

## Introduction

“But I don’t trust him, what if he plays with your feelings too?” Said Lizeka Mfenyane my beautiful short, caramel skinned and thick girl friend. The only friend I have and trust. “Give him a chance please Lizzy I know he loves me and I love him too.” I said with a smile on my face. Lizeka faked a smile and gave me a hug. I could tell that she wasn’t pleased at all with me dating Samkelo Ndunakazi. He used to be one of the most popular player around Aqudene High School located in Richards bay. (Empangeni) I was in love with the guy and I saw nothing that could come between us. But I learned a hard way that OUR LOVE WAS A MISSION.

I am THANDEKA DHLOMO and this is my story.

The story has a TRUE LIFE STORY content behind but with a majority of fiction in some things. So what I can say is, it’s a mix. Both non fiction events and fiction events. I hope you understand.

For protection of other characters I have changed their real first names but I didn’t change mine. I am THANDEKA DHLOMO in reality.

## Chapter: one

Thandeka Dhlomo the last born of Mfaniseni Dhlomo(my father). My brother Andile Dhlomo is the first born. We are just a family of three and the maid Aunt Maud. But she wasn’t staying with us at home. Our mother died in a car accident and my dad didn’t remarry. I was actually cool with that but sometimes I wished he had a special someone in his life because sometimes I could see that he becomes lonely. My friend Lizeka and I were doing grade 12. We were 18 years old and we were in science class. My boyfriend Samkelo was also doing grade 12, he was 18 years old and he was in commerce class. My brother was doing his second year in civil engineering at Durban university of Technology. He was 21 years old. My father was a Doctor. I had a good relationship with my dad and my brother. My father’s family stayed at Engwelezane township. And my mother’s family at Eastern Cape. She was a beautiful Xhosa woman.

We stayed at Breckenham suburb area in Richards bay. We had a big first brick mansion. That had 4bedrooms with their walk in bathrooms, the lounge, Kitchen, Daddy’s study room, laundry room, dining room and the garage. A round swimming pool. The yard was not big. It was just a beautiful home for us. Samkelo stayed at Mzingazi around Richards bay and Lizeka stayed at Eskhawini township near Richards bay.

Samkelo and I have been dating for a month and he was a loving boyfriend to me. I didn’t care about his past because he was a changed man.

It was April and the Easter holidays were over. So I woke up, stretched myself, made the bed and went to my bathroom that had just the shower, toilet seat, sink and the mirror cupboard. I took out my shower cap and covered my long black hair. “Damn I look ugly in the morning” I said to myself and laughed out loud as I was looking at my light brown skinned face with small hazel brown eyes. I smiled and made funny faces on the mirror. I then walked my medium height self inside the shower. I wasn’t thick, fat nor skinny but I was just medium sized with a medium curves and medium ass. After showering I brushed my teeth and I looked beautiful after the shower. I went back to my room and wore my school uniform which was a blue, grey and white scotch skirt. I put on my short sleeve white shirt and my blue jersey. I wore my white short socks and black school shoes. I then tied up my hair into a

nice neat bun. I took my phone and put it on my skirt's pocket. I took my pink Nike backpack and went to the kitchen.

My dad was having breakfast. I joined him.

Me: (kissing his cheek) Morning Dinangwe.

Dad: Morning my angel how are you?

Me: I am fine dad and you.

Dad: I am fine too. Baby I won't be driving you to school from this day onwards.

Me: No problem dad I will just take a taxi.

Dad: No baby. I found a driver for you. And it's the only best thing since you have afternoon classes sometimes.

Me: Okay dad.

I didn't like having a driver but dad wasn't going to let me take taxis so I had no choice but to say yes. Dad: I am leaving now. So he will be here in a few minutes. Have nice day.

Me: Thanks dad you too.

He tapped my shoulder and left. I ate and washed my plates afterwards.

I went to the lounge and waited for the driver. After a few minutes there was a buzz on the gate. I went to attend to it and it was my driver. I took the car keys and went outside. Dad had two cars and my brother also had a car. I was the only one who had no car but I had a license and I could drive but my dad didn't want me to drive his cars since he had big cars. The driver was driving a black tazz but he was going to use dad's Nissan to drive me to school. He came out of his car. He was a tall black chocolate skinned guy. He had a well built body. Shaved head and beard. He was wearing black pants and a white shirt. He came to me and gave me his hand.

Guy: (handshake) Hi Miss Dhlomo, I am Qiniso Gumede your driver.

Me: I am Thandeka Dhlomo and please call me by my first name not Miss Dhlomo.

Qini: Okay Can we go.

I nodded and gave him the car keys. We went inside the garage. I stepped inside the front seat and he did the same on his side and started the engine.

Along the way he was playing Drake and he was rapping along. I wanted to laugh but I tried and contained myself. It was so funny as he was acting up on his seat like those hip hop artists do. Qini: So what kind of music do you like Thandeka?

Me: I like Old school music a lot but I do listen to other types. Beside Hip hop and Maskandi.

Qini: You should listen to hip hop. It's really good.

Me: No, I will pass.

Qini: I would like to change your mind on that.

Me: (smiling) Okay then I will try.

Qini: Okay.

We arrived by my school and I stepped out of the car. I took his number so that I could tell him if the school was out.

Qini: Have a beautiful day like you then Thandeka.

Me:(smiling) thanks. Have a lovely day

Qini: Lovely like me right?

I giggled and closed the door before he could say anything. And he drove off. I walked inside the school premises and my day began

I went straight to my class and I saw Samkelo with a group of girls outside his class. They were talking and laughing. Actually he was the one who did the talking while they were laughing. Him being around girls all the time was something that I was slowly getting used to. I just went inside my class and Lizeka was already in class. She was always early because their bus arrived early. She screamed and came towards me. We squeezed each other and let

go.

Lizzy: Yoh! Chommy I have been missing you.

Me: Not like I did. Andile didn't spent the whole week with us. (Walking towards our desks) And after he left I was alone and bored. You know.

Lizzy: I am sorry chommy. I was just missing your madness and crazy talks.

Me:(laughing) You are wrong you know. Please walk me to the toilet.

Lizzy: (getting up) Okay let's go. Babe kaNdunakazi (Samkelo)

Me: (blushing) Please don't make me have pink cheeks.

Lizzy: (laughing) Sorry. But my friend you didn't say anything to Andile about me?

Me:(laughing) No my friend, you know Andile has a girlfriend and you don't want that chick to whip you hard.

Lizzy: I ain't scared of her. As long as I can sleep on that chest of her man and kiss his pink lips.

Me:(laughing) Geez mntana ndini! Stop fantasizing about my brother and please behave like a virgin!

Lizzy: (Laughing) Don't remind me that, during the holidays Phumlani (her boyfriend) wanted to break my virginity and I gave him the red card shame.

I walked inside the toilet laughing at what she just told me. And replied while inside.

Me: I wonder what would I do if I can visit Samkelo and he wants to break mine.

Lizzy: Please don't let that dog break your virginity. I don't trust him at all.

Me: But my friend he has changed nje.

I walked out and washed my hands and we walked back to our class.

Lizzy: There is a movie that I used to watch. There was an old lady that used to say to her daughter (mimicking the old lady's voice) My baby don't believe a man who says I am changed man.

Me:( Laughing) Come on. Just give him a chance.

Lizzy: For your sake okay. But don't trust him too much and don't let him take your virginity. And lastly don't think that you're the only one to him.

Me: But he said I am nje my friend.

Lizzy: Oh okay then.

We arrived by our class. Our teacher came and marked the register. We then went to assembly and came back to our class and the first period began.

During break time. We went to buy lunch and went to sit on our favorite spot. We were talking about random stuff and Samkelo came to us walking with a girl. They were holding each other's hands.

Sam: Hey ladies.

Us: Hey (I didn't look at them. I was a little pissed)

Sam: Bbe are you alright?

Me:.. (Lizzy looked at me and I didn't say anything)

Sam: Thandeka I am talking to you.

Me:(looking at him) Oh sorry I thought you were talking to her (pointing the girl) That's why I didn't say anything.

Sam:(kissing her cheek) No I wasn't talking to her. But I was-

Lizzy:(standing up) Please excuse me.

Me: Hawu. Lizzy where are you going now?

Lizzy: You know I can't stand sh-

I interrupted her before she could finish the sentence.

Me: Yes I understand my friend.

She walked away with her bag. And I was left with Samkelo and the girl. They sat down next to me.

Sam: So bbe this is my friend Sbahle.

Me:(faking a smile) Nice to meet you Sbahle.

Sbahle:(laughing) Likewise dear.

Okay I couldn't take it too, so I just stood up and took my backpack.

Sam: And then where are you going because I am here to spend time with you?

Me: Next time if you want to spend time with me, try to come alone not with your so called friend.

Sbahle: Jealous type neh.

I clicked my tongue and left them right on the spot. I was angry at Samkelo because I didn't understand why would he act that way with a friend but I tried to cool myself off because I didn't want Lizzy to lecture me. I went inside the class and I told her not to talk about it. And she did. The break was over and we got down to business.

It's been almost three weeks since Samkelo hasn't tried to contact me. No phonecall, No text, No inbox, No mixit chats. He was just quiet. Even at school, he was always with his friends. He had no time for me and I was tired of the silent treatment. I was in my room under my bed covers. It was a Thursday at night. I logged on mixit and Samkelo was online so I started a conversation.

Me:"Hey Sam how are you? "

Sam:"G n u" (good and you?)

Me:"Oh I am fin cn we tlk abt smthing"(oh I am fine can we talk about something)

Sam:"shoot"

Me:"Whts gng on btwn us?"(what's going on between us)

Sam: "I should be asking you that. Because you've been acting like a jealous girlfriend"

Me:"Excused me? You've been ignoring me Samkelo. You wanted me to follow you?"

Sam:"Maybe you should have "

Me:"That's total bullshit then."

Sam:"K" (Okay)

Me:"Mxm "

Sam:"Uthi "mxm" kimi?" (You're saying "mxm" to me)

Me: "As you can see."

Sam: "Can I see you after school tomorrow. We can skip the afternoon class so that we can fix this"

Me:"fine by me"

Sam:"Okay see you tomorrow then."

Me: "Okay. Goodnight I love you"

Sam:" K cool"

"K cool"???..... Really??

In the morning I woke up and did my daily routine and I went to have breakfast. My dad was still sleeping since he had a night shift. Aunt Maud was cleaning the lounge.

Me: Morning Aunt Maud.

Maud: Morning Thandeka how was your night?

Me: Perfect and yours?

Maud: Good sisi.

I smiled and sat on the table. I ate my breakfast and my phone rang. It was my brother. I smiled and picked up the call.

Me: Bhuti Ka Thandeka

Andile: How are sisi ka Andile?

Me: I am fine my brother and you?

Andile: I am fine sisi. I was just checking up on you. I hope you're studying hard. And you

will get those marks dad wants.

Me: I am trying my best bhuti. I need that car he promised me so I have to get those marks.

Andile: Good but I still believe that dad is unfair. Why would he say he wants distinction on Physical science and Mathematics only from you while he wanted four from me?

Me:(Laughing) Stop complaining. But you got those distinctions and the car. And besides I am the little one hello??

Andile: But still. It's unfair. Please just behave and keep away from boys please. Maybe you can see them after grade 12.

Me:(laughing) Okay send my love to my sister in-law. Please.

Andile: I will do that. Uyathandwa u-Andile Okay?

Me:(smiling) Nawe uyathandwa uThandeka. Have a nice day bhuti.

Andile: Thanks. Have a nice day little sisi.

Me: Thanks. \*we hung up\*

I finished breakfast and I washed my bowl and I took my backpack and the keys as I heard Qiniso calling my name. I went to him.

Qini: Morning \*giving him the keys\*

Me: Morning you're early today hey.

Qini:(smiling) Yeah I know.

We went inside the car and I played my choice of music this time around. I was playing "buy me a rose- Luther vundross" (not sure about the spelling of his surname I sang along. Qiniso was just smiling alone. I could sing and I knew that I was good at that but not good that I can win Idols or X-factor.

Qini: You have a nice voice. And I wish you were mine. I would have made you sing for me every single day and night.

Me:(laughing) Too bad I am not yours then.

Qini: You can still be mine. I like your personal. You're a bubbly pretty girl. And I like you.

Me: Thanks and that is a very bad idea. You work for my Father.

Qini: He won't find out. At least think about me.

I smiled and nodded. I wasn't going to risk my relationship with dad by dating my driver.

Hell No! Yeah Qiniso was a great guy and I could say that we had some few things in common and he was just relaxed and funny but dating him was seriously not an option. And still I have a boyfriend that I love. I thought to myself.

We arrived by my school. Qiniso kissed my cheek. Okay?? and he wished me a great day. I thanked him and walked inside the premises. Samkelo was by the gate. He came to me and gave me a warm hug. We pulled away.

Sam: Are you fine?

Me: Yes Samkelo I am fine and you?

Sam: I am not fine. I have a headache and I think about going back home.

Me: Oh sorry. So I won't see you today after school?

Sam: You can go with me now please. I just need to be with you the whole day.

Me: And school Samkelo?

Sam: We will catch up on the weekend classes please bbe (puppyface)

Me: Okay let's go before people see that I bunked school.

Sam: You're the best babe.

I smiled and nodded. We walked out of the school and we went to take a taxi to Mzingazi. It was my first time visiting him at his house/home. He lived with his mother and his two little sister, who were still in high school. His father was married to another woman and had kids with her. They lived in Capetown.

We arrived at his crib and it was a nice eight room house. He unlocked the door and we walked in. I followed him and he was going to his room.

Me: Should I also come in or?

Sam: Come in bbe. I will go and get us some drinks so far. You can play some music on my system.

I nodded. His room was not too big. It had a double bed with a black headboard, study desk and chair, the wore drop and the table with his cosmetics. He had a laptop on the study desk and speakers. I didn't know what to play so I just played "buy me a rose" I was in the mood of that song that day. I sat on his bed and took off my shoes. I wasn't sure if I had to but anyway I did. Samkelo came in with juice and biscuits on a tray.

Sam: No! No! Are you 75 bbe?

Me: No why?

Sam: Why would you play such music. This stuff is for old people. \*placing the tray down\*

Me: Oh but I love this kind of music.

Sam: You will play it when you're alone not when you're with me. I won't listen to this crap.

Me: Oh I am sorry.

He didn't say anything but he changed and played Rick Ross . I was a little bit hurt that he sad that my favorite music was crap. He then didn't say anything but instead he turned back and grabbed me. He smashed his lips on mine. I didn't respond because I wasn't expecting that behavior. My eyes popped out and I just froze for a second and he stopped and looked at me.

Sam: What is wrong?

Me: Nothing (clearing my throat)

Sam: Is this your first kiss?

Me: No.

Sam: So?

I didn't say anything. Yeah him and I have been dating for a month but we didn't kiss each other. It was our first time kissing. Well he wasn't my first kiss nor first boyfriend but second actually. Nhlanzeko was my first boyfriend he was the most sweetest guy I ever known. And his kiss was gentle and smooth, with his hands softly touching me. But sadly his family had to move back to Swaziland and we lost contact. As Samkelo was kissing me, it was a lot different compared to My first. To him it seemed like there were no feelings involved but I tried not to think like that. And just go with the flow. He kissed me and took off my clothes. I tried to stop him but he didn't get the message. I was naked and he was also. I was left with my panties and top skin. I wasn't wearing bras because my breasts were still tender though I was 18. I laid on my back as he pushed me and he got on top of me. He tried taking off my panties but I stopped him immediately.

Sam: What's wrong now?

Me: I am not ready yet.

Sam: What do you mean by that?

Me: I am still a virgin and I don't want to loose my virginity this soon.

Sam: So I should wait for you?

Me: If you love me you will.

Sam: Okay but let me continue.

I nodded and he kissed me. He placed his hand under my panties. I was scared because I was new to all that thing he was doing. I felt his finger inside me and I screamed and removed it. He did it again and I held his hand. "Why are you limiting me Thandeka? I won't have sex with you but at least let me hear you moan" he said in a sleepy voice. I let go of his hand and he placed it back inside me and moans escaped me. I immediately held my mouth and he saw that. He removed my hands and kissed me intensely. I was feeling some things but I wasn't going to let him break my virginity. "Thandeka I can't do this bbe please let me go inside you please" He bagged. I shook my head as a sign of saying NO! He stopped and sat on the bed.

He was breathing heavy so was I. We sat on that position without a word. He gave me my drink and biscuits. I ate them and drank the juice. We then cuddled each other and we talked until we both fell asleep.

We woke up and it was time for me to make my way to the school before Qiniso made it there first. I quickly wore my uniform. And fixed my head. I took my backpack.

Me: Are you going to walk with me to catch a taxi.

Sam: No, go well. I love you and I hope next time you will be ready.

Me: And if I am not ready?

Sam: Then you must find yourself another boyfriend....

Ouch! ???

I arrived by my school and the school was out already. I didn't see Qiniso so I quickly went to the gate and waited for the car. While I was still waiting Mr Zulu (physics teacher) passed by.

MrZ:(through the window) MaMkhabela I didn't see you in my physical science class today.

Me:(out of words) Ehhh Uhhh No Sir I wasn't feeling well so I-

Lizzy:(shouting) Hhaybo Chommy you and Samkelo were not present today but you're here?  
\*she stood by me\*

MrZ: So you bunked school? Does your father know about that? And Samkelo? Do you want to fail Thandeka?

Me: No Sir I don't want that.

MrZ: Your father is my friend so I have to tell him about this.

Me:(panicking) Please Sir don't tell my father. He will freak out.

Lizzy: Please understand Sir. Don't tell her dad.

MrZ: If I don't care about you. I won't tell your father. \*The Principal came to us\*

Me:(crying) Sir I beg you please.

Principal: Mr Zulu what is going on here.

MrZ: I think we need to go to your office now and discuss this matter Principal.

Principal: Okay Let's go.

Mr Zulu drove back inside the school and I was told to come to the office. I hugged Lizeka and followed them. I texted Qiniso telling him to wait at the gate since we weren't having any extra class.

On the office I was told to sit down and Mr Zulu told the Principal about my absence from school. The principal was furious and unhappy.

Principal: Thandeka where did you go?

MrZ: Oh and Samkelo Ndunakazi they were both absent but they were seen in the morning here on the school premises.

Me:(crying) Please don't tell my dad.

Princ: Where were you?

Me: We went to the library with Samkelo.

MrZ: lies! Samkelo is doing Commercial subjects.

Principal: I am calling your parents both of you and that boy.

I was just crying because they didn't want to hear anything coming from my mouth. The Principal called my dad and Samkelo's mother. I was so doomed and heart broken.

Principal: Your father said tell your driver to drive you straight home. And Monday we are having a meeting with you, your dad, Samkelo and his mother. You can go now.

I nodded and I took my backpack walked straight to the gate crying.

Qiniso saw me and he came out of the car. He came towards me, took my bag and gave me a tight hug. I just wailed inside his embrace. He brushed my back softly. And we walked to the car after he wiped my tears. I wanted to sit at the backseat but there were bags on the seat.

Me: And who is the owner of the bags?

Qini: They are mine. \*I sat on the front, he did the same and drove off\*

Me: Where are you going with them?

Qini: I am moving in with you guys.

Me: Oh Why?

Qini: I didn't win the case of fighting for my father's house so my stepmother threw me out and your dad offered me a place to stay.

Me: I am sorry about that. At least you won't be homeless.

Qini: And I will be close to the woman I love.

Me: Please drop that.

Qini:(smiling) Okay. Why were you crying?

Me: It's a long story which I don't want to talk about. \*He nodded\*

We arrived at home and we stepped out of the car. I assisted him with his bag. He was going to use the guest room. There was no backroom so he was going to share everything with us. Dad was not around the lounge so I went to my room and changed my uniform. Qiniso knocked on my door and told me dad is calling me on his study room. I took a deep breath and went to the study. He was doing something on his computer. I went through and sat on the chair. He looked at me.

Dad: Where were you attending your school today

I didn't know how answer the question so I decided to shut up and I played with my nails.

Dad: Where were you Thandeka?(shouting)

Me: I was with a friend dad.

Dad: What kind of a friend makes you to bunk school huh?

Me: I am sorry dad. I won't do it again.

Dad: I am disappointed in you Thandeka. You bunk school just to be with a boy? Did you sleep with him?

Me: No dad I didn't sleep with him.

Dad: You're going to the Reed dance this year?

Me: But dad?

Dad: It is not up for discussion Thandeka. And if you ever happen to be pregnant consider yourself homeless do you understand me?

Me: Yes I understand dad.

Dad: Good now give me all your gadgets. I will keep them for you. You will get them back on November on your final paper.

Me: Even my laptop dad?

Dad: Everything. If you want to use the internet you will use my computer and Facebook website is banned on this computer.

I slowly stood up with tears and went to my room. I took all my gadgets and put them on the bag. My phone had missed calls from Samkelo. I wanted to call him back and my dad appeared on the door. I quickly switched off my phone and I gave him the bag. He took it and left. I threw myself on the bed and cried...

was woken up by my dad calling my name.

Dad: Thandeka.

Me: Dad?

Dad: Your brother wants to talk to you.

Me: Okay.

I sat up straight and he gave me the phone and left. I rubbed my eyes and yawned. The phone rang and I picked up immediately.

Me: Bhuti wami. (My brother)

Andile: Kuki wami my left paralyzed foot! (My brother my foot!)

Me: Andile?

Andile: How can you bunk school for a boy after I told you to stay away from boys?? (He was shouting)

Me: It was a mistake. I was wrong Bhuti I am sorry.

Andile: You want to fail Thandeka hurh?

Me: No bhuti. I won't do it again. (Crying)

Andile: Stop crying! Why are you crying. Has anyone beat you up?

Me: No.

Andile: So why are you crying. Or you want me to come and beat you so that you will cry for something you know?

Me: No I don't want that.

Andile: Stay away from that boy do you understand Thandeka?

Me: But I love him Andile.

Andile: You love him? What kind of love makes you to bunk school. What were you doing the whole day. You were having sex?

Me: No Bhuti I didn't.

Andile: You better stay away from that boy before he makes you pregnant! Nxxx!

He hung up the call. I cried and dad came inside my room and took his phone. He didn't say anything but he left. I didn't feel like eating so I decided to cry myself to sleep.

My weekend was sour and it wasn't nice at all. My dad wasn't talking to me. But I did apologize. Qiniso was the only person who was talking to me. Even aunt Maud was disappointed in me but I love Samkelo they didn't understand that. Yea I was wrong but I was sorry about it. I was only a teen who said I wasn't going to make mistakes. It was painful but I had to suck it up and study.

Monday morning Qiniso drove me to school in silence. I stepped out and I went straight to my class. Lizzy came to me and gave me a hug. We sat down and I told her everything about Samkelo and my dad.

Lizzy: I am sorry my friend but I think it's for the best. Samkelo is bad news chommy.

Sam: I always knew that you don't like me. (He was standing in front of us)

Lizzy: You're nothing but a player and you will break her heart.

Sam: Are you sure?

Lizzy: I know. You and your friends are just dirt. You sleep with girls and make sex tapes of them.

Sam: Talking from experience maybe?

Lizzy: Argh Nxx I can't stand your dog Thandeka.

She stood up and left. I didn't say anything.

Sam: Thandeka?

Me: Samkelo?

Sam: I am sorry about what happened bbe. I didn't mean it serious.

Me: Okay.

Sam: But you should've taken a taxi Thandeka. Why did you come back to school.

Me: I have a driver and you know that so I don't think I have to answer that question. (The bell rang and he stood up. Others came to class)

Sam: Okay. I am sorry. I will see you later then I love you Thandeka.

Me: I love you too Samkelo.

He kissed my cheek and left. As he was about to go out my class teacher came inside and saw him

MissZungu: What are you doing here Ndunakazi?

Sam: (brushing his head) I was just here to check up on Thandeka.

MissZ: Come here Ndunakazi. (He did) Class please settle down. (they did) From this day onwards Samkelo Ndunakazi is not welcome in this class. He must not come in here or even stand by the door and wait for Thandeka. If you happen to see him here or see them together around the school please report them Okay?

Class: Yes Miss.

MissZ: You can leave Ndunakazi.

Sam: But that's unfair Miss Zungu. What happened to free South Africa and democracy. The whole class laughed at that even Lizzy but I didn't because I didn't find it funny. Vele where is democracy to what she was doing. We are entitled to use the infrastructure provided by the government what was wrong with Samkelo coming to my class? Mxm I was annoyed.

MissZ: You will have that democracy outside the school because one thing you want is to make that girl pregnant then leave her.

Sam: Do you know any girl I made pregnant Miss Zulu?

Class: Hhaybo!

MissZ: Stop disrespecting me Ndunakazi.

Sam: It's not disrespect but I just wanted to know her name maybe she didn't tell me that I am a dad. The class laughed. I stood up.

Me: Samkelo please leave Miss Zungu and go to your class.

Sam: Okay but akayeke ukungijwayela kabi lo nemilenze eyomile Nxx! (Everybody laughed at that. I wanted to laugh too but I didn't)

MissZ: Uthini wena mfana? \*I went to the front\* (what are you saying?)

Sam: Ungizwe kahle nje. (You heard me)

Miss Zungu gave Samkelo one hard slap. The whole class went "wooooh" Samkelo attempted to slap her but I got in between them fast.

Sam: Thandeka Yazi!

Me: Samkelo go please.

MissZ: You will be suspended you dog. Stop fucking up girls.

Sam: I don't care if they suspend me. You must also stop using face cream you will never be beautiful. Ugugile futhi nje ushile!

The class laughed. I pushed Samkelo out of the class. I was also going out as I pushed him out.

Sam: Thandeka stop it. That woman provoked me.

Me: Just go to your class Samkelo. We're already in trouble. We don't want another trouble or bad record on our names.

Sam: You think I am scared of them I am not scared at all. If I want you and you want me. Who are they to stop us.

He was really angry and he was shouting. The learners from other classes were looking at us through the windows. Back then Aqudene High School wasn't a double building like now.

Me: Samkelo stop this just go.

Sam: Let me show you that I am not scared.

He grabbed me and kissed me right in front of the school. The learners were screaming from their class rooms and boys were blowing whistles. I tried to fight myself out of his lips and embrace but he squeezed me tightly, closer to him and kissed me even more. The English teacher Mr Skhakhane separated us. I backed away and catch my breath. We were both breathing heavily.

MrS: Ndunakazi what is meaning of all this nonsense you're doing.

The principal came and other teachers joined in.

Principal: What is going on here? Ndunakazi and Thandeka?

MrS: Ndunakazi was kissing her right in front of the school.

MissZ: And he insulted me.

Principal: You want me to suspend both of you

Us: No.

Principal: Go to my office Now!!

We nodded and slowly walked to the office.

We arrived by the office and we were instructed to sit down. We did just that. Samkelo was busy staring at me and I tried to avoid eye contact with him. The principal, Miss Zungu and Samkelo's teacher (Mr Khumalo) also sat down with us.

Principal: Do you mind telling us why you did what you did?

Me: Who? Me or him?

Principal: Both of you.

Sam: We did a lot of things principal please clarify.

MissZ: You're so full of yourself Ndunakazi!

MrK: Ndunakazi are you on drugs?

Sam: What? No!

Principal: Why are you behaving like this then?

Sam: I am sorry but Miss Zungu provoked me.

MissZ: I was telling you the truth.

Sam: And all I wanted to know was who is the mother of my baby that I left?

MissZ: That's what you do.

Principal: That's why you insulted her?

Sam: I didn't insult her. I was telling her the truth.

MissZ: You see?

Principal: (ignoring her) Why did you kiss in front of the school.

Sam: I was trying to calm my anger down.

Principal: Oh, And you Thandeka?

Me: He took me by surprise principal.

Principal: And you didn't fight it?

Me: I couldn't Principal. He was strong against me

MrK: But you did respond to the kiss?

Me:.....

Principal: Thandeka??

Me: Eee I-

Sam: She didn't.

MrK: We are not asking you.

Me: I did.

Principal: Okay. Thandeka and Samkelo I am suspending both of you for two weeks. You won't come to school. You will only come back after two weeks. And I don't want to see you together around the school.

Sam: But that's unfair. Why don't you just suspend us. What is wrong if we stay together during school hours Principal?

The Principal didn't answer him but instead he wrote suspension letters for us. And he stamped it and sign the letters. He gave us the letters and we took them.

Principal: You may go back to your class and you will come back here during lunch time when your parents arrive.

We didn't say anything but we stood up. As soon as we were outside I just ran to the toilet and cried. My dad was going to be very angry with me and I was just stressed as hell. Two weeks without school but only staying at home was going to be hard. I wiped my tears and stood up. I washed my hands and I walked out of the toilet. Samkelo was standing by the toilet walls but at the back of them.

Sam: Thandeka!

Me: (turning back) What?

Sam: Come to me please. ( I went to him)

Me: What do you want?

Sam: I am sorry Thandeka I should've listened to you from the beginning. Please forgive me.

Me: It's cool. I want to go back to class.

Sam: What happened to your phone?

Me: Dad took it. But I will buy myself an E250 at least just to socialise but I will hide it from him.

Sam: Okay Call me then with the new number.

Me: I will.

Sam: Okay. Go first then I will come after you.

I nodded. We hugged each other and I left. I went inside the class and they did the nasty comments. I didn't care so I just sat down and concentrated on the teacher who was teaching Maths.

During lunch time, we made our way to the Principal's office. Our parents were already there, the Principal and our class teacher. We sat down.

Sam's mom: These is the girl that drives you crazy Samkelo?

Sam: She doesn't drive me crazy mom. I just love her that's all.

Dad: What do you know about love? You want to make my daughter pregnant huh?

Sam: No Sir.

Principal: Why did you bunk school?

Us:.....

Sam's Mom: Answer the question!

Sam: I am sorry about that.

Principal: That doesn't answer the question.

Me: But answering the question will be disrespectful because there is no suitable answer.

MissZ: There is no such.

Sam: Okay we wanted to spend time together.

His mother gave him one hot slap. He held his cheek and looked down.

Sam's mom: Spend time together in my house Samkelo?

Sam: I am sorry.

Dad: Thandeka your turn to answer. State your reasons.

Me: I--- I--- don't have a reason.

Dad: This relationship thing of yours must end from today. Thandeka do you understand.

I looked at Samkelo and he nodded a little.

Me: Yes dad.

Sam's mom: Do you understand Samkelo?

Sam: I understand mom.

Principal told them about the kiss and our parents were more then furious. And about the fact that we were suspended.

Dad: Please borrow me a pipe. That you use to beat them here around the school.

Sam's mom: Get me one too.

I started crying and Samkelo squeezed my hand under the table since we were closed to each other. He didn't let go until Miss Zungu came back with two pipes. She gave them to our parents and Samkelo let go of my hand. They came to us and beat us both. I jumped out of the chair and dad held my arm and beat the hell out of me. I was crying saying I am sorry and Samkelo on the other hand was crying silently because I could hear was the sniffing. Our teachers were just watching us. They beat us until they were satisfied. My whole body was sore and I was in pain.

Dad: Go get your bag and we're leaving now!

Sam's mom: You too Samkelo.

I went out crying and wiped my tears. I walked slowly. I heard Samkelo calling my name. I looked back at him. And he made the signs and mumbled "please don't forget to call me if you get the phone" I nodded and headed to my class. I saw a grade 8 girl and I asked her to go to my class and tell Lizeka to give her my bag. And she did. I didn't want to go to my class. She came back and gave me my bag. I thanked her and went to my dad's car.

I sat on the back seat and he gave me a brown envelope.

Dad: My lawyer drew up that contract today please read it.

He started the engine. I read the contract And it was stating that if I do get pregnant while I am still studying. Either university or High School, my dad will disown me and I will leave his house.

Me: Dad?????

Dad: Sign it.

Me: This is new. I have never heard of such

Dad: Now you do. So please sign that contract and I am serious about it. I mean every word..

Me: Dad you can't be serious?

Dad: Well I am serious Thandeka.

Me: I am 18 years dad I am entitled to make my own mistakes and learn from them. I am not saying I want to be pregnant but what if Samkelo is the only guy I want?

Dad: You will not talk to me like that. I am still your father. Just sign that contract now!

I didn't say anything but instead I took out my pen from my bag and signed the papers. And I put them back on the envelope. I gave it back to him. He took it. I looked out of the window and cried silently. I just missed my mom. I was wrong, yes but I didn't deserve all of the treatment my dad was giving me.

We arrived by the house and I stepped out of the car and went to my room. I changed my uniform and wore my casual clothes. I went back to the kitchen and made something to eat.

Dad went back to work. Aunt Maud was doing the laundry. I went to the lounge and ate.

Qiniso came in.

Qini: Hey Thandeka?

Me: Hey How are you?

Qini: I am fine and you?

Me: Perfect are you going somewhere?

Qini: Yeah I am going to the mall to meet with my baby mama.

Me: Oh you have a child?

Qini: Yes her name is Enhle.

Me: That's nice. How old is she?

Qini: 3yrs old.

Me: Okay. Can I please go with you. I want to buy something. I will come back using a taxi just to give you time with your baby mama.

Qini: We are no longer in a relationship Thandeka. I am going to buy some few things for Enhle.

Me: Okay. Let's go then.

Qini: You know I love you Thandeka right?

Me: Not now Qiniso please.

He nodded and I went to the kitchen to rinse the eating utensils. I went to my room and took my credit card and we walked out. Qiniso drove to the mall.

We stepped out of the car and we walked together. We were just talking and laughing.

Qini: So how do you feel about being suspended?

Me: Brah if you can see me my body right now? So don't talk about suspension.

Qini: What is wrong with your body?

Me: Hheyi dad whipped me in front of my teachers Qini: (Laughing) And in front of your boyfriend?

Me: Yes and his mother did the same to him. And stop laughing it's not funny at all.

Qini: Sorry TDK.

Me: Eww please don't ever call me like that. I don't like it yazi.

Qini: Conditions Hhayi.

I laughed and he called the baby mama. We met up together and she was quite beautiful.

Qini: Thandeka this is Zinhle, Zinhle this is Thandeka.

Zinhle: She's your new ride?

Qini: Zinhle???

Zinhle: I was just asking nje nothing much.

Me: I ain't no ride sisi.

Zinhle: Whatever! Can we go already.

Me: Qiniso I will meet you outside when you're done I want to buy something.

Qini: Okay.

I flashed a smile and I looked around different shops. I wanted to buy a new simple phone. I was searching for a black Samsung E250 and I finally found one and I bought it. I bought a new sim card and a airtime. I went back outside where Qiniso parked his car. I stood by the car since it was locked and started my new phone. I punched in the numbers of the airtime.

Voice: You bought a new phone?

Me:(looking up) Geez Qiniso you gave me a fright. Dad must not find out about this phone.

Qini: Relax he won't.

I smiled and we stepped inside the car and drove back home.

We arrived at home and I went to my room to hide my phone under the pillow. I also hid the box and slip of the phone transaction. I went back to the lounge. Qiniso was listening to music.

Qini: I made some snack for us.

Me: Thank you. I can't believe I will be staying at home for two weeks Brah.

Qini: Relax you won't be bored. I am here.

Me: Oh Okay.

He played " Power of love " by Celine Dion.

Me: (smiling) Since when do you listen to this kind of music?

Qini: Ever since I met an Angel like you. Will you dance with me. (Giving me his hand)

Me: (laughing) Dance for this song?

Qini: Yes.

Me: I can't dance.

Qini: I will teach you how to dance.

Me: Okay.

I smiled and stood up. And gave him my hand. And he held me closer to him. His other hand held my waist. My chest against his chest, his heart was pounding and his hands were warm. He started moving and I followed his lead. It was so nice and heartwarming. I felt comfortable that I even placed my head on his chest and it felt so right. I was just lost on his warm chest that I even forgot about my problems of being suspended, being beaten and tied up with a contract. The song ended and we looked at each other deep in the eyes. And his eyes were so peaceful. He smiled.

Qini: Can you be my lady and I'll be your man?

Me:....

Me: Erhhh Qiniso that's a huge risk you know. Since we live together. If my father can find out then we are doomed.

Qini: He won't find out Thandeka. We will be normal around the house. Please Thandeka just give me a chance.

Me: I have a boyfriend Qiniso.

Qini: I know that. Look you don't have to answer me now. Give it time I don't want to pressure you into this relationship but I want it and I need you in my life. I want you to be my light and my life.

I smiled, he kissed my forehead and let go of me. He made his way to his room. I sighed and took the eating utensils. I went to the kitchen and washed them. Qiniso's words were ringing in my mind. I mean his words found a place in my heart but I was scared of our relationship. I wasn't sure if I loved him but he was a nice guy and free spirited guy.

Maud: Do you think Qiniso is the right move for you right now?

Me:(looking at her) Excuse me?

Maud: I saw you two on the lounge.

Me: Aunt Maud please don't tell my dad about that

Maud: I won't but I don't think it wise to date him.

Me: I am not dating him Aunt.

Maud: Okay but be careful.

I nodded and packed the dishes. I went to my room and studied my books. I wanted to make sure that I prove my dad and my brother wrong and pass with flying colours.

I think I must have fallen asleep because I was studying in my bed. Aunt Maud woke me up and told me that she was leaving. I woke up and went to the bathroom to wash my face. I went to the kitchen and started cooking. Qiniso came to the kitchen. And he looked at me and smiled.

Qini: Mrs Gumede

Me: Really? I am Mrs Qwabe already. What did I do to deserve that title?

Qini: You keep on stealing my heart and now you have all of it with you.

Me: (blushing) I wasn't aware.

Qini: Can I help you. What are you making?

Me: I am making steam bread and mutton curry.

Qini: I wish you were my wife you know.

Me: Qiniso!

He smiled and came close to me. He smiled and I smiled back at him.

Qini: let me fix your face.

I turned back and looked at him. Instead of fixing my face he make up my face using flour.

Me:(screaming) Qiniso!

Qini: (laughing) You look beautiful now.

I scattered the flour on him. He ran after me and I was laughing non stop. I ran outside and he sent his leg to my leg and I tripped and fell on the grass. I don't know if he fell on top of me purposefully or mistakenly but he did. We laughed at each other and there was a moment of silence. He looked at me and I looked at him deep inside the eyes. He was slowly getting close to my lips and I cleared my throat.

Me: Hmmhm I think my pots are burning.

Qini: I am sorry.

I smiled and he assisted me get up. We walked back to the kitchen. He looked at me and I looked back and him. We both smiled. He held my hand and I giggled. We entered the kitchen.

Me: No funny business just help me qha.

Qini: Yes Mrs Qwabe.

I smiled and we continued with cooking. A car passed by on the street playing “Bhuti ngihamba nawe” by Mafikizolo. We heard the song because the volume was on the max I suppose. This person was breaking the law hhaybo so much noise around the suburb area. But anyway Qiniso and I looked at each laughed. I sang “Sengihamba ooh ngihamba nawe. We bhuti Mina ngihamba nawe” He took out his phone and played the song. I laughed and he held my hand and we made the step like the bride and groom when they are getting married on a Zulu traditional wedding. He changed the dance and ended up holding me close to him. And it was fun and exciting. I was singing along and he was just did the bass since he couldn’t sing. The song ended and we let go of each other. He kissed my cheek and I giggled. We finished up with cooking and cleaned up the mess we made.

Dad arrived, he greeted us and went to his room. We dished up the food and called dad. We settled down and dad blessed the meal. We ate.

Dad: This is nice.

Qini: Thank you Baba’Dhlomo I cooked that meal.

Me: Really Qiniso?

Dad: Hhaybo Thandeka why are you calling Qiniso by his name. You should say brother. I looked at him and he looked down.

Me: But dad I call Andile by his name.

Dad: Qiniso is older than Andile. You’re?

Qini: I am 24 yrs old.

Me: Okay then I am sorry bhuti Qiniso. (Smiling)

Qini: It’s Okay sisi Thandeka.

Dad: You can call her by her name.

Me: Why?

Dad: You’re young kkk

We all laughed and we continued eating. My dad, Bhuti Qiniso and I. After eating I washed the dishes with Bhuti Qiniso and I went to my room. I took a shower, and studied my books. But all I could think about was Bhuti Qiniso

Next morning I didn’t feel like waking up and I was on suspension so I took my phone and called Samkelo. It rang and he picked up.

Sam: Hello (sleepy voice)

Me: Hey it’s Thandeka.

Sam:(yawning) Hey bbe how are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Sam: I am also fine. Thanks for calling hey. How is your body?

Me: It’s better and yours?

Sam: Mine is painful serious. I will just sleep the whole day and I won’t wake up I tell you.

Me: (laughing) But they did beat us yoh!

Sam: Very hard that I even cried. I didn’t think I was going to cry but I couldn’t hold it.

Me: Eish sorry.

Sam: No I should say sorry because I put you through all this and you didn’t deserve it.

Me: it’s okay what is done is done.

Sam: Yah so I will see you within this two weeks?

Me: Yes I will make a plan but nobody must see us Samkelo otherwise I will loose my father.

Sam: Relax bbe nobody will.

Me: Okay we will talk later then have a nice day.

Sam: Thanks bbe you too have a nice day. I am in love with you MaDinangwe no girl has ever show me love like you did. I know I was a player but your love found a place in my heart. I love you.

Me: (smiling) I love you too Bbe. Bye then.

Sam: Good bye.

We hung up and I did my morning short prayer. I went to the bathroom and took a shower. I brushed my teeth and went back to my room. I lotion my body and wore comfortable clothes. I went to the kitchen, dad and Bhut'Qiniso were having breakfast. I joined them.

Me: Morning Dad and Bhut'Qiniso

Them: Morning.

Qiniso smiled and looked down. I did the same, it was wired because I was kind of in love with him but I had to call him Bhut'Qiniso. I had thought long and hard about being in a relationship with him. Well since everyone was against my relationship with Samkelo at least I could use some back up just in case things don't work out with him and I. We had breakfast and dad had to go to work. He said he was going to come back late. So we were alone with Qiniso. Around my dad he was bhuti Qiniso and around me alone he was going to be Qiniso or my love maybe that was the risk I was willing to take.

Qini: So uryt sisi Thandeka?

Me:(laughing) oh so I am no longer Mrs Qwabe?

Qini: Really? You are Mrs Qwabe but I was just keeping the formalities.

Me: Slow down. I was just asking.

Qini:(sad) Oh okay.

Me: (looking down) But I love you though.

Qini: Thandeka?? Did you hear yourself.

Me: Eeh I think I did. (Smiling)

Qini: Oh Lord! You can still answer my prayers. I believe God you're really there! Yoh!

Me: (laughing) Seriously Qiniso?

Qini: No bbe I am happy. I am just over the moon. I thought maybe you won't give me a chance because of my status of life. I mean I am your driver.

Me: Come on love knows no occupation.

Qini: wow!

He stood up and hugged my shoulders since I was sitting on the chair. He kissed my cheek I giggled.

Qini: I wish I can kiss you but it would be disrespectful to do it under your father's roof.

Me: Yeah hey but we are already taking a gamble. But I am not saying kiss me.

He laughed and sat down. We had breakfast while looking at each other a little.

After breakfast we washed the dishes and we cleaned the house. We told Aunt Maud to sit back and relax. We played some soft music and cleaned the whole house. Aunt Maud was at our service. We made tea and biscuits for her and she sat on the lounge. She watched us cleaning up the house and she couldn't help but smile. After cleaning the house we did the laundry. She asked to leave because there was nothing left for her to do for the day. We had no problem at all. So she left and we were all alone in the house. We went outside for a swim. It was so nice and lovely. We were still in the water and Qiniso came closer to me. He held my waist.

Qini: I love you Thandeka and you don't know how happy I am to have you in my life.

Me: I love you too my love.

He smiled and held my chin up and kissed me slowly. I responded and I wrapped my arms around his neck. We kissed passionately and I could feel his heart racing against my breasts. He was taller than me. My heart was also racing and I felt my blood getting warm. We broke the kiss after some time. He gave me a hug and kissed my forehead.

Qini: Now I can concentrate on my studies. And having a lot of fantasies.

Me: You're studying?

Qini: Yeah UNISA.

Me: That's nice. Let's go back inside the house. I am tired of swimming and I want to study after taking a shower.

Qini: You don't want to take a shower with me.

Me:(laughing) No I don't.

Qini: Okay Let's go then I will also study my books.

I smiled, he picked me up and walked with me inside the house. He placed me down in front of my doorstep, I pulled his face close to me and I kissed his cheek. He smiled and headed to his room. Damn I was happy. The guy made me blush more than five times per day and he was just sweet. I took a shower and went back to my room. I lotioned and wore my simple dress. I took my books and studied. I text Lizeka my new number. I told her that I was going to come to her after school and get some work. She replied saying it's Okay.

Later I fixed myself up and went to Qiniso's room and I knocked.

Qini: Come in.

I went through and he was studying seriously. I stood by the door and looked at him. He lifted his head up after a little while.

Qini: Sorry bbe. Come in don't stand there.

Me: Actually I wanted you to drive me to school but I can drive myself because you're busy.

Qini: (getting up) Don't be silly. You want to cause an accident then your father will blame me for it.

I looked at him as he wore his t-shirts and sneakers. We walked to dad's car and he drove straight to school. The school was already out. Lizeka came to the car and I opened the backseat door for her.

Lizzy: Hey guys.

Us: Hi.

Lizzy: Thandeka there is a lot of paper work here for today and two assignments. My bus will come anytime what will you do.

Me: Eish.

Qini: Bbe why-

Lizzy: (looking at us) Bbe??

Me:(clearing throat) Lizzy please give him a chance to speak.

Qini: oh I was saying why don't we go to a near by internet cafe and do some copies. Then we can drive her home since your dad will come back late.

Me: That's a good idea. You're the best you know.

I kissed him and he responded to the kiss immediately. Lizeka cleared her throat. We broke the kiss.

Lizzy: I am still here you know.

Me: Sorry my friend.

Qiniso chuckled and started the car. I could sense that Lizeka wanted me to tell her already but I didn't.

We drove to the nearest cafe and we all stepped out of the car. We went inside, did the copies and drove to Eskhawini. Along the way were just talking about general things.

Lizzy: No guys tell me already.

Us: What?

Lizzy: You two, what's going on. I want to know.

Me: Okay we are dating.

Qini: Actually we are not dating but we're in a relationship.

Lizzy: Wow! I am happy for you two. At least I don't have to worry about her getting heartaches through that Samkelo player.

I looked at her in disbelief.

Lizzy: What? He's bad news Thandeka and you know it. I am just glad that you got the

message and left his sorry ass.

Me: Who said I left him?

Lizzy: Woh! You're still dating him.

Me: Yes I love him.

Qini: Was that even necessary for you to say it in my presence Thandeka.

Me: What? That I love Samkelo? That's not a secret nje and you know it.

Lizzy: At least show some respect don't rub it on his face Thandeka.

Me: Oh.

Qiniso clicked his tongue and concentrated on the road. Lizeka directed him to her hood. We arrived by her house. She stepped out and said goodbye to Qiniso only. She went inside the house and Qiniso drove back to Richards bay. The drive was silent.

We arrived at home and I stepped out of the car. I went inside the house and I went to my room. I took a shower. I lotioned and wore my pyjamas. I went to the kitchen and started cooking. Qiniso was sitting by the counter eating a sandwich. I didn't say anything to him and he did the same. Dad arrived by 8pm. I was done with cooking so I went to dish up for everyone. Qiniso was on his room. Dad joined me as I was already eating.

Dad: Where is Qiniso?

Me: He is inside his room.

Dad: Why isn't he eating?

Me: I don't know dad.

Dad: Did you call him?

Me: No I didn't.

Dad: Then go and call him.

Me: But tata-

Dad: Just go Thandeka.

I nodded and dragged myself to his bedroom door. I knocked.

Qini: Come in.

Me: Food is ready Qiniso.

Qini: I am no longer bhuti Qiniso now?

Me: Oh sorry Bhuti Qiniso.

I walked away irritated by his behavior and I continued with my meal. He came and joined dad and I. They greeted each other and we ate in silence. After eating dad went to sleep and I sat behind by the lounge and watched TV. I was watching Jackie Chan in rush hour.

Qiniso came to the lounge and joined me.

Qini: Why ain't you studying. Your friend gave you a lot of paperwork and assignments.

Me: I will study on my own time.

Qini: When will be that ti-

Me: What is your problem Qiniso?

Qini: My problem? I was just being a concern a citizen showing care so I have problem if I show some care?

Me: Mxm please ngehle man!

Qini: I don't understand you Thandeka sometimes.

I stood up and went to the kitchen. He followed me and I drank water.

Qini: Can I talk to you outside. I don't want to risk your dad hearing our conversation.

I nodded and followed him outside. We went to the chairs and table by the pool.

Me: Talk then before-

I couldn't finish the sentence. He grabbed me and kissed me. I was surprised but I finally gave in and kissed him back. I wrapped my hands around his neck and he put me on top of the table. He went down on my neck I let out soft moans. His hand moved inside my pyjamas

pants. He fingered me and I was on a different world. I was feeling what he was doing to me. His other hand played with my titts giving my private island more power to release juices. He slide my pants down and opened my legs wide. He went down on me and used his tongue. I controlled my moans because I didn't want dad to wake up. I came and he kissed my lips again. We broke the kiss and he looked at me his eyes had a lazy look.

Qini: Now go and study my love.

Me: I won't do anything to you?. But I don't know how to do it.

Qini: I will teach you some day. But you won't do anything to me now. Today was about you feeling the pleasure from me.

Me:(giggles) Thank you. It was perfect. I love you and I am sorry for what happened earlier today.

Qini: It's Okay as long as you repeat it. And I love you too my love.

Me: I promise I won't.

He smiled and kissed me once more. He hugged me and we went back to the house. I went to my room with a huge smile on my face. I was in love with Qiniso. I took my books, went to dad's computer and did my assignments as I was instructed by Qiniso.

The week went by and it was already the second week. Friday morning I woke up and I did the routine. I wore light blue jeans, a white shirt, put on a loose brown coat, a brown scarf and brown ankle boots. The weather was a little bit cold. And I joined the family for breakfast. Qiniso had a test that day and dad had work as usual. So as soon as they left I took my light brown hand bag took a taxi that took me to the rank where I took a taxi to Mzingazi. I was visiting Samkelo that day. I arrived by his crib and knocked he opened the door. He smiled at me and gave me a hug.

Sam: How are you bbe?

Me: I am fine and you?

Sam: I am fine now that you're here. And you look beautiful. The outfit is on point.

Me: Thank you.

I smiled and we went to his room. We sat on the bed and he was playing music on his laptop. It was dark on the screen facing the bed side.

Me: Can you please change the position of your laptop.

Sam: Why?

Me: I don't want it to face my position.

Sam: You think I will make a video?

Me: I don't know.

I stood up and went to his laptop. He quickly stood up and stopped me from touching it.

Me: And then?

Sam: I will do it myself.

Me: No there is a song I want to play.

Sam: I will play it for you.

Me: No I have my own hands.

Sam: Stop being stubborn Thandeka.

Me: Okay. Do it then but I am not shifting here.

Sam: Bbe let's stop this.

Me: You were going to make a video of me Samkelo? How could you?

Sam: It's not like that Thandeka.

I touched his laptop, and undimmed it. It was on a video mode. I looked at him with tears and I took my hand bag.

Sam: Thandeka please don't leave.

Me: Fuck you leave me alone. It's obvious that when you see me. You see the rest of the hoes that you fuck and dump. Nxx!

Sam: (holding my hand) I am sorry Thandeka.

Me: Leave me alone you bastard!

I yanked my hand out of his hand. I walked out of his room and he followed me. I ran to the main door and unlocked it. I walked out running away. He ran after me. I ran faster but I got tired. I was crying. I swear at him telling him not to come near me and he listened. I went to take a taxi. I went grab a pizza by the mall and went home. I sat on my room. Ate the pizza and cried..

It was hard for me to believe that Samkelo was going to tape me, surely I was going to be the talk of the town. I was still crying there was a knock on the door. I didn't want to talk because I didn't trust my voice. I had spent hours crying.

Qini: Thandeka can I come in?

Me:.....(silent)

Qini: Thandeka I know that you're inside.

I didn't say anything still but he invited himself in. I quickly covered my face with my blanket. I didn't want him to see me.

Qini: Why were you ignoring me?

Me: I had earphones plugged in. (Talking under my blanket)

Qini: Oh really? Are you crying?

Me: What? Me crying? No.

Qini: I can hear your voice Thandeka. What happened?

Me: Can I sleep Qiniso please I am tired.

Qini: Tired from doing what exactly?

Me: Qiniso please leave my room I don't want to talk please leave!

I was shouting under my blanket. He stood up and headed to the door I suppose. I felt bad.

Me: Qiniso bbe don't leave. (I removed blankets)

Qini: (looking at me) What do you want from me Thandeka just tell me?

Me:(wiping my tears) please close the door and lock it.

He locked the door, and came to me. I told him to take off his shoes and he did. I opened space for him on my bed and he sat with me. I rested my head on his shoulder.

Qini: What is wrong my love? What is bothering you?

Me: I was just being emotional over my thoughts about the past. (I lied)

Qini: (holding me tight) I am sorry bbe. Don't stress yourself too much okay my love?

Me: I will try muntu wami.

My phone vibrated under my pillow, I took it and looked at the screen. Samkelo was calling. I put it aside and didn't answer.

Qini: You won't answer that?

Me: No. I am with my best boyfriend so why must I answer his phone call?

Qini: I like, I like Mrs Qwabe.

Me: (giggles) Yes Mr Qwabe wami.

I looked at him and we kissed each other. Under my father's roof? Yes! I wasn't scared if I was going to get caught or what. I just wanted to have the moment with Qiniso. He kissed me and his hand was caressing on my thighs. I got on top of him and he held my waist. I was getting wet as he took off my pyjamas top and played with my titts. He kissed my neck and I pressed my lips together avoiding to moan. His lips lingered longer on my neck. I unbuttoned his shirt and took it off. And moved my hands around his abs. I used my nails just to give him the ticklish feeling. He took off my short pyjamas pants and his hand went inside my panties. As his finger approached my vagina there was on the door. "Shit!" We both said that on the same time.

Dad: Thandeka? (Knocking)

Me:(whispered) Wear your shirt now!

He quickly wore his shirt and I wore my pyjamas top.

Me: (shouting in a panic) Dad?

Dad: Why is your door locked?

Me: Eeh I was taking a nap I didn't want to be disturbed. (Whispering) Go out through the window bbe please.

Qini: Shit? (He went to the window. I assisted him)

Dad: Where is Qiniso?

Me: Bhuti Qiniso? Oh the last time I saw him he was sitting by the pool.

Dad: Okay I needed him.

Me: Okay daddy check him there then.

Dad: Okay my angel. (He walked away)

(Qiniso was outside my window and I whispered to him) Me: Go sit by the pool now. I love you.

Qini: I love you too Mrs Qwabe. (Baby kiss)

He quickly ran off before my dad could see him. I sighed and threw myself on top my bed. I laughed really hard at what just happened. My phone interrupted me by vibrating. I took and it was Samkelo. I answered.

Me: Yini?

Sam: Oh so that's the new way of answering?

Me: What do you want?

Sam: Thandeka please give me a chance to explain myself bbe. I am sorry.

Qini: (knocking) Thandeka we're going out with your dad please be ready just now.

Me: (shouting) Okay Bhuti Qiniso. He laughed and walked away.

Me: I have to go. I will talk to you later.

Sam: Okay. I love you.

Me: Okay.

I hung up the call. And I went to my room and took a quick shower, lotion quickly and wore a simple dress with sandals. I combed my hair loose and put on a pink lipstick. I fixed my bed and walked out. The guys were waiting for me on the lounge.

Me: So where are we going boys?

They laughed and stood up. Dad kissed my cheek.

Dad: You look beautiful my Princess.

Me: Thank you my old man.

Dad: (laughing) Let's go then Angel.

I giggled and we walked out. Dad was driving so Qiniso and I took the backseat. He opened the door for, I smiled and hopped in.

Me: Thank you bhuti Qiniso.

Qiniso: (smiling) No problem Thandeka.

I smiled and dad drove off. Along the way dad was talking about boring stuff from his childhood. Qiniso held my hand and I looked at him with a smile.

We finally arrived in the mall and we walked inside. Dad held my hand as we were walking.

Me: Dad?? (Trying to free my hand)

Dad: I want this boys to see that you're taken by me. And they mustn't try their luck on you.

Qiniso and I laughed out loud at what he said.

Me: I am sure they can see dad.

Dad: They better because I will kill any boy who will touch my Princess.

I giggled and looked at Qiniso who was smiling. We decided on the restaurant and we ordered our food. The order arrived and we ate. Qiniso was stealing a look here and there. I couldn't help but smile. After eating, dad paid and we went back home. I said my goodbyes

to the boys and went to my room. I wore my pyjamas and went inside my bed covers. I took my phone and chat with Qiniso until I fell asleep.

Monday morning was my day to go back to school I haven't spoken to Samkelo because I was ignoring his calls, the whole previous day. I went to the bathroom did the daily routine and as I was wearing my school uniform, I noticed that I have strong love bites on my neck (I had a moment of pleasure with Qiniso the previous day outside the house at night but we were not having sex). I was kind of pissed because I had to wear a scarf and it was sunny outside. Even the shirt collar couldn't hide them. I put on the scarf, packed my books for the day and my assignments. I went to the kitchen to join the family for breakfast.

Me: Morning.

Them: Morning.

Dad: I hope you have learnt your lesson, you will stay out of trouble and that boy.

Me:(looking down) Yes dad.

Dad: Good. Why are you wearing a scarf because it's hot outside?

Qini:(laughing) I was about to ask that too.

Me: I just felt like it that's all. (Dad shook his head)

I looked at Qiniso who was laughing and I was quite pissed because he was the reason I wore that scarf. We had breakfast, dad left for work. Qiniso and I went to the car. Before starting the car, he started the conversation.

Qini: So how are you my love?

Me: mxm you were laughing at me just now and you are the one who placed love bites on my neck

Qini: I am sorry Mrs Qwabe wami(I smiled) I am sad because you're going back to school meaning I will be bored.

Me: (laughing) Oh so you were happy to have me around you not going to school?

Qini: I was happy but sad.

Me: Oh my baby. I am sorry that mama has to leave you Okay. Come to me my chocolate bar.

He laughed and came close to me. He held my neck and we kissed each other passionately. I didn't want to let go but I had to. We broke the kiss and he kissed my forehead. I smiled and he started the engine. We arrived by the school but he didn't park near the school gate but a little bit far from the gate.

Me: And then? ( I gave him the look)

Qini: I want to do this.

He grabbed me by my scarf and he kissed me. We kissed for the longest time until the first warning morning assembly bell rang. We broke the kiss and looked at each other. His eyes were so tiny and I smiled at him.

Qini: Eish goodbye then Mrs Qwabe I will miss you

Me: I will miss you too Mr Qwabe.

We baby kissed, I took my bag and ran inside the school gate. I looked back and Qiniso watching me, I smiled and disappeared from his sight.

I went to my class and Miss Zungu was already in class marking the register. I walked in and went to sit down on my sit. Miss Zungu looked at me.

MissZ: Morning Princess of the school. (The class laughed and I didn't say anything)

MissZ: I am talking to you Thandeka Dhlomo

Me: Oh I didn't know that I was the Princess of the school but anyway morning.

MissZ: You're chicky neh. I guess Ndunakazi has finally get under your pants.

Class: Woohh!

Me: If he did is it any of your business?

Class: Weeeh! Wooh!

MissZ: He will dump you like a hot potato my dear, don't say I didn't warn you.

Me: It's better because he'll be dumping me not you. I guess

Class: Haa Haa Haa

She clicked her tongue and came towards my direction. I knew she wanted to slap me but I stood up immediately.

Me: You want to slap me right because that's what you do best?

Class: Weeee!

MissZ:(shouting) Shut up all of you! Stand up and go to assembly.

She walked away, I took my assignments with me and walked out with others. We went to assembly and after assembly I went to submit my assignments. The first period began.

During break time I was with Lizeka.

Me: Last time I spoke to you, you were angry at me

Lizzy: What you did was unacceptable.

Me: I know and I am sorry about it.

Lizzy: Okay. Yoh! You were pissed this morning.

Me: No. I know I was disrespectful but serious it getting on my nerves now how this whole Samkelo thing and the way it being handled. Miss Zungu is such a pain in an ass. So I just lost my cool.

Lizzy: Ncoah shame. So why are you wearing a scarf vele?

Me:(smiling) I am hiding something.

She snatched it out of my neck and she saw the love bites. She laughed.

Me: Bring it back Lizeka.

Lizzy:(laughing) Yoh! My friend. This is Qiniso's work?

Me: Yes. Lizzy please bring it back.

Lizzy: No!

She stood up and I ran after her. She was laughing and others were looking at us. I saw Samkelo coming towards us and I quickly ran inside the toilet. I was breathing heavily. Lizzy came and gave me my scarf. I put it back on.

We went back to our class and the Bell rang. Our Accounting class began by Mrs Dlamini. I was doing science but accounting was also one of my subject that I chose.

MrsD: Thandeka Dhlomo dear was it cold during your break at home? (The class laughed)

Me: No why?

MrsD: Why are you wearing a scarf?

Me: Oh where I was spending my holidays from. It was snowing so that's why I am wearing the scarf.

MrsD: But it's not snowing now.

Me: But I still have the ice within me. I catch the cold you know.

MrsD: Oh okay. Let's take out accounting text books.

We did and she pointed me to do the corrections on the board. I didn't know about the homework but I knew how to do the task. I stood up and went to the board and did it.

After school, I packed my books and we went to our extra class. After the extra class, I took my bags and hugged Lizzy. She left while I went to the toilet. I did my business and walked to the gate. Samkelo was waiting for me. Qiniso wasn't around

Sam: Can I talk to you Thandeka.

Me: I thought you were told not to talk to me during school hours or around the school.

He didn't say anything but he grabbed me by my arm and we walked away from the school gate. I saw Qiniso pulling over.

Me: My ride is hear Samkelo let me go please.

The weather was wind that time and my scarf fell down. He looked at my neck and his face

changed

Sam: Who did this to you? When and where?

Me: Leave me alone. I want to go.

Sam: I am still talking to you man! Thandeka answer my question!

Me: I don't report to you. And Qiniso will tell my dad about this Samkelo.

Sam: He must tell him about this marks on your neck first and let me make him tell him something.

He grabbed me by neck and shoved his lips on my lips. I tried fighting it but as always he was strong against me. I heard the car speeding off on high speed and I opened my eyes. I pushed him away but he didn't stop kissing me. Mxm! I responded ke nami. Hawu kwakumele ngenzenjani vele? We kissed and kissed until he was calm and we broke the kiss. And he looked at me.

Me: Why did you do that?

Sam: I was trying to calm down because I didn't want to slap you.

I didn't say anything but I looked around and Qiniso was gone. He left me??*ii*?

I looked at Samkelo who was also looking at me.

Me: Do you realize that Qiniso left me behind?

Sam: Why did he do that? It's his job to drive you home. He should have waited for you. Tell your father maybe you can get another driver.

Me: You're unbelievable you know. Nx!

I took my scarf as it was on the ground. I removed the dust away and put it back on my neck.

Sam: Who did that to you Thandeka?

Me: Nobody. It's just a mosquito bites can you let go of my arm.

Sam: You think I am a fool neh? Even malaria can never give you such bites.

Me: I guess some of us move on too fast from betrayal and heart breaks.

Sam: I said I am sorry.

Me: can I go home Samkelo.

Sam: Thandeka what must I do to show you that I love you?

Me: Stop being a jerk. Stop being a player!

Sam: I am no longer a player Thandeka.

Me: Mxm! Let me go Samkelo please I am begging you now.

Sam: Kiss me first.

Me: Excuse me?

Sam: You heard me.

I baby kissed him. But he didn't let go of my arm.

Me: And then?

Sam: That was not the kind of a kiss I wanted.

I kissed him intensely and he responded to it immediately. I broke the kiss and he let go of my arm. He gave me a hug and told me he loves me. I nodded, he gave me a R200 note it was the only money he had, I thanked him and we went our separate ways.

I took a taxi and went home. I walked inside the house. Qiniso was on the lounge. He was listening to hip hop music. His eyes were closed, I switched off the music and he looked at me.

Qini: (calm tone) I was listening to that.

Me: I can see that. Why did you leave me behind Qiniso?

Qini: I won't answer that stupid question. Please play my song there. You're disturbing me.

Me: I won't! I am still talking to you klk.

Qini: Mxm.

Me: (shouting) Kanti yini inkinga yakho wena?(what is your problem?)

Qini: Hheyi wena Thandeka ngimdala kabi mina ukuthi ungangibiza ngowena. Ungaphinde unghithise syezwana? (I am older than you that you can shout at me. Do you hear me?)

Me: So now you know that you're old?

Qini: Thandeka don't push me. Firstly you kiss your boyfriend in front of me and secondly you shout at me. Mind yourself Thandeka I am warning you!

Me: Uzongenzani Qiniso? Uzongenzani!(what will you do Qiniso? What will you do?)

Dad:(from the door) Thandeka!!!! \*I turned back\*

Me: Dad?

Dad: Why are you shouting at Qiniso and calling him by his name. What did I say to you?

Me: Bendicaphukile tata uxolo. (I was angry dad I am sorry)

Dad: Why are you shouting at him?

Me: He left me behind at school dad. I took a taxi back and I didn't have money with me.

Qini: Kutheni ungamxeleli utata wakho ukuba why I left you behind? (Why don't you tell your dad, why I left you behind?)

Me: So you can speak Xhosa now?

Qini: Don't change the subject here. And yes I can because my mom was Xhosa.

Dad: Thandeka I am waiting?

Me: I don't know why he left me. How should I know how his mind works.

Dad: Qiniso please just give her one, just one strong slap so that she can know that you're older than her.

Qini: No it's Okay I won't beat her. I understand that this is her father's house and I guess she thinks I don't deserve her respect. After all I am just her stupid driver.

Me: Zange ndithi usisdenge mna (I never said you're stupid)

Dad: Do you see how you're making Qiniso feel? You're making him feel unwelcome! Just because he is not your biological brother that doesn't mean you should disrespect him.

I looked down and didn't say anything.

Dad: What did she do Qiniso?

Qini: She was busy kissing her boyfriend while I was waiting for her. And she saw the car but she pretended like she didn't see it.

Dad: WHAT??? THANDEKA???

Me: It's not like that dad.

Dad: Qiniso go to your room. Under the bed there is a sjambok.

Qini: But don't beat her-

Dad: just do as I say now!

Qiniso looked at me, tears streamed down on my cheeks and dad sat on the couch taking off his shirt. I was scared as hell. I attempted to run away but he quickly grabbed me before I reach the door.

Qiniso came back and gave it to him. Dad took my backpack and put it down. He started whipping me with a sjambok. I cried and begged him to stop but he didn't stop. He continued beating me until he had enough. My body was painful.

Dad: Leave my house now!

Me: (crying) Where must I go dad?

Dad: Don't ask me just leave my house now!

Qini: But it's dark outside. It's not safe out there.

Me: Mxm as if you care.

Dad: You see? You think you're big enough now right? Leave my house now Thandeka!

I sniffed, I took my backpack and limped to the door. I looked at Qiniso with tears in my eyes.

Me: I hope you're happy now right?

He looked down, I opened the door and walked out of my father's house using a small gate. I

didn't know where to go and who to call. I walked on the street crying. I thought about calling Samkelo. I took out my phone and dialed his number. He picked up immediately.  
Me: (crying) Dad threw me out of the house Samkelo I am scared. I don't know where to go. I am wondering on the street.

Sam: (panicking) Bbe where are you right now?

Me: I am on the street around my house.

Sam: I will talk to mom now. I will come and get you just now.

Me:(crying) Please I am scared-

Voice: Bitch get in the car now!

Me: (wailing) Samkelo help me please. They will kidnap me.

Sam: Thand-

I couldn't hear what he wanted to say because the guy took the phone away from me and threw it on the ground. He stepped his feet on it, he picked me up and walked with me to the car with Five guys.

Guy1: Mmm some fresh meat. I hope she is a virgin because I need her to cure this HIV virus I have.

I just cried in silence, the others said "yah" and he drove off...

Guy1: Gents we must go inside the mall and buy the stuff that we will use on the mission tonight.

Guy2: What about our Beyonce here?

Guy1: Mthunzi keep an eye on her.

Mthunzi: Okay boss.

The four of them left the car. They didn't lock it. So I was left with Mthunzi guy. I had to take my chances so that I can get out of that car. So I decided to play it cool. And stopped crying.

Me: You know Mthunzi love, I am not even a virgin I don't know how he thinks I can cure him.

Mthu: But you're fresh tjo.

Me: Do you want to have a test first before he does. (Seductively)

Mthu: (leaking his lower lip) Please bbe girl.

I giggled and sat on top of him. He wasn't really that bad. I kissed him and he responded fast. I moved my hands to his penis as he was squeezing my ass. I squeezed the life out of his balls and he let go of everything and cried out of pain. I quickly grabbed my backpack and hit him with it while he was holding his balls. I opened the door and ran for my life. I went to the taxi rank.

It was dark but I knew that it was still early just that in winter the sun goes down early. I saw the rank manager.

Me: Can I get a taxi to Engwelezane township?

RankM: Okay come. I think you will get the last one.

I nodded and looked around. There was no sign of anyone following me. I got inside the taxi, a few people came and it was full. The driver started the engine. Luckily Samkelo had given me money so I used it to pay. With an hour we were at Ngwelezane. I took a local taxi to my granny's house. And I called for Nokuphila my cousin because the gate was locked. My grandmother came to the gate.

Gogo: Thandeka please leave! You're not welcome here!

Me: Makhulu?? (Shocked)

Gogo: Yes Mfaniseni told me all the dirt things you do and he told me that when you come here. I must not let you in.

Me: please let me sleep here. I will leave first thing in the morning.

Gogo: No!

She left me standing by the gate. I walked away and wait for the local taxi back to the rank. I wasn't crying anymore. My tears bank were dry. The taxi took forever to come but it finally came. I went inside the taxi and arrived by the rank and looked around.

I saw a cell c container it was still opened and I went inside and I made a phone call. I called Samkelo. He picked up immediately.

Sam:(sniffing) Hello.

Me: Samkelo it's Thandeka.

Sam: (panicking) Thandeka bbe where are you? (Crying) "give me the phone Samkelo" voice from the background. I heard shuffling sounds.

Voice: Thandeka sisi where are you? It's Samkelo's mother. We are on the streets looking for you.

Me: I am at Engwelezane township mama. At the main taxi rank.

Sam's mom: Yoh! I know the place. Look we will drive straight to Engwelezane with Samkelo. Just wait for us sisi.

Me: I am scared where should I wait.

Sam's mom: By the street vendors shelter. The one near the post box.

Me: Okay thanks mama.

Sam's mom: It's Okay baby. \*I hung up and paid\*

I looked around and by the post box there were shelters that are used by street vendors. I looked around making sure that nobody see me and I went inside the shelter and sat on the seat provided but hiding my head under the table. It wasn't a see through table. I sat there until I was sleepy but I blinked the sleepiness away. I heard voices whispering. "Thandeka" I slowly raised my head and it was Samkelo and his mom. I quickly stood up, Samkelo saw me and he ran towards me. We hugged each other for thee longest time and we broke the hug. I hugged his mom.

Me: Thank you for coming.

Sam: I am glad that you're safe. They didn't do anything to you? (His eyes were red)

Me: They almost did but I managed to get away.

Sam's mom: Okay Let's go back here home. It's late now.

We nodded and followed her to the car. I sat at the back with Samkelo. I rested my head on his shoulder and he held me tight as I cried thinking about what almost happened. I felt safe under Samkelo's arms. I cried until I fell asleep on him. They woke me up when we arrived by the house. We went inside the house. His sisters were asleep

Sam's mom: Samkelo show her the bathroom and wash her uniform for her.

Sam: Okay mom.

I followed him to the bathroom and I took off my uniform and gave it to him. He gave me the face cloth. I took it and took a bath. After I bathing I drained the water and washed the tub. I dried my body. I was told to use Sam's mom toiletries. I went to her room, I lotion and wore pyjamas provided.

I joined them on the lounge. Samkelo stood up and went to get food for me. He gave me the food

Me: Thanks. \*I ate\*

Sam's mom: You will sleep with me Thandeka.

Sam: Hawu mama but she's my girlfriend nje.

Sam's mom: No, there's no kis my kilfrieng nje here. I rescued her.

Sam: But I was there too. I am her super man.

Sam's mom: Wait then super man. I want to sleep with her maybe get to know her because it's seems like she's really the special someone to you. You have never go that mad for any girl my boy. And maybe I can look into your relationship differently.

Sam: But mom-

Sam's mom: No. You will sleep with me baby right

Me: Yes I will mama. (Smiling)

Sam: I knew it. \*we laughed\* Good night then my sunflower. (He kissed my cheek)

Me: Good night super man.

He smiled and stood up. He kissed his mom's cheek. And headed to his room's direction.

Sam's mom: You don't even tell her that you love her Samkelo.

Sam: I was scared \*I laughed\* you don't mind mama? (She smiled and shook her head)

Sam: I love you MaDinangwe.

Me: I love you too Ndunakazi.

He smiled and left. His mom smiled too. After eating I was given a toothbrush and toothpaste. I brushed my teeth, joined her to bed and we talked, talked and talked until we were sleepy. We prayed and fell asleep immediately..

In the morning I was woken up by Samkelo. My body was painful as hell. I tried opening my eyes and looked at him.

Sam: Morning dear.

Me: Morning. Where is your mother?

Sam: Really? Thandeka is that the first thing you can ask when you see my face.

Me:(smiling) sorry for that. How did you sleep then Ndunakazi wami?

Sam: I had nightmares knowing that I have my girlfriend under the same roof but she's not sleeping with me. And you?

Me: I had what they call the best night. I was sleeping with a sweet woman ever.

Sam: I am not sweet? (Sad face)

Me: Hhayi Samkelo stop competing with your mom. Your sweetness is restricted.

Sam: I promise I will stop being a bastard and I won't restrict my sweetness for you starting now.

I giggled and he picked me up. He walked with me to the bathroom and he put me down. I took off my clothes and I went inside the bathtub.

Sam: Mom leaves early for work with my little sisters. You will see them when they come back bbe okay?

Me: Okay muntu wami.

Sam: For now I will prepare breakfast for us.

Me: Thanks.

we baby kissed and he left. I continued with my bath. I had marks on my body and they were painful. I managed to bath and brushed my teeth. I went back to Sam's mom room to lotion and my uniform was already on top of the bed. It was ironed. I wore it and tied up my hair. The bed was already made and windows opened. I wasn't limping but I felt pain. I joined Samkelo for breakfast, he gave me painkillers and told me to keep them just in case I will need them at school. He went to his room and wore his uniform. I washed the dishes and cleaned the kitchen. He came back with my backpack it was clean with no dust and the scarf since the love bites were still visible. I put the scarf on and took my backpack. We left off to take a taxi to school.

We arrived at school and he walked me to my class. He gave me a hug and kissed my cheek.

Sam: Have a good day then I love you.

Me: Thanks you too. And love you too.

He nodded and went to his class. I walked inside mine and Lizeka was impatiently waiting for me.

Lizzy: Yoh! Woman we were worried about you!

Me: "WE"?? \*sitting down\*

Lizzy: Duh? Yes me and Qiniso.

Me: Oh?

Lizzy: Why didn't you come to my house instead of running to Samkelo?

Me: Really? You gonna ask me those questions. Instead of asking what happened maybe? Because all you care about is me being away from Samkelo?

Lizzy: It's not like that but I thought you will come to my house.

Me: Sorry then I didn't think about it. Well I went to my granny's place but she chased me out. Then I called Samkelo on a public phone. And I was supposed to call him because he is the one who put me in this position after all.

Lizzy: I am sorry my friend. Qiniso called me crying he was seriously worried about you.

Me: If he was worried about me. He was supposed to follow me. And maybe I wouldn't be closed to being gang raped. And by the way he's not the only one who was crying.

Lizzy: He tried following you. But he said your dad told him not to.

Me: It's Okay dear. I don't mind him not following me after all I put myself in this position in his eyes but if he cared enough he wasn't supposed to leave me yesterday because even a child I think could've saw that I was fighting with Samkelo. I don't blame him but I blame myself for being stupid.

Lizzy: I am sorry. How do you feel.

Me: I am fine my friend.

She nodded, I could see that she wanted to hug me but she was unsure so I let her be. Miss Zungu came in and marked the register. And our first period began.

During break time Samkelo came inside my class. They all looked at him and he didn't care at all.

Me: Do you want them to give you a no return?

Sam: Come bbe please. \*I stood up with my bag\*

Me: I will be back Lizzy.

She nodded. Samkelo and I went out of class. We walked together to his class.

Sam: Sit here. I will go and buy lunch.

Me: Okay. \*he gave me his phone and left\*

Sbahle: If it's isn't the almighty Thandeka who has taken Samkelo away from me.

Me: Excuse me? I thought you were friends?

Sbahle: Yes we are friends. Special kind of friends.

Me: You mean with benefits?

Sbahle: You can call it however you want to call it but don't think you will win this game.

Sam is mine baby. I know he thinks he loves you. He's just blinded for a few weeks. He will come back to his "player" mode and he will be begging me for my pussy dear because you can't even give him one.

Me: Oh that's nice of you to give me that information sbahle. Thank you dear.

She clicked her tongue and left. I plugged in Sam's earphones and listened to his music collection on his phone. He came back and told me to follow him. I took my backpack and followed him. We found a spot and sat down. We ate together. Just talking about general stuff. I didn't ask him about Sbahle. I took the painkillers, Break was over. Samkelo walked me to my class, he gave me a hug and left. I went inside and our period began. We had an afternoon class. We attended it and afterwards Lizzy hugged me and left. I walked with Samkelo. I was expecting that if may Qiniso cared that much about me. He was going to be there after school but he wasn't so Samkelo and I took a taxi back to his house.

We arrived, I took off my uniform and wore his clothes. He washed both our uniforms while I was making something to eat for us. We ate together and cleaned the house. After cleaning we went to his room. We listened to music and I was on his arms. He was playing with my hair. I looked at him and smiled. He came close and kissed me. We kissed passionately and

when the kiss got heated up he broke it. And he looked at me.

Sam: You were my mission Thandeka but I have fallen in love with you in a way that I don't understand.

Me: I was your mission???

Sam: My friends and I, we don't love. We are all about eating the cake and leave. I once loved but she fucked my friend right under my nose. And she sent the video of that sex to me. So the mission for me was to take you down. I think you saw that I couldn't even tell you that I love you at the beginning. That's because the last time I used those words was when I was in love with that girl who slept with my friend and ever since I have never told a girl that I love her. Well we knew that you are virgin. All my friends has completed their mission to sleep with these girls, tape them and dump them. I am the only who didn't complete it and I am not going through with it because I love you Thandeka and believe me when I say that.

Me: (crying) How do I know that you're telling the truth. Maybe you're telling me all this because you want to get under my pants.

Sam: Our rule says if you don't complete the mission on given time or date. You have to abort the mission and you will be given another project. That's another girl. To assure you that I don't want to do that with you. I want to try something new and wait with you. Not to wait for you because waiting for you means I will be getting it somewhere else but waiting with you means I will also be abstaining from all sexual activities. If I feel weak I will be honest with you. I am willing to give you my love Thandeka. Something I never thought I can give to someone else after Sanelisiwe. Please bbe give me a chance.

Me: You won't break my heart.

Sam: Not intentionally.

Me: Okay I am giving us a chance please don't disappoint me and please prove all those people wrong.

Sam: I will try my best. Please don't disappoint me too then Thandeka.

Me: I will also try my best Sthandwa sami.

Sam: Ngiyakuthanda Thandeka. (I love you)

Me: Ngiyakuthanda nami Samkelo. (I love you too)

We kissed each other and we stood up. We went to the kitchen and I assisted him with cooking.

His mom and his siblings came back. The two girls ran to him and hugged him shouting "bhuti"

Sam: How are you?

Them: Fine and you?

Sam: Fine. Here is your older sister. She's been waiting to meet you.

They giggled and hugged me. I smiled.

Me: My name is Thandeka.

Girl1: My name is Simthande.

Girl2: My name Melokuhle.

Me: You look beautiful.

Them:(giggles) Thanks you too.

Me: Thank you.

They ran to their rooms. I hugged Samkelo's mother.

Sam's mom: Are you alright?

Me: Yes mom and you?

Sam's mom: I am fine bbe. Wear your school uniform then because we are going to your father's house tonight.

Me: Okay. As soon as it get dry I will wear it.

She nodded and left. Samkelo and I continued with cooking. After cooking we assisted the girls with their homework. And we had supper. I wore my uniform and I was ready to go. I went to Sam's room. He was doing his homework. I cleared my throat and he looked up.

Sam: You're leaving already?

Me: Yes I am leaving. I hope he will forgive me.

Sam: (standing up) You're his little angel. He will forgive you. Good luck with that and don't forget that I love you.

Me: Thank you. I won't forget that if you won't forget it too.

Sam: I promise I won't. Come closer then.

I took a step closer to him and we kissed each other. We shared a long passionate kiss and we hugged each other feeling our heart beats against our chests. We let go and he kissed my forehead.

Sam: There's something you have to take with you

Me: What's that.

He went to his drawers and took out a red covered little book written "The mission's code of conduct and ethics" he gave it to me.

Sam: This is our code of conduct book. But I won't need it anymore since I am no longer part of the group and missions.

Me: What should I do with it?

Sam: The rule says once a member has found love or has fallen in love. The cord connecting him to the group and the missions, it become broken. And the member must give the book to that girl he's committing himself to and the girl must burn the book. Then there will be a farewell party that will be done for me and you as my woman you must be there.

Me: Yoh! So when will that farewell party happen?

Sam: I will tell you, once it's organised. You must have a black outfit first and we will change to another red and white outfit. We have to buy a white dove, red and white candles for that day.

Me: Okay let me go then. You will update me about that ceremony then.

Sam: Okay. Good night. I will see you tomorrow.

Me: Thanks. Good night.

We kissed once more and hugged each other. I put the book inside my bag and we left with his mother heading to my dad's house.

Sam's mom: You will assure your dad then that nothing is going on between you and Samkelo.

Me: Okay.

Sam's mom: I hope you both won't disappoint me. I don't want to see you pregnant. I hope you're protecting yourselves?

Me: Eeeh don't worry mama. I am still a virgin.

Sam's mom: That's really nice. Please keep it that way maybe until you finish your matric.

Me: Yes mom.

Sam's mom: I will talk to him too about this because I won't forgive myself if you can be pregnant.

Me: Thanks.

She nodded. Within a few minutes we were by my father's house.

She buzzed the gate. And Qiniso answered.

Qini: Dhlomo residents?

Sam's mom: It's Samkelo's mother. I am here to talk to Thandeka's father.

Qini: Okay.

He let us through. We stepped out of the car and we knocked at the door. Qiniso opened the

door. He was surprised to see me but I quickly moved my eyes away from him. We went inside the house. Dad was on the lounge. He looked at me in a disgust manner. I just looked down. We sat down on the two seat couch.

Sam's mom: Sanibona (greetings)

Them: Yebo (greeting back)

Sam's mom: I am here to bring back Thandeka.

Dad: Why did she leave from the first place.

Sam's mom: I believe you chased her out of your house because of her behavior with my son. But you can't just throw out your daughter for that mistake she did. She's a teen. I believe she's bound to be attracted to boys.

Dad: You are here to tell me how to raise my daughter?

Sam's mom: No it's not like that but I was just making a point. Which I think it's true.

Dad: So you say it's alright when she's dating your son and kiss him on the street after they have been told to stop their nonsense?

Me: Dad I am sorry.

Dad: I am not talking to you.

Sam's mom: I know it's wrong but chasing her out won't solve anything. Where do you suggest she must stay?

Dad: Where that boyfriend she obeys stay.

Sam's mom: I wouldn't mind staying with her but in a right manner that's if my son marries her. And it's not like she's pregnant now.

Dad: But she will be. Because she bunk school for boys. She will be pregnant.

Sam's mom: I won't say anything further. Let me leave.

Dad: Leave with her because I will chase her out again! I don't want her here.

Me: Dad I am no longer dating Samkelo. Please forgive me.

Dad: You ran to him when I chased you out right?

Me: I went to grandma and she chased me out too. What was I supposed to do.

Dad: I don't know leave now Thandeka!

Me:(crying) They might as well rape me today and give me that HIV those bastard wanted to give me and I wish to die.

Qini: You were almost raped?

Me: Leave me alone wena!

Dad: You see the kind of disrespect she has?

Sam's mom:(crying) Are you really giving away your own daughter? Just like that? What do you think your wife would feel like if you chase her daughter out?

Dad: Don't! Don't involve my wife in this.

Sam's mom: (sniffing) Let's go Thandeka.

Me: I am going nowhere mama.

Dad: What?

Me: You heard me dad. I am going nowhere. This may be your house. But you made it my home. I didn't beg you to bring me in this world. It was your choice and my mother. Just because I did something wrong you want to chase me out. That won't happen. This is my home there is no other home I have beside this one. I am your child. I am your responsibility. I won't be a burden to other people while I have a father that will never happen. It's not like I opened my legs to Samkelo I didn't. I almost got gang rape and you don't care. It's my right to have a shelter provided by you as my parent and right now I am claiming it dad. I am going nowhere!

I kissed Samkelo's mom cheek and I ran to my room leaving my dad's mouth and eyes wide open. I locked the door threw myself on top of the bed and cried my lungs out.

I might have fallen asleep because I was woken up by a soft knock on my door. I rubbed my

eyes and went to open the door. It was my dad.

Dad: Can I come in.

Me: Yes.

I let him through and closed the door. We sat on the bed and he looked at me.

Dad: Are you alright? You don't need any counseling maybe?

Me: No I don't need counseling. I need my father to love me and expect mistakes from me not always expecting good things. I don't want to disappoint you and I am not planning on doing that but I am teen dad. I am not 13yrs anymore but I am 18yrs.

Dad: it's hard for me to accept that you're growing up and soon you will be leaving me and start your own family. To me you'll always be that little girl I want to protect from the world.

Me: But the other day you were not there dad when the world wanted to swallow me.

Dad: I know my baby. I am sorry I was just showing tough love but I didn't realize the danger.

Me: It's Okay tata. I am also sorry for disrespecting you my old man.

Dad: (laughing faintly) I am not an old man Thandeka (I giggled) come to me baby.

He opened his arms for me and gave me a hug. He gave me a heartwarming hug and I felt more safe on his arms. He didn't let go.

Dad: if you date again don't date that Ndunakazi boy. He is trouble. (I nodded) But the contract still stands and it rules don't forget it.

Me: I won't forget it. I love you tata wami.

Dad: I love you too ndodakazi yami.

Me: Can I sleep with you on your bed tonight?

Dad: Okay baby. Take a bath then and come sleep with your dad.

Me: (giggles) Thank you Sthandwa saMama.

He smiled and stood up. I went to take a shower with a huge smile on my face. I wore my pyjamas and went to sleep with my daddy..

The following morning I woke up dad was on the shower. I stood up and fixed the bed. I went to my room, I did a morning short prayer and I went to take a shower too. It was good to be home. I did all the necessities, I wore my uniform, packed my books and went to the kitchen for breakfast. Aunt Maud was setting up the table and Qiniso was helping her.

Me: Morning.

Them: Morning.

Maud: It's good to have you back Thandeka.

Me:(giggles) I also missed my bed too.

Maud: You didn't miss us.

Me: I did a little. (I laughed)

Maud: I hope you will stay away from Ndunakazi.

I didn't answer her I just laughed and walked away because I remembered a homework I didn't do for Accounting. I took my text books and journals books. I did my homework by the lounge. When I was done I joined the family for breakfast. Qiniso was busy stealing looks and I did the same when he wasn't looking.

Me: Dad. Can I have some few hundreds I want to do my hair.

Dad: Use your cards Thandeka.

Me: But dad I want to go to a saloon. I use cash there.

Dad: How much?

Me: R400

Dad: What? No R400 for your hair?

Me: And lunch dad.

Dad: You're going to make me bankrupt.

I smiled as he took out his wallet and gave me the money. I kissed his cheek and thank him. After breakfast he left.

Qiniso and I did the dishes in silence and we went to the car afterwards. He started the engine.

Qini: Are you alright?

Me: Yes I am fine and you?

Qini: I am not fine at all.

Me: Sorry. After school please take me to the saloon I want to do my hair.

Qini: Okay. So after what happened where do we stand?

Me: Where do we stand how? I don't think I understand.

Qini: I mean you and me.

Me: Oh I don't know.

Qini: But Thandeka I love you and you know that you put me on the hot spot that day by telling the truth first. You shouldn't have said I left you.

Me: Okay. You were supposed to lie ke wena.

Qini: Lie and say what?

Me: I don't know! Why did you leave me from the first place Qiniso?

Qini: I was angry Thandeka.

Me: Please unlock the car I want to leave.

Qini: So that's it. it's over like that between us?

Me: I didn't say anything about breaking up. Please let me go.

He unlocked the car and I stepped out of the car closing the door behind me. I went inside the school premises.

I arrived in my class and Lizeka was there already as usual. I sat down.

Me: morning Lizzy.

Lizzy: Morning Thandeka. Are you alright?

Me: Yes dear and you?

Lizzy: I am fine. Ndunakazi came in alone today and he was here looking for you.

Me: Oh okay. I went back home last night. Thanks to his mother who took me there.

Lizzy:(excited) Really? Wow! That's nice my friend. I am so happy. So how are things between you and Qiniso?

Me: I don't know and I don't understand.

Lizzy: So you're still with Ndunakazi?

Me: No he's just a friend now. (I lied)

Lizzy: That's better.

I faked a smile. Our class teacher came as usual and marked the register. Our day began.

During break time I was with Lizeka we were eating and Samkelo came to us walking alone.

Sam: Hey ladies?

Us: Hey.

Sam: Can I join you?

Lizzy: Where are your friends?

Sam: Uhhh I no longer have friends so I could use some new friends if you don't mind

Lizzy?

Me: What about me?

Sam:(laughing and winks) You know you don't mind MaDinangwe. (I blushed) so Lizzy?

Lizzy: I don't mind.

Sam: Thanks hey.

He sat down and ate with us. We were having a general conversation with him. The bell rang and we went back to our classes.

After school we had no afternoon class. We walked out of our class Samkelo was waiting for

me outside the class. Lizzy gave me a hug and left to catch her bus. Samkelo and I walked to the gate and we stood far from the gate, we having a conversation.

Me: Why did you say you no longer have friends?

Sam: They were not really my friends but we were part of the same cult and we shared the same lifestyle. So that means they are my past I should start making friends that's if I can.

Me: That's nice my love and good luck with making new friends.

Sam: But you can also be my friend right. 2 in 1.

Me:(giggles) I guess I am then.

Sam: (smiles) Thanks my love. So bbe this weekend we're doing the farewell.

Me: Really? Everything is organised?

Sam: Yes. Please think of a plan to say to your dad because we will do it Friday and come back Sunday afternoon.

Me: We're going where?

Sam: The farewell is done in Durban on our kind of a chairperson's house. But he's not really a chairperson.

Me: Is this thing of yours demonic?

Sam: No bbe but it's just a bunch of guys and a few girls who have been heart broken before. But we live this kind of lifestyle after heart breaks. So Saturday will be my big night. I will be leaving all those dirt things and commit myself to the most beautiful woman I have ever seen.

Me:(giggles) really? Most beautiful.

Sam: Yes. My love. Tomorrow we will go together to buy our outfits. The candles and the dove we will buy it in Durban.

Me: Why don't we go now because I wanted to do my hair. I will call Qiniso to fetch me there after we done with everything.

Sam: Okay love let's go.

He held my hand and we catch a taxi. I did my hair firstly, I did snoopy but adding some extension for it to look more beautiful. I finished and paid.

Sam: You look beautiful bbe.

Me: Thank you my love.

We went to different clothing stores and we finally got our outfits. We both bought black jeans, black long sleeve polo necks, black sneakers, black gloves, black lipstick for me and black hats. We bought cheap clothes for black because he said they were going to be burnt. Then we bought the red and white outfit. I bought a long white figure hugging dress, red sandals, red cardigan and a red lipstick because I didn't have one. Samkelo bought white jeans, white Nike sneakers and a red shirt. I bought another E250 and new sim card. After buying clothes we went to eat, just twister and milkshakes. He gave me his phone and I called Qiniso to fetch me. After a few minutes he called. Samkelo and I hugged each other good bye and I went to Qiniso. I started my new phone and punched the airtime numbers. I downloaded mxit and Facebook quickly I started chatting with Lizeka about her backing me up on the weekend...

Lizeka agreed to back me up though I didn't tell her the truth about where I was going. I went inside my room and I remembered the book that I had to burn. I went to the kitchen and took the lighter. I took the book, I went inside the bathroom on the shower and I placed it on the tiles. I lighted it up and it burnt down until it was black burnt papers. I took them and placed them on a plastic bag. I threw them away and cleaned my shower. I changed my uniform and did my homework because I had nothing to do. After doing my schoolwork I went to the kitchen and started cooking. Qiniso wasn't around. I didn't know what to do with Qiniso because I also loved him but not in a way that I loved Samkelo. I didn't want to hurt Qiniso's

feelings because I have already done that. While I was still cooking he came inside the house with a beautiful baby girl. She was holding a big white teddy bear. The girl looked like her mother but she had Qiniso's skin colour. I realized that it was his daughter Enhle.

Enhle: Baba umama wami weshibiyi yo? (Dad this is my second mother?)

Qini: Enhle. Bingelela kuqala (Enhle greet her first)

Enhle: Shanipona (greetings)

Me:(smiling) Sawubona Enhle unjani?

Enhle: Niyaphiya wena? (I am fine and you?)

Me: Ngyaphila nami. Mina ngiwu sisi Thandeka yezwa? (I am fine too. I am sisi Thandeka)

Enhle: Awuyena umama wami weshibiyi? Pheya wathi ubaba yena neyinye iyanga mina nizoba naye umama weshibiyi (You're not my second mother? My dad once said I will have a second mother one day)

Me:(to Qiniso) And why would you tell a child that?

Qini: We were going through some hard times with her mom being on drugs and she left for rehab then she asked if she will have another mother and I said yes. One day.

Me: I can't say I am her mother what will my dad say.

Qini: I understand.

Me: She's going to stay with us?

Qini: No she's visiting for 2 days. She will go Saturday. Your dad didn't have a problem with it.

Me: That means I only have Thursday to spend with her.

Qini: You are going somewhere?

Me: Yes Lizzy's house but I still have to tell my dad. Please continue with cooking.

Qini: Okay I will.

I nodded and picked Enhle up. I took her bag from her dad. I went to my room with her. She was messy looking like she was eating chocolate. I took off her clothes and I went to my brother's room with her because it had a bathtub. I opened his drawer and took a unused face cloth and bathed Enhle. She was talkative and had a lot of stories which were lies "her killing a crocodile" like really? But I was listening and laughing. After bathing her. I went back to my room with her to lotion her body and I put her on her pyjamas which were on her bag. I guess she wasn't making the bed wet anymore because there were no diapers.

I picked her up and went to the kitchen with her. Dad was back. He told me to give her to him and I did. He played her with doing those kind of things old people do with kids. I went to the kitchen.

Qini: Thanks for bathing her.

Me: (smiling) No problem at all. She's a lovely child and she talks a lot. I like her.

Qini: (smiling faintly) That's nice.

I didn't talk further because I knew that he wasn't free because we didn't really knew where we stand. It was hard to decide but I wanted to try something new and clean with Samkelo. I didn't know what to do serious. The table was set and I called dad and they came to the table. Dad blessed the food. Enhle was sitting on his lap and dad was feeding her.

Enhle: (with food on the mouth) Baba, umkhulu uthe ngimuhle (Dad grandpa said I am beautiful)

Me: Ungakhulumi nokudla emlonyeni baby yezwa. Awogwinya kuqala bese uyakhuluma ke. (Don't talk while you have food in your mouth baby. Swallow first then you can talk)

Enhle: (swallowing) Yebo Shishi (Yes sister)

Qini: Thanks for that.

Me: It's no biggie Bhuti.

He smiled and we continued eating. After eating we washed the dishes with Qiniso and I went to the lounge to talk to my dad. I sat in the couch with him and Enhle.

Me: Dad you know that we're about to write our June exams right?

Dad: Oh so you will be starting your studying arrangements with Lizeka?

Me: Yes dad and we are going to start this Friday. I am going to her house. I will come back Sunday like we always do during exams.

Dad: No problem baby. Remind me then Friday to give you money for some few groceries that you will take with you.

Me: Okay dad I will. Thanks.

Dad: Okay Dinangwe.

Me: Asambe siyolala ke Enhle (Let's go and sleep Enhle)

Qini: You don't mind sleeping with her?

Me: Not at all.

Qini: Okay thanks.

I smiled and held Enhle's hand. We went to her father and she kissed him goodnight. We said goodnight to them and we went to my room.

I tucked her inside my bed covers and I went to take a shower and brushed my teeth. I lotion and wore my pyjamas. I got inside the covers with her. She was asleep already. I took my phone and call Samkelo. It rang and he picked up.

Sam: Sam speaking.

Me: Hello Sammy

Sam: Bbe please who is Sammy now?

Me: I thought you won't recognize my voice.

Sam: Who wouldn't know his girlfriend's voice.

Me: (laughing) Oh I see. Babe Daddy agreed then.

Sam:(excited) Really? Bbe that's good news. Thanks for doing this with me. I know it sounds creepy but I assure you my love it's not demonic.

Me: Okay my love so Friday we're leaving?

Sam: Yes bbe.

Me: Okay. Goodnight then I love you.

Sam: Good night I love you too.

We hung up and drifted off the lala land.

+

+

Thursday I spent time with Enhle. Friday came and I had everything packed in my bag. I was going to leave with the bag to school and come back Sunday. Dad gave me the money and he gave me a hug. He left for work. Qiniso and Enhle drove me to school. I kissed both their cheeks and said my last goodbyes to Enhle because she was going to leave without seeing me. They left and I went inside the school premises. Samkelo took my bag with him to avoid questions from Lizeka. Because to her I said I was going to a private vacation to distress the drama that happened. She supported me and she was going to mimic my voice if dad called for me. But I told her not to tell anyone about it. After school Samkelo and I waited for the school pupils to leave and we also left after almost everyone was not around. We went to his house and we took a bath together, brushed our teeth, lotion and wore our black outfit. After a few minutes we took our bags. Two cars were outside his house.

Sam: Bbe you won't ride with me then. You will go to that car (pointing it) And I will ride with that one.

Me: Okay.

Sam: Let's go then before mom comes back.

I nodded and he gave me a hug and a baby kiss. I was riding with two cute guys and he was also with two guys. We greeted each other and we stepped inside the car and we drove straight to Durban...

Along the way, the guys were asking me questions. Their names were Mzwandile and Philani.

Phila: So tell us what muti did you use to Samkelo?

Me: Excuse me?

Mzwa: Come on, who didn't know that Samkelo was the almighty player around your school. Even if I wasn't schooling with you but we all knew that and he is the most heartless one. Who doesn't have the guts to lie and say I love you to a girl.

Me: I guess he changed then.

Phila: Stop lying to us just tell us that you used a spell on him. We've seen beautiful girls more than you. They were also victims of the mission but they didn't pass the test of owning his heart.

Me: I guess you want me to lie and say I used a spell on him? Well I didn't use any spell, I just love him and he loves me that's all.

Mzwa: I still don't believe this thing of you two. It's a pity that if he leaves the cult now he will never come back to join again.

Me: That's not a bad thing.

Phila: Mxm I don't like you. You have an attitude!

Me: You don't have to like me.

They both clicked their tongues. I was pissed off because they thought I used the spell on Samkelo and I failed to understand to why would I use a spell on him.

I kept quiet until we made it to Durban but we were at some place with birds. Samkelo came to the car and opened the door for me. I stepped out and he held my hand. He looked at me I was just quiet because I was still pissed.

Sam: Thandeka are you alright?

Me: Yes I am fine.

Sam: You don't look fine to me.

Me: I am just tired that's all.

Sam: Okay sorry. You will rest but late.

I nodded and we went to the owner of the place. Samkelo told him that we want a white dove and he took us where he kept them. We looked at them and they were all beautiful. We found the one we liked and he placed it on its little cage. Samkelo paid, he gave me the dove and we went back to the cars. I hopped in and Mzwa started the engine. We drove to gateway and we went to clicks. We bought the red and white candles. We went back to the cars and we drove to Morning side. We arrived in a beautiful white big double storey house. There were a lot of cars parked on the yard. We stepped out of the car. Samkelo came and took my bag. I had the dove in my hands. We walked inside house and the lounge was full. About 26 guys, I saw some guys from our school, some around my area, some I didn't know, even our two teachers were there. I was shocked seriously. I am not talking about school boys only but even guys who were supposed to be married and have their own families. And there were 10 ladies. We went to greet them and they all did hand shakes with Samkelo. The ladies came to me and gave me hugs.

Man: (coming from the stair) Our Almighty player is in the house.

A tall yellow bone man came downstairs and went to Samkelo. He gave him a handshake and a hug.

Man: These must be your special lady?

Sam: Yes it's her Brah Phil

Phil: You're the Thandeka right?

Me: Yes I am.

Phil: (handshake) I am supposed to like you but how can I, if you're taking my favorite boy on the game. (They all laughed and I just looked down)

Phil: Mbali show her, to her room for tonight and come back around 8pm.

Mbali: Sure Brah Phil.

I took my bag to Samkelo and I followed Mbali. The house very huge and had a great open space. She showed me in to a beautiful big room.

Me: I will sleep alone here?

Mbali: Just for tonight but tomorrow you will sleep with your man.

Me: Okay thanks.

Mbali: I will come and get you then when everything is ready.

I nodded and went inside the room closing the door behind. I said a short prayer because I was feeling scared and I then took a nap.

Mbali woke me up and I went to the bathroom and rinsed off my mouth. I went back to the room.

Mbali: Wear the rest of your outfit then. And put on your black lipstick.

Me: Okay.

I wore my black gloves, the black hat and I put on the black lipstick. I looked at myself and I was looking good.

Mbali: Let's go then.

I nodded. She told me to leave the dove and candles behind.

I followed her to a room which had two doors closed. She opened the door and some sorrowful instruments played as Mbali held my hand and we walked in the room that looked more like a hall. It was huge but not that huge. All the people I saw earlier were inside the room. They were all wearing black clothes. They were on black chairs but they stood up as soon as Mbali walked in with me. The room was dark the only lights available were the red candles. Mbali walked with me until we reached the front and she told me sit on big black chair. Samkelo was not sitting close to me. Mbali sat next to me, Phil stood up and climbed the stage.

Phil: We can all sit down. (They did) We are all gathered here to free our brother highly known as "the almighty heartless player" (they laughed). This is the first little ceremony to free him from that dark heart that never wanted love. He is here with the light of his life Thandeka Dhlomo. (They clapped hands) The young woman who first freed his heart from hatred and bitterness caused by love that hurt him before. I would like to have them both here with me.

Samkelo and I stood up. We walked together to the stage. We stood by the sides of Phil. He was in between us.

Phil: Ntobeko please come and do your job.

A short guy stood up and joined us on the stage. He had some things I couldn't see with him. He requested us to stand before him and we did.

Ntobe: The black outfit you're wearing symbols the darkness you were in before Samkelo.

And you were going to be the victim Thandeka but your light has shined upon Samkelo's dark heart. Today we are going to free you and let you go to experience the love Thandeka has for you freely. Always remember both of you. You must never in your lives wear all black outfit. You can mix it with other colours but never wear it like you're wearing today.

Thandeka you must never wear a black lipstick on your lips.

He then came close to us and took off our gloves starting by Samkelo.

Ntobe: Samkelo Ndunakazi I free your hands from the darkness of lust that they were going to do (then me) on the victim Thandeka Dhlomo

He put them on a medium sized bin, and he took off our hats. Starting by Samkelo.

Ntobe: Samkelo Ndunakazi I free your minds from the dark thoughts, you were thinking and going to think about her. (then me) Thandeka Dhlomo I free your mind from almost falling and being hurt by his thoughts which might have came in to action.

He placed them on the bin again. He called ladies who came with one big white cloth. It looked more like a sheet. They stood behind us and opened it so that people on our backs won't see us. Ntobeko then took a knife. For a second I thought he was going to stab me but he tore up our clothes using the knife. Starting by Samkelo.

Ntobe: Samkelo Ndunakazi I free your body from the darkness of lust and sleeping with every girl you wished for including Thandeka. (Then me) I free your body from almost being victimized by Samkelo's lustful body.

We were both half naked, we were left with our underwear only. Ntobeko and the girls were the only people who saw our bodies. He then put the clothes on the bin and our sneakers freeing our feet from walking in the darkness. He then took a white cloth and wiped my lips.

Ntobe: Thandeka Dhlomo lastly I free your lips from believing that Samkelo's lips were there to kiss you with love.

He threw away the cloth on the bin. He took a small bottle and poured out petrol on the clothes. He lighted them up and they burnt down.

Ntobe: You're free now all your dreams you will share together, wishes, heart to heart talks, kisses, making love and all other things will be based on the truth and the light that you created for yourselves lead by the love you feel for each other.

The whole house stood up and clapped hands for us. The girls wrapped us with the white cloth. We were both inside it. We held it with one hand each and Samkelo held my hand with the hand that was inside the cloth. They played the song by "Sam Cooke – You Send Me" And we walked out of the room and headed to the room I was going to use that night...

We arrived in that room I was going to use "that night" as they said. We removed the cloth and we looked at each other with a smile. He hugged me tightly and I felt so secured under his wings. We let go

Sam: (kissing my forehead) Thank you so much bbe for doing this with me. More specially for us and our future together.

Me: It was scary but as long as we are going to be happy and have a normal relationship.

Sam: With you everything is possible my love.

I giggled and he kissed me. I wrapped my arms around his neck and he held my waist slowly moving his hands to my ass and he squeezed it. I wrapped my legs around his waist and he held me even more tighter allowing me to feel his heart beating fast against mine. The kiss was different then before I felt close to him. I felt like a need not a want to him. We were disturbed by a knock on the door it was Mbali.

Mbali: Dinner is ready lovers so please kindly join us.

Sam: We will be down just now Mbali.

His voice was lazy and Mbali giggled at that. He gave me a soft peck on my lips. He put me down.

Sam: Let's get your body covered.

Me: And yours too.

He smiled and I wore my casual clothes. I wrapped his sexy body with that sheet they gave us and he laughed really hard.

Sam: Bbe it's no biggie even if they see me.

Me: Hello? See who? Who belongs to who?

Sam: Eish Samkelo who belongs to Thandeka.

Me: (Giggles) Now don't take that sheet off.

Sam: Okay MaDinangwe walk me to my temporary room then.

I smiled and held his hand. We walked together to the bedroom. We walked inside and I looked at him wearing his clothes. Damn he was cute and sexy at the same time. When he was done we joined the others on the two huge dining tables. They clapped hands for us. I

was just too shy I kept looking down. We had dinner with conversation going on around the tables and around 2:00am we went to sleep. I slept alone. The others went to hotels. The following morning Mbali and Nomfundo came to my temporary room. They woke me up. I wanted to scream because I was still sleepy and the time was around 6am. I woke up and went to the bathroom. I took a long ass shower, brushed my teeth, I lotioned and wore the outfit of the day. My long white dress that showed my figure and medium sized curves well. I put on a red cardigan, red sandals and I put on the red lipstick. There was a knock on the door.

Me: Come in.

Sam: Mmm you... You look out of this world.

Me: Please! I am tired and sleepy.

Sam: Sorry bbe. (Baby kiss) But you slept well right?

Me: Very well bbe.

Sam: Very good then. I have something for you to add on your outfit.

Me: What is it?

He opened a box and it was a beautiful silver necklace piece and earrings. I gave him a kiss and he assisted me put them on and they completed the look. He was also on his red and white outfit.

Me: Thanks bbe they are beautiful.

Sam: Just like you. Let's go and join the others.

He held my hand and we walked together downstairs. We went back to that room and it was a lot different. The decoration was red and white. And there were chairs and tables. And catering people. The song that was playing was "Loved me back to life – Celine Dion" We were shown our seats and we sat together with my boo.

Sam: (whispering) Thank you for loving me back to life.

I smiled and kissed him right there. And there was a loud cheer from the guys and ladies. We broke the kiss and smiled. As expected Phil took the stage. Everybody else was wearing all white. We were the only one wearing red and white.

Phil: Morning everyone.

Us: Morning.

Phil: I would like the lovers to come and stand in front of me please.

Samkelo and I stood up and went to stand in front of him as he asked. People clapped hands.

Phil: This is the new beginnings for you Samkelo and Thandeka. Samkelo we will miss you big time and I hope you will treat this beautiful lady with love and respect. Whatever obstacles you face in your relationship just go through it together. (Raising a glass) To Samkelo and Thandeka.

Them: To Samkelo and Thandeka.

Phil: The most important part of this ceremony. Samkelo as you know this is just the beginning. You will write down the names of all the ladies that you have broke their hearts and together with your girl's support apologize to them one by one. I wish you all the success on that one. Those that you remember and can get ahold of. And you know there is no turning now. Please kiss your woman and let us eat. (People laughed)

We kissed each other for the long time and we broke it as people started clapping hands. We walked back to our seats and the farewell party began. We ate had some music and some performances til late. It was really cool.

7pm we all drove to North Beach to do the last part. They all had white candles. I had the red candle and Samkelo had the white candle. We formed a circle with our candles lighted on. Okay? We all sang the church song "Ukuthula" (Peace) We raised the candles up until they were all off. Samkelo and I stood inside the circle. Ntobeko did the talking after taking the candles away and giving us our dove. We both held it with our hands

Ntobe: Samkelo Ndunakazi “The Almighty Player” You’re no longer part of us. You don’t belong to our lifestyle and culture anymore. Your heart belongs to Thandeka now. Wherever this love will take you both just hold on to it because some of us need that love but it’s not there. So this is it now you may both free your dove to fly as a symbol of peace and letting go of the past, meaning neither of you must use the past against each other because today you’re letting go. Now Free that dove.

We opened the little cage, Samkelo took the dove out. We placed the cage down and we both held the dove and counted “3,2,1” and we let it go. It flew up even more higher. People clapped hands we hugged and kissed each other. After that we went back to the house. We ate supper and went to sleep. That night I was sharing a bed with Samkelo. His arms around my body and it felt so right. Sunday afternoon we drove back home...

They dropped me off three houses away. Samkelo stepped out of the car and gave me a hug. And he kissed me passionately. I broke the kiss as I was getting wet. And his breath spoke volumes.

Sam: Thank you again for everything my love.

Me: We did this together. And you were brave enough to let go of your lifestyle.

Sam: I love you Thandy

Me:(laughing) I love you too Samke

Sam: Really? Bbe Samke? That’s for girls moss.

Me: But I like it.

Sam: You want to make me gay?

Me: (laughing) Hell no! Let me go before someone sees me.

Sam: Okay. I will call you before you sleep.

Me: I’ll be waiting. Oh we still have to see your girls right?

Sam: Yoh! Eish yeah.

Me: How many are they?

Sam: About 20 of them.

Me: What?? Were you protecting yourself?

Sam: I was a player but not that stupid to risk my life. I was protecting myself.

Me: Okay. We will talk tomorrow about it okay.

Sam: Okay bbe.

We baby kissed and hugged each other once more and I walked away. I looked back and he was looking at me. I smiled and went inside through the gate. I saw the car speeding off.

I went inside the house and it was quiet. I went straight to my room and took a shower. I lotioned and wore my pyjamas. I made my way to the kitchen and I started cooking.

Qini: You’re back?

Me: (turning back) Hey yeah I am back. Are you fine?

Qini: Yes I am fine and you?

Me: I am fine. Where is dad?

Qini: He went to visit to your grandmother. He’ll come back tomorrow night.

Me: Oh that’s nice I guess.

Qini: So how was your weekend?

Me: Hmmm it was cool yours.

Qini: Fine but I was just missing you that’s all.

Me: I think we have to talk about us.

Qini: Okay.

Me: Let me finish up here first. Then after dinner we can talk.

Qini: Let me help you.

I nodded and he assisted me with cooking. We were listening to music. Just humming along

with the beat. After cooking we settled down and ate together. We washed the dishes and went to sit on the lounge. We had a tub of ice cream and we were eating it together. My heart started beating pretty fast.

Me: Qiniso look I love you and you're a nice guy but for now I would love to be single. (I lied about being single. I didn't want to break his heart by saying I am choosing Samkelo over him)

Qini: So this is it? We're breaking up just like that?

Me: It's for the best Qiniso. I know I was willing to take the risk but I just need a break from all this. I have been through so much drama lately.

Qini: Am I the cause of that drama?

Me: No I am saying it like that?

Qini: So what does your drama has to do with our relationship?

Me: My point is I need a break.

Qini: You're not answering my question.

Me: I don't have the answer okay! I don't! I just don't want our relationship to continue. I don't deserve a guy like you. Somewhere out there is a proper girl waiting for you not me. You're a grown up Qiniso I can't mix you with school boys. I hope you understand.

Qini: Sure.

He left the spoon on the tub and went to his room.

I stood up and followed him. The door was locked, I knocked and he didn't answer.

Me: Qiniso don't do this we don't have to be strangers or enemies but we can be friends.

Qini: I don't know how do you woman think. But I can never be a friend with someone I am in love with. I just can't.

Me: At least Let's try and get along. I won't like the tension between us and we live together.

Qini: Yeah! From now on I am just your fuckin stupid driver and Bhuti Qiniso. No more calling me by my name. And I am not your friend. Please leave me alone.

I didn't say anything. I walked away as tears streamed down my eyes. I took the ice cream and went to my room with it. I went inside the covers and cried while eating the ice cream. I didn't want to hurt him but I couldn't continue with being in a relationship with him. Yes I do love him but some things you just have to let them go. My phone vibrated and it was Samkelo calling. I didn't answer it. I placed it on silent mode and put it under my pillow. I ate the whole tub of ice cream afterwards I was feeling cold. I pulled up the covers and drifted off to sleep.

I woke up next morning, I stretched myself and I took my phone under the pillow. I had dozens of missed calls from Samkelo. I called him back, it rang and he picked up.

Me: Morni- (he cut me short by singing.)

Sam: "She does not call me all the time but she's always on my mind (I joined in and sang along)

Together: ..." I swear on my whole entire life she's/he's one of the kind x3.. Hhhhhh... I have dated many girls/guys in the past she's/he's not the first but she's/he's definitely the last I have to say truly have to say she's/he's one of the kind.." (We laughed)

Sam: Good morning then.

Me: Wow a very a good morning indeed Ntshika.

Sam: (laughing) Are you alright Buhle?

Me: How can I not be alright after that sweet melody I have just heard.

Sam: I am happy if you think I am not that bad.

Me: You're not bad at all bbe. Next time you must beat box and I will sing.

Sam: I don't mind at all.

Me: You can beat box bbe?

Sam: Yes I can. I love Accapella music more than any music.

Me: That's nice. I listen to some of it but I love old school music.

Sam: I have seen that. I guess I will also start listening to it if you love it.

Me:(giggles) Okay Samke. Let me go and take a shower. I will see you at school.

Sam: Okay. Thandy I love you neh.

Me: I love you too bbe.

We hung up, I smiled and stepped out of my bed. I fixed my bed and opened the windows. I went to the bathroom and did my daily routine. I took my backpack and went to the kitchen. Aunt Maud was not yet in. I grabbed an apple and an orange. I went to my dad's room for some money and I knocked on Bhuti Qiniso's door. There was no response.

Me: Qini- Eeh Bhuti Qiniso?

There was no response but I could hear him humming a song. I knocked harder thinking maybe he had his earphones on but still there was no response. I knocked until I got tired. I walked out and took a taxi to school.

I went inside the school premises and I was late. I rushed to my class and the Teacher was already teaching. I went inside the class and apologize for coming in late. I took my seat and took out my books and I concentrated on the Teacher but I was still worried about Qiniso. Like why would he just ignore me like that? I understand I broke his heart but I didn't deserve that. What happened to "I am just your driver?" My thoughts were disturbed by my classmates calling my name. I snapped out of it.

Sir: Where is your mind at?

Some girl: Ndunakazi obviously. (The class laughed and boys blew whistles)

Me: I am sorry Sir. It won't happen again.

Sir: Please come and teach the class the rest of the lesson I was going to teach today.

Me: But Sir-

Sir: Just do as I say!

I slowly stood up and I took his text book. He pointed things he was going to teach. I had no problem at all because I was practising Maths like my life depended on it because I wanted that distinction so that dad can buy a car for me. I taught the class and they were asking questions where they didn't understand. I attended their questions. Lizzy raised her hand.

Me: Lizzy?

Lizzy: Miss please go a little deep on explaining that simultaneous equation.

Me: Okay.

I explained the equation suggesting the easy way to do it correctly and get the correct answer.

Me: Are you satisfied Lizzy?

Lizzy: (smiling) Yes Chom- I mean Miss.

Some girl: Yoh you should be our teacher hhayi!

Class: Yeah!

Sir: Okay that's all Thandeka please sit down. That was all.

I gave him the text book and I went to sit my ass down. The class clapped their hands. Lizeka winked at me and I winked back.

During break time. I was with Lizzy on our usual spot. We were just having lunch and I was lying about my weekend. I felt someone closing my eyes with their hands. I smiled.

Sam: Samke.

Me:(giggles) Thandy. (He removed his hands)

Sam: (sitting down) How are you Lizeka?

Lizzy: Good. Please excuse me. (She left)

Sam: (playing with my cheeks) I was told you're Miss Dhlomo. You were teaching Maths.

Me: (laughing) Yes I was. News travels fast hey. Or I have bodyguards or spies?

Sam: (laughing) No. I love paper one and I always go for an A+ but Paper two yoh I always

fail that shit.

Me: We must go to the library sometimes maybe I can help you understand a few basic things so that you can at get a 50% at least.

Sam: You can really do that bbe?

Me: Yes I don't mind. And since you're an Accounting top learner you can assist me with companies. The accounts there are giving me hard time to solve.

Sam: No problem bbe. We can go to the library whenever you want to. Or during break time because we usually have afternoon classes.

Me: Yeah. Thanks buddy.

Sam: Sure ntwana. (We fist pump & I giggled)

Me: So who is on top of the list of your girls.

Sam: Please don't be mad Okay?

Me: Why would I be? Who is she?

Sam: Lizeka.

Me: She's doing which grade?

Sam:(brushing his head) Eish bbe Lizeka. Lizzy your friend.

Me: (sarcastic laugh) Come again who?

Sam: Lizeka Mfenyane your friend

Me:

Me: You screwed my friend Samkelo?

Sam: Bbe I am sorry.

Me: Sorry? You're sorry for what? For keeping it a secret? Or for approaching me after screwing my friend, Oh it wasn't about lo- (I remembered that I shouldn't bring the past and use it against him)

Sam: It's fine you can say it. It wasn't about love? So every time I do something wrong you will quote my past? Or you will refer to it?

Me: it's not like that.

Sam: It's like what then make me understand.

Me: Don't change this whole conversation Samkelo this is about you and Lizeka. I am sorry about that I shouldn't have said it.

Sam: Okay.

Me: So you're mad at me?

Sam: No I am not.

Me: She told me she's still a virgin.

Sam: I didn't fuck her. She saw the video I made of me and her. I was more like doing things to her because she knew nothing about sex. She begged me not to upload it on the internet. I made her pay for that and she Uhhh she you know.

Me: I don't know.

Sam: She blow me.

Me: Blow you how? Blow your mind or what?

Sam: Come on Thandeka.

Me: No I don't know tell me.

Sam: She gave me a blow job.

Me: When and for how long?

Sam:(looking down) It happened last year and she gave me a blow job for the whole year.

I stood up and walked away. Samkelo followed me but I ran off and went inside the toilet. I locked myself up and cried silently. I couldn't believe that Samkelo did that to my friend and Lizeka didn't tell me. I sent a text message to Qiniso telling him to come on normal time, I wasn't planning on attending after school. I sat there until it was after school. I stood up and

washed my face. I walked out of the toilet.

Samkelo was outside waiting with my backpack. I went to him and took my bag.

Me: Why are you standing here?

Sam: I couldn't go to class while you're in there. Lizeka brought your bag here.

Me: Did you tell her?

Sam: No I didn't.

Me: We don't have a Maths class?

Sam: No we don't. Bbe please don't cry okay.

Me: (walking) I wasn't crying. Who said I was crying?

Sam: I can see your eyes. They are red and puffy

Me: I need to go home.

Sam: Can we please talk things through. I am sorry Thandeka for everything.

Me: Talk things through? (Whispering) You made my friend your dick slave for the whole year Sam.

Sam: I know and I will apologize to her.

Me: Let me take a taxi home. These driver is not here but he saw that I send a text telling him to come and get me. Nxx!

Sam: Calm down.

Me: Calm down after you and Lizeka kept a secret away from me.

Lizzy:(from the back) So you told her after I told you not to?

Sam: (looking back) I had to be honest?

Lizzy: Why now? You want her vagina so bad that you want to get it using my name?

Sam: I love Thandeka.

Lizzy: (laughing) What do you know about love wena? What do you know? You can't even say I love you to your girlfriend.

Sam: At least I don't misuse the word "I love you" and I didn't lie to you and say I love you.

Lizzy: Thandeka wake up. Samkelo is a dog. He will use you and leave you like nothing ever happened. (She was crying. Her bus came and she left us. Samkelo looked at me)

Me: I think she loves you Samkelo.

Sam: I don't love her.

Me: You knew about that?

Sam: Thandeka please let's not fight about your friend please.

Me: You knew that she loves?

Sam: Yes I knew. But I don't love her what was I supposed to do force love and lie?

Me: Saamkeloo- ( a lump grew on my throat)

He gave me a long squeeze and I couldn't hold my tears. I didn't want him to see my tears but I had no control over them. I cried until I realized that I was in public. I backed away and he wiped my tears. I saw a taxi and I stopped it.

Me: I will see you tomorrow.

I kissed his cheek and ran off. I stepped in and I looked at Samkelo through the window and he was also looking at me. We looked at each other until the taxi took another corner and I couldn't see him.

I arrived at home, a car and Qiniso's car were parked on the yard. There was a lot of noise inside the house. And it was guys who were talking and laughing. They were talking about girls and sex. I listened a little and used the back door. Aunt Maud was hanging the washing on the washing line.

Me: Evening Aunt Maud.

Maud: Evening baby how was your day?

Me: it was good thanks yours?

Maud: Perfect my love.

I nodded and went inside the house. I looked down and passed the guys without looking at them. But I greeted them.

Me: Sanibona.

Andile: So you won't even give me a hug(nyana)

I turned back and screamed. I ran towards him and he stood up. We hugged each other. My feet left the ground because he was taller than me. He put me down and kissed my cheeks. I giggled and kissed his but he had to bend a little.

Me: Tjo Bhuti wami (my brother)

Andile: Are you fine little sis. The last time I spoke to you. You were drunk in love (others laughed)

Me:( hitting his shoulder)

Andile: Ouch! Joy why would you do that?

Me: Stop calling me like that. Who is these fi-(I wanted to say fine ass man right here but I held it before I could finish) guy?

Andile: That's Qiniso you know him right?

Me: Duh! He lives here.

Andile: Okay. That's my friend Mondli you know him and that's Edward. Gents these is my little sister Joy.

Me: Patrick! Or do you want me to tell them the one that our granny use?

Andile: Okay Okay. Her name is Thandeka Joy Dhlomo.

Me: Nice to meet you. But that name is not on my birth certificate.

They laughed and I stick my tongue out at him. And went to my room. His friends were fine though I knew Mondli but still he was also fine. Edward was white. I went to my room and changed my clothes. I wore casual clothes. I was happy to have my brother back. I went back to the lounge and they were all going out. They told me to come along with them. I went to my brother's car, it was inside the garage. They drove straight to the beach. It was me, Andile, Qiniso, Mondli and Edward. We had lunch, they went to the water and swam. I was looking at their fine muscles and their six packs but Qiniso had the best out of the two(Mondli and Edward) Awu I didn't care about checking Andile because he is my brother. We played some games and we ate supper. The guys were paying all I did was to order anything I needed. Around 8pm we went back home. Edward was visiting us for the holidays and Mondli lived around our neighborhood.

We arrived at the house. My father was asleep so I didn't wake him up though I missed him. I said my goodnight to the guys and went to my room. I took a shower, wore my pyjamas, I took my books and studied. Later I took my phone and I had missed calls from Lizzy and Samkelo. I called Lizzy back. She picked up.

Lizzy: (sleepy voice) Hey

Me: Hey I saw your missed calls.

Lizzy: Yeah hey look I am sorry for not telling you about Samkelo and I.

Me: It's Okay. You had your own reasons.

Lizzy: But Thandeka please stay away from him.

Me: I can't I love him.

Lizzy: You think I don't? (Raising her voice)

Me: Excuse me? Oh you still have feelings for him?

Lizzy: (crying) I have always loved him Thandeka and I still do. Please just stop this relationship of yours!!

I couldn't answer her, I just hung up the call and placed my phone aside. I love Samkelo and he loves me why must I leave him because my friend said so??

Tuesday morning I woke with a massive headache from crying the previous night. I didn't want to go school. I was basically running away from my problems. I went back to sleep. I was disturbed by someone shaking me. I opened my eyes and it was dad. I jumped out of bed and snuggled myself on his arms. He laughed.

Dad: You are acting like a child.

Me:(letting go) I am your only little girl right?

Dad: Yes baby. I missed you. You look so grown up now.

Me: Really dad? Just 4 days and you think I look old.

Dad: (laughing) Yes. Why are ain't you preparing for school.

Me: I have a headache I won't go to school today. I will study indoors or go to the library during the day. Next week Monday I am writing accounting.

Dad: Have you found someone to assist you with Companies?

Me: Yes I have.

Dad: Who is that?

Me: Promise you won't be mad. It will be about Accounting only and we will meet by the library. My brother can come with me if you don't trust me. I will also help him with maths paper2. Just that he's the top learner in Accounting. And I-

Dad:(laughing) Slow down baby. I trust you to do the right thing with your education. If Ndunakazi can help you and you can help him it's okay. Andile will drive you to the Library then.

Me: You're the best daddy in the world. Thanks.

Dad: Go eat your food, take some painkillers and take a nap. Then wake up when you're ready to go. I will give you back your phone only.

Me: Thanks Dinangwe.

He smiled and left my room. I jumped up and down at least my dad trusted me. I went to the bathroom and washed my face and my mouth.

I joined the family for breakfast. It was just Andile and Edward. I closed Andile's eyes using my hands.

Andile: Joy you are disturbing me dude.

Me: (laughing) Stop calling me Joy. I will stop this too.

Andile: (shouting) Dad! Dad!

Dad: What is it?

Andile: Please tell your daughter to behave she's disturbing my breakfast time.

Dad: Thandeka stop it.

Me: But dad he's calling me by Joy and I don't like it.

Edward: I think it's a beautiful name.

Dad: Yes it is.

Me: Argh. Patrick I will get you.

I removed my hands on him and I sat down.

Andile: You didn't say good morning.

Dad: Thandeka your manners?

Me: I was going to dad. Morning Edward.

Edward: Morning Joy.

Andile: And me?

Me: You too Patrick.

Dad: (handing it over) Here is your phone.

Me: (taking it) Thanks. I don't even get a few hundreds dad?

Dad: Hundreds for what?

Me: Lunch today? (Colgate smile)

Dad: (giving it to me) Thandeka!

Me: Thanks daddy.

Andile: what about me?

Me: Go dad. Don't give him.

Dad: Give him half of what I gave you. (He left)

Andile: My share.

Me: There's no share that you're getting. A share of R400 no Brah think again.

Andile: Dad said half. So I need my R200.

Me: I will give you R50. You want it too Edward.

Edward: Yes I want it.

Me: (laughing) Okay here is your share. But you're university students you need R50. (I gave them)

Andile: I will buy airtime and call Bontle. She said I must tell you that after your last paper there's a freaky party we will go to.

Me: Mmm can I bring a date?

Edward: I am your date.

Andile: Yeah Edward will look after you. So no date

Me: Oh okay.

I stood up and went to wash my dishes. I went to my room, I charged my old phone and took a shower. Before I lotion I texted Samkelo "Hey bbe I am not coming to school today. Please come to the library after school. Love you" I lotioned and picked out an outfit. My phone beeped I checked the message it read:" Okay love. I will go back home now and change. I will meet you there within an hour. Love you too" I told him about my brother bringing me and he had no biggie. I wore my black jeans, long sleeve brown shirt and a brown coat. I put on brown boots and pink lipgloss. I packed my books on my backpack. I took my phones and my money. Andile called me and I went to them in the car.

Me: Where is Bhuti Qiniso?

Andile: He is writing his first exam paper today.

Me: Oh I didn't know. I didn't even say good luck.

Andile: You didn't say it to me.

Me: (laughing) Happy Belated good luck.

We all laughed hard at that. I thought about what I just said and laughed even harder. It was so good to laugh and forget about all the drama in my life.

We arrived by the library and we stepped out of the car and we all leaned on it.

Andile: I can't babysit you. I want to see Bontle now. Where is these guy you're studying with?

Me: he's coming and who said we need a babysitter?

Andile: Dad said I should babysit you. So that you won't bunk the library.

Edward: (laughing) Really man?

Andile: I was given instructions Brah.

Me: Yoh! I thought he trusts me.

Andile: He's trying so don't disappoint him.

Me: I wasn't planning on it.

Edward: I can babysit them.

Andile: (laughing) much better. But I want to see lo mjita wakho maybe I can like him.

Me: There he is.

They turned back and looked at him. My babe was looking fine AF. Our eyes met and he smiled but he quickly removed his eyes from mine because of my brother I guess.

Sam: Hey guys.

Us: Hey.

Andile: So you're the guy who made my sister bunk school?

Sam: I am sorry about that I promise it won't happen again.

Andile: At least you are committed to your school work. If you're a top student in Accounting. I hope you will help each other wisely.

Sam: Sure.

Andile: If you break her heart I will kill you with my bare hands I promise you.

Me: Andile we are not da-

Andile: Yeah! Save it. I am not a kid. No study buddies smile at each other like you two did.

Me: Oh.

Edward: Just so you know nigga(referring to Sam) I was planning on marrying her.

Andile: Hell No! Ed Brah you're too old for my sister and Joy won't handle your mom.

Sam:(smiling) Who is Joy?(looking at me)

Andile: (laughing) She didn't tell you.

Me:(pinching his ear) Andile mahn!

Andile: Ouch! Joy why did you do that?

Me: Samkelo can we go and study? (Annoyed)

Sam: Okay.

Andile: One last thing. Don't bunk the library.

Edward: Really Andile?

Andile: Yeah dude. And Sam don't cheat on my sister. She's too beautiful to be cheated on.

And Don't make her pregnant.

Sam: I got that.

Andile: Sho sbari!

They did fist pump, Andile and Edward left.

We went inside the library. Where discussions are allowed. We settled down and took out our books.

Sam:(holding my hand) Let's pray together first.

Me: Huh?

Sam: Mom told me I must pray before Studying.

Me: Okay.

We bowed our heads and did a short prayer. We finished and we decided to start with Accounting.

Sam: By the way you look beautiful.

Me:(giggles) Thanks and you look good too.

Sam:(chuckles) Thanks Joy.

I gave him a dead stare and he kissed my cheek. We did all the chapters that we knew in accounting and he taught me Companies the chapter that was giving me hard time. He was pretty good at it and I understood a lot of things and ways of solving the transactions. After answering the questions he prepared for me. We took our Maths Paper 2 books and I taught him. My babe was really struggling with paper2 but by the end of the session he was getting there. We didn't even look at the time nor become hungry. There were lot of things that I had to explain to him. We were disturbed by Andile.

Andile: I think that's enough guys did you see the time?

Me: (looking at him) Oh you're back. What time is it now?

Edward: The library will be closed soon it's after 4pm now.

Me: Yoh! I don't even feel hungry.

Andile: Do you understand what she is teaching you or she's just wasting your time.

Sam: I understood a lot. I think she's better than our teacher.

Edward: She's your girlfriend better or teaching better?.

Sam: Actually both.

Me: (smiling) I am genius moss. You know Patrick. Andile: Stop that. So guys pack your bags please. I will drive you home Samkelo.

Sam: Thanks Brah.

Andile: Sho.

They left and we packed our books.

Sam:(holding my waist) Do you realize that I didn't even kiss you.

Me: (giggles) There are people around let's go.

Sam: baby kiss? There are no adults here. It's just school kids.

I giggled and I moved closer to him. Our lips met and he kissed me instead of baby kissing.

We broke the kiss after a few minutes. He gave me a hug and we walked to my brother's car.

We stepped in at the backseat.

Andile: What took you so long?

Me: We were sorting out the books since they were messed up around the table.

He nodded and Samkelo directed him to his crib. In no time we arrived and he took his bag.

He whispered:"I love you " in my ear and I whispered back "I love you too". He smiled and stepped out. He went to Andile's side.

Sam: (fist pump) Thanks Brah.

Andile: Sho mjita. Don't forget what I said about my sister.

Sam:(laughing) I won't relax.

Andile: Good. (He went inside. Andile drove off)

Edward: Overprotective hey.

Andile: That's my mother's Joy dude I have to protect her since I can't keep her away from boys.

Me: How sweet.

Andile: Sweet my foot. Don't seduce the guy then.

Me: Andile!

They both laughed. We continued talking until we arrived at home. I went straight to my room and took a shower. After that I joined the family for dinner. Dad was still at work. After eating Qiniso and I washed the dishes.

Me: So how was your paper?

Qini: It was good thanks.

Me: You will pass right?

Qini: Yes I have to for Enhle's sake. Look I am sorry for not taking you to school the other day.

Me: It's cool I understand.

Qini: Thanks.

Me: Good luck for the rest of your exam.

Qini: Thanks you too.

Me: Thanks. Goodnight then. (We were done)

Qini: Goodnight.

I nodded and went to my room. I took my books and prayed first like Samkelo suggested. I did the things he taught me all over again and I did different accounts.

I was disturbed by my phone and I took it. Lizeka was calling.

Me: Liz-

Lizzy: So you decided to bunk school again both of you today?

Me: How are you Lizeka.

Lizzy: Don't play games with me.

Me: I was absent because I wasn't feeling well and if we bunked school again how is that your problem?

Lizzy: I thought I said leave Sam alone.

Me: And you think I will?

Lizzy: Listen to me and listen carefully! I am Lizeka Mfenyane. Nothing stand in my way. If I can't have Samkelo. You won't have him too and I will make sure of that.

Me: Is that a threat maybe?

Sam: No but it's a promise. Continue with this relationship of yours and I will make your miserable life a living hell!!!!

After she hung up on me. I felt sweats forming on my forehead and my hands. I knew exactly what she meant about that but I tried not to worry myself and I prayed and tried to bring myself to sleep. The following morning was a Wednesday. I woke up in the morning and prayed. I was too scared for "my miserable life" I woke up and took a shower as always. I made my bed and wore my uniform. I took my bag and joined the family for breakfast. They were making a hell lot of noise. There was a debate going on, even dad was debating with them. Aunt Maud was laughing. I went to the fridge. I didn't even greet them, I took an apple and went out using the backdoor. I took a taxi to school. I arrived at school and I spotted Lizeka and Samkelo. I went to them because I could see that they were arguing.

Lizzy: "you know what you did to me"

Sam: "And I said I am sorry. What kind of sorry do you want from me. You want me to make an apology in front of the whole school? Fine I will do it"

Me: What do you want Lizeka? (They turned back)

Sam: Thandeka?

Me: I am talking to Lizeka Samkelo.

Lizzy: I want what belongs to me?

Me: (laughing) And that is?

Lizzy: That is Samkelo.

Sam: Lizeka st- (learners started to come near us)

Me: You see Samkelo is mine and mine alone. Nothing you do will come between us. If we are not meant to be we will break up when the time comes.

Lizzy: He will use you and drop you like a hot potato. (Learners laughed)

Me: I am not some dick slave

Learners: Woooooh!

Sam: Stop this bbe please. Let's leave her.

Me: Just because you used her for sucking your fuckin dick that doesn't mean she owns you and-

I couldn't finish the sentence Lizeka slapped me across my face. I tried slapping her back but Samkelo held my hand. He picked me up and walked away with me. The learners were screaming and chanting "Peru! Peru!" (In Zulu though not the English word of Peru. They said Peru encouraging them to fight)

Samkelo walked with me and he put me down when we were at the back of the classroom. I was fuming with anger. As I wanted to shout at him. He gave me no chance by shoving his lips on my lips. He kissed me intensely and I responded to his kiss. The kiss was fast and freaky. I was getting wet by the minute. His hands moved all over my body and I felt at ease. He broke the kiss and looked at me.

Me: Why did you do that?

Sam: I wanted you to calm down. I saw that you were angry so I calmed you down by kissing you.

Me: Um... Can you calm me down again?

Sam:(laughing) But you are calm now. (Holding my hand) babe you know that I love you right?

Me: Yes.

Sam: I don't want to see you fighting please. I don't want my woman to fight. Girls from my past will provoke you maybe but please don't fight. Be a lady and walk away with dignity.

Me: I will try but I don't need bullshit special from Lizeka because she wasn't honest with me from the beginning and now that I have fallen in love with you this hard she wants me to leave you. That will never happen.

Sam: Nobody will break us apart. We will break up Only if we are not meant to be. Even if we can be apart but we will find our way back to each other.

Me: I love you Samkelo.

Sam: I love you too my Joy.

I giggled and he kissed me. We broke the kiss and went back to our respective classes. I sat down and waited for the teacher while chatting with my brother telling him about how I left in the morning. The teacher came and our first period began.

Break time Samkelo came to my class and we went to buy lunch. We went to hi class and sat down.

Sam: We will do Accounting or Maths.

Me: Let's do accounting because we are writing it on Monday.

Sam: Okay take out your journals then we will do previous question papers.

Me: Okay.

I took out my books and he did the same. He took out the question papers and we worked together on the questions.

Voice: I am impressed.

Me: (looking up) Principal? We are sorry-

Principal: Slow down. I was told by my source that you're together here but I am glad to see that you're doing your school work. In fact I am really impressed. Keep up the good work Ndunakazi help her get that A+ like you do my boy.

Sam: Yes Principal.

He nodded and left. We both sighed and looked at each other. We smiled and Samkelo kissed my cheek. We continued with our school work until break time was over. I went back to my class. After school we attended the afternoon class.

After the class I went to Samkelo. Lizeka wasn't talking to me and I did the same thing.

Sam: You're ready to go?

Me: Yes bbe.

Sam: Your driver what's going on with him?

Me: He has exams going on so my brother will fetch me.

Sam: Okay I will wait with you until he comes.

Me: Thanks bbe. So how is your mother?

Sam: She's fine and your dad?

Me: He's alright. Bbe I think we should move on to another girl. We will see Lizeka some other time.

Sam: Okay bbe here's your brother. We will talk about it tomorrow okay. Let me catch a taxi. I love you my Joy.

Me:(giggles) I love you too muntu wami.

We hugged each other and he gave me a kiss on my cheek. I went to my brother's car and stepped in. He was with Edward.

Me: Gents.

Them: Joy.

Me: Guys please! (They laughed) Bhuti can you please buy a milkshake for me?

Andile: Sorry I don't cash with me.

Me: Edw-

Edward: I don't have cash too.

Me: Mxm.

We drove straight home and I went to my room. I changed my uniform and I decided to sleep. I woke up late and took my phone and I had a message from Lizeka: " You're playing with fire. I hope you won't regret it " my heart started beating fast. I was scared of what might happen to me. I went to the bathroom and took a cold shower. I went back to my room and I wore my pyjamas. I went to have supper with my family. Dad was not back yet. I washed the dishes with Andile afterwards. I went back to my room and I started panicking again. I couldn't sleep but I finally managed to sleep.

+

+

Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Samkelo and I didn't go to school. Every morning he came to my house and we studied Accounting and Maths together. During the day he'll go back to his house to continue with other subject that I wasn't doing with him and I would do the same. My dad had no problem with Samkelo coming over because my brother and Edward were there, aunt Maud was there and sometimes Qiniso was there too. Though he wasn't comfortable with it but he had to suck it up and live with it. We studied in my father's study room with no funny business but studying only.

Monday morning I was woken up by my alarm. I was writing Accounting that day and I was ready for it. I removed the blankets and tried to move my legs with an intention of getting out from my bed but I couldn't move my legs. There was no pain that I was feeling but my legs couldn't move.

Me: (screaming) Dad! Andile! (I started crying)

They both came in my room running.

Dad: What is it Thandeka?

Andile: Joy speak?

Me:(crying) I can't move my legs...

Them: What??

Dad: Thandeka my daughter? What's happening?

Me:(sniffing) I don't know dad. But I can't feel my legs.

Andile: Are you going to be able to write your exam today?

Me: Hell yes! I don't feel any pain.

Dad: Okay. Andile take her to your room because you have a bathtub. I will ask Maud to help her with bathing herself.

Andile: Okay dad.

Andile picked me up and went to his room with me. He placed me on top of his bed and walked out of the room. I was worried that maybe if Samkelo can see that I am crippled he will leave me. I didn't want to loose him but I told myself that I will keep on believing. Aunt Maud came in while I was still thinking. She told me not to worry myself about it too much. She picked me up and put me inside the tub after taking off my clothes. I bathed myself. I drained the water while I was still inside the tub. I wiped my body. She came back and I lotioned using Andile's things. I wore my uniform. Andile came and picked me up again. He put me down on the chair and I ate my breakfast with everyone looking at me with pity. I wasn't crying anymore because I knew that Lizeka did this to me so crying wasn't an option. Her grandmother was a Sangoma so anything was possible with her.

Me: Who's taking me to school?

Andile: It's me.

Me: Since I don't have a wheelchair you will pick me up and walk with me inside the school?

Andile: Yes I don't mind mama's Joy. (I giggled)

Dad: After school you will drive with her to the hospital I want to check her up.

Andile: Okay dad.

Dad: (standing up) Good luck then my baby.

Me: Thanks dad. Can I have a few-

Andile&Dad: ...Hundreds please.

Me: (laughing) Yes dad.

Dad: It's always hundreds. I wonder what happened to ten rands at least.

We all laughed and he gave me the money. He tapped my shoulder and left. I was left with the guys.

Andile: Let's go then Joy.

Me: Please go and take my pencil case in my room.

He nodded and left. He came back with my pencil case. Qiniso offered to pick me up. He picked me up and buckled me on the front seat in my brother's car.

Me: Thank you.

Qini: It's my pleasure. Good luck on your exam.

Me: Thanks.

He nodded and left. Andile started the car and we drove off.

Andile: So tell me who is these enemy of yours who made you cripple?

Me: Um enemy?

Andile: Come on sisi you can't just wake up with crippled legs.

Me: I don't know Patrick maybe I have hidden enemies out there that I don't know at all.

Andile: If you happen to find out who is she or he please do tell me.

Me: I will.

Andile: Good.

We arrived at school and he opened the door for me and picked me up. He closed the door using his foot. He walked with me inside the school and all eyes were on us. The security stopped him.

Secu: Young man. This is total disrespect, carrying your girlfriend inside the school.

Andile: She's my sister baba. She can't walk so I have to take her to her class because she's writing and at the moment she doesn't have the wheelchair.

Secu: Sorry Thandeka sisi. Good luck with your paper today.

Me: Thanks Bab' Nkosi.

He walked with me towards my class. He was making me laugh along the way. And the girls were drooling over him. And I was laughing at that too. We arrived in my class and I showed him my desk. Lizeka froze as soon as she saw us. I pretended like nothing happened at all.

Andile put me on my desk.

Me: Please bhuti go and call Samkelo for me on the Commerce class. You will ask directions to the learners.

Andile: Okay. Why do you need him?

Me: Really? Why do you need Bontle sometimes?

Andile: because I want to kiss her and spend time with her.

Me: I also want that too.

He laughed and left. Lizeka came close to me.

Lizzy:(faking sadness) What happened to your legs?

Me: Who said something happened to my legs?

Lizzy: Come on why will your brother pick you up if your legs are fine?

Me: Why don't you ask him?

Lizzy: Oh okay. Why didn't you tell me that your brother was coming here? Maybe I was going to look more nicer.

Me: Please get off my case.

She left when Andile and Samkelo walked in. Andile kissed my cheek and left me with

Samkelo.

Sam: What happened bbe?

Me: I woke up crippled by so God knows what.

Sam: They are just jealous enemies bbe don't mind them please. You will get through this.

Me: So you won't leave me because of my legs?

Sam: What? No I won't do that. I love you with or without your legs my love.

Me: I am glad to hear that bbe.

Sam:(kissing my forehead) I will come back and fetch you when it's time to write then.

Me: Okay thanks.

He nodded with a smile and left. After a few minutes Miss Zungu came and marked the register.

Around 8:30am we were told to move and go to the exam venue. I stayed behind.

MissZ: Why are sitting behind Thandeka?

Sam:(coming in) I am here to get her.

MissZ: Ndunakazi you are really trying to-

Me: I can't walk Miss Zungu.

She didn't say anything but she was shocked. Samkelo came towards me.

Sam: I hope I won't fall with you.

Me: (laughing) please Samke don't even try.

Sam: Relax Joy.

I smiled and he picked me up. We left Miss Zungu behind. Samkelo walked inside the venue and expected all eyes were on us. Teachers needed an explanation to why Samkelo was carrying me and he explained that I can't walk. They were all surprised. We settled down and we were given question papers and answer sheets. As I saw the paper I was all smiles when I looked at the questions. As soon as we were told to start writing I wasted no time. Within two hours I was I was done. Samkelo handed in his script and I also raised my hand. They took the paper. Samkelo was told to take me to the Principal's office. And he did that.

Sam: So how was the paper?

Me: It was just perfect thanks to you.

Sam: I am happy to be your hero hey.

Me: Ya yah hey.

We laughed and walked inside the office. He was told to leave. They called my brother to come and fetch me. They asked me what was the problem and I couldn't answer them. Andile came with a wheelchair that I was going to control for myself. I sat on it and I controlled the gear. He assisted me to get inside the car and we drove to the hospital. Dad was already waiting for us and he did the test and X-ray. And I was told to wait for the result. All I could do was hope...

Days went by and waiting for the results was hard on it own but that didn't stop me from studying. I was no longer going to school. I only went to school when we were writing. Samkelo was there for me emotionally and physically. He used to come after school just to check up on me but only when dad was not around. But when he came for Maths there was no problem at all. We wrote our Maths Papers and they were not tough because I was fully prepared and Samkelo was happy about paper two. So we were on the lounge with Bontle, Andile and Edward. My father hired a nurse for me. Qiniso was with his daughter that day. Dad came in with a sad face. He sat down on the couch and placed the white envelope on the coffee table.

Dad: Those are your results baby.

Me: And what is wrong with me dad?

Dad: Umm.. I am afraid nothing is wrong with your legs or your health.

Me: I don't understand.

Bontle: But baba don't you think this must be a spiritual thing?

Dad: How Bontle?

Bontle: I think it's witchcraft. I mean she just woke up in the morning with crippled legs.

Andile: Yes I agree with Bontle dad. I think she must consult Inyanga.

Bontle: No bbe. She must use a different weapon. We don't know how powerful is this muti they used. And how powerful the one we will get to battle with the other.

Dad: So what do you suggest?

Bontle: I suggest prayer. There's a woman who helped my mother when she was also bewitched but it was idliso on her.

Dad: Where can we get this woman.

Bontle: She lives at a place called Matshane, outside Engwelezane township. It's kind of a rural area. So Thandeka will live with her for a few days until she comes back fine.

Dad: Thandeka are you done with your exam?

Me: I only have English tomorrow then I am done.

Dad: Okay then hopefully by tomorrow you will go to that woman who will help you. I will go to her in the morning with Bontle's mother and afternoon we will go with you.

Me: Okay dad. (Crying)

Andile: (hugging me) Don't cry sisi everything will be alright. God is on your side.

I nodded and excused myself. I drove my chair to my room and I tried to get myself up in my bed but I couldn't. I tried harder and I fell on the floor and screamed. Andile and Edward came to my room and saw me on the floor. They came towards me. I just broke down and cried my lungs out. I felt helpless and useless. My brother picked me up and placed me inside my bed covers. He wiped my tears.

My phone rang and Edward handed it over to Andile. He looked at it.

Andile: it's Samkelo.

Me: (sniffing) I don't want to talk to him bhuti.

Andile: He cares about you Thandeka. Try and talk to him maybe he will calm you down.

Me: Okay. (He gave me the phone and they left)

I answered the phone. And wiped my tears.

Me: Ndunakazi.

Sam: MaDhlomo. Baby are you alright. You don't sound okay.

Me: I am...(crying) I am not fine Samkelo. The results came back today and they say I have nothing at all. I am crippled Samkelo. I am just a bunch of rotten potatoes.

Sam: Hey Hey bbe look? You love Passions the Soapie right?

Me:(sniffing) Yes I love it.

Sam: Look at Ethan's mother Ivy. She is a beautiful woman and she has class but she sitting on a wheelchair similar to yours regardless of that, nothing stops her from getting what she wants or from doing whatever she wants to do. She makes people's lives miserable while she is on that chair. And do you know the good thing she does?

Me: What is that?

Sam: (chuckles) She never stops loving Sam Ethan's real father even if she's on that chair. She still believes that Sam belongs to her and one day Sam will find his way back to her arms.

Me:(laughing) So I am Ivy now Ethan's mother?

Sam: Yes and I am Sam Ethan's father. Though I am not apart from you but please don't stop loving me because you feel helpless on that chair. Don't let that chair stop you from getting what you want. But I am not saying make people's lives miserable.

Me: (laughing) I promise bbe I won't do that. Thanks for that little Ivy example motivation. It really made me feel better.

Sam: No problem my love get some rest then I love you my Ivy.

Me: I love you too my Sam.

I giggled and we hung up. I placed my phone aside and I drifted off to dreamland.

Next morning I woke up and rubbed my eyes. I was in need of the toilet so badly. I wanted to pee but I couldn't go to the bathroom. I screamed for help but nobody came to help me. I took my phone checked the time, it was around 3am. I called Andile, he didn't pick up. I called my dad, he didn't pick up, I called Edward still he didn't pick up and I tried Qniso he didn't pick up too. I looked around for my wheelchair and it was far away from my bed. I tried stepping out of my bed by placing my hands on the floor and I tried to bring my whole body down I fell on the floor. It wasn't nice at all. I tried moving to the bathroom using my butts but I couldn't make it to the bathroom. I peed on the floor. I couldn't go back inside my bed it was hard. I just cried on the floor until I fell asleep on it. I was woken up by someone shaking me. I opened my eyes and it was Andile.

Andile: What happened Thandeka?

Me: Where is my nurse?

Andile: She's not here yet. Sisi why are you on the floor.

Me: Why didn't you answer your phone when I called you earlier?

Andile: (trying to help) I was dead sleeping. Sorry.

Me: (shouting) Stop! Stop! My nurse will help me. Please leave my room now!

Andile: Thandeka-

Me: Leave now! Andile just leave damnit!

He left me on the floor. I slept there crying until my nurse came and assisted me with bathing. My shower had a chair that I sat on when I was showering. I showered and brushed my teeth inside the shower. I wiped my body and the nurse came and picked me up. My room was clean and the floor was dry. I lotioned and wore my uniform. I took my pencil case and joined the family for breakfast.

I didn't greet them. I just took a plate and helped myself with the food.

Dad: Thandeka why didn't you greet us?

Me: Why did you all ignore my calls when I called you in the morning?

Dad: We were sleeping Thandeka.

Me: I forgot to greet you then. Qniso please take me to school now.

Dad: Thandeka Dhlomo Respect??

Me: Bhuti Qniso.

He nodded and stood up. I called my nurse and I drove my chair out of the house. The nurse tried buckling me inside the car. Qniso tried to help.

Me: Who said I need your help?

Qini: I was helping the nurse actually not you.

Me: Back off nobody needs your help. Nxx!

He nodded and stepped inside the car. The nurse sat on the backseat. Qniso drove off to school. We arrived at school. The nurse stepped out of the car with the chair and placed me on it.

Me: Thanks bye.

Nurse: Bye. Have a nice day.

Me: You too. Thanks.

I controlled my chair and went inside the school. And since it was still early I went to a quiet spot. I listened to music on my E250. Nothing was good about the music. I threw my phone on the floor and cried my lungs out. I felt so useless and helpless. I cried until I couldn't. I felt someone kissing my cheek and I looked up. It was Samkelo. He smiled at me but I didn't smile back I just stared at him.

Sam: Thandeka are you alright?

Me: (clearing throat) Uhhh yes I am fine and you?

Sam: I am good. Were you crying? And what happened to your phone?

Me: It fell off by a mistake. I wasn't crying.

He picked up my phone and he looked at me because it was ruined. It didn't look like a phone that fell on the ground by mistake. He took out the memory card and the sim card. He wrapped it with a tissue and placed it inside my pencil case. He threw the phone away because it was damaged.

Sam: Are you sure that you're fine?

Me: Yes I am sure.

Sam: Okay. I want you to be my partner for the ball

Me: I am not going to the matric ball.

Sam: Thandeka please. You need to do something that will cheer you up and forget about your legs a little.

Me:(sarcastic laugh) Forget about my legs? Did you hear what you just said? How can I forget about my legs when I can't walk? They can't take me wherever I want to go? How can I forget?

Sam: I am just trying to cheer you up Thandeka.

Me: I didn't ask you to cheer me up. I didn't ask you to try anything so please leave me alone.

Sam: Thandeka-

Me: I said leave me the fuck alone Samkelo Ndunakazi. Leave me alone damnit!

Sam: I am not leaving! You won't tell me what to do. I am here because I want to and I have to be here for you. So I won't listen to that shit you just said!

I didn't answer him I just broke down and cried. He went down on my level and held me tight. I cried inside his chest and he brushed my back. I cried until I was calm and he let go.

Sam: Everything will be alright. Now let's get you to your class.

I nodded and he insisted on pushing me instead. He left me by the door because Miss Zungu was inside the class already. I went through and went to my desk. Lizeka looked at me and smiled. I payed no attention to her. I concentrated on MissZ.

Lizzy: (whispering) Give up the boy and you will get your legs back darling.

I gave her a dead stare and I didn't answer her. She had new friends and I didn't care about it at all

At 9am we wrote our paper and after the paper my dad and Bontle came and fetch me. I couldn't say goodbye to Samkelo nor tell him about me leaving. And Bontle told me that I am allowed to use my phone where I was going to stay. We drove to Matshane. Along the way I was hoping and praying that I get my miracle..

We arrived where I was going to stay. There were three houses. One big house, and the other houses were two rooms flat houses. I was taken to a two room flat house. We sat on the couches provided while waiting for the lady.

Dad: No disrespecting people around here if things don't go your way Thandeka.

Me: Yes dad. I am sorry about this morning.

Dad: It's Okay baby. You know I wasn't going to ignore your call intentionally.

Me: Yes dad.

Bontle: You will be fine Skizwa you will see.

Me: Thanks Skizwa

The woman came inside the house. She was a tall yellow bone woman and fat not thick but fat. She sat on couch and looked at me for a very long time. Then she started praying. I think for over an hour because there were times where she'll just say "mmm...mmmm...yebo

...mmm". She even prayed in tongues. When she was done she looked at me again.

Her: If you believe that the miracle you were praying for can happen then stand up and walk. I looked at her then I looked at my dad who had confusion. I closed my eyes and told my heart that I believe that I have my miracle. I held my wheelchair and I tried to stand up. I was scared but I told myself that I won't let fear planted by the devil to overcrowd my heart and my mind. I saw myself standing on my feet. I just cried right there on the house. I cried even louder. My dad tried to comfort me but the lady told her to leave me like that. I started opening my mouth and thanked the Lord.

Me: You're God our healer. Thank you Lord for healing my legs. You deserve the honor and the glory. Let your will be done Lord and help me deal with hatred that I have within me because of my legs. Please father keep on protecting my family and my friend (referring to Samkelo ) Thank you Jesus for freeing me from the devil's chains. Glory to God. Amen.

Others: Amen.

I walked and went to sit next to the lady. She held my hand and smiled. She gave me a tight hug and let go but she didn't let go of my hand.

Dad: The Lord has shown himself to us through you. Thank you sisi.

Her: Praises belongs to the man above.

Dad: Amen. How can we make the offering?

Her: Anything that comes from your heart baba.

Dad nodded and took out a cheque book. He signed a cheque and gave it mama. She told us to stand up and we did. She prayed as she was taking the cheque.

Dad: I guess we will go back home with her

Her: Yes. And I hope to all the ways you will travel using your feet young lady the house of the Lord is included there.

Me: I will make sure mama. Thanks. (She nodded)

Dad: Take the chair then Thandeka let's go back home.

The lady: Are you planning on making her sit on that chair again?

Dad: No.

The lady: Then leave the chair. Her faith will carry her through. And sisi stay away from that girl.

Me: Yebo mama.

We did the handshake and we walked back to the car. I was so damn happy that I had my legs back that meant no more peeing on myself and being bitter. I was just going to rejoice and be happy that I had my legs back. Dad was also happy. He couldn't stop saying "Oh thank you Lord my baby is back". All I could do was to smile to myself.

We arrived at home it was dark outside. We stepped out of the car and walked inside the house. Andile saw me and jumped for joy. He came to me and hugged me tightly.

Andile: Thank God you're back on your feet again. Now you will stop snapping at us.

Qini: You can say that again Andile.

We all laughed and they stood up and gave me a hug. Dad went to his room and I threw myself on the couch.

Edward: So the party is still on then?

Andile: Joy is back so why not?

Bontle: And we're not late at all because it will start at 8oclock.

Me: I am tired. (They laughed)

Qini: Come on like seriously?

Me: I am kidding. Let's go to the party but it's my first time going to a party so bhuti please look after me.

Andile: You know I got your back sisi wami.

Me: Okay what are we going to wear?

Bontle: It's a freaky party of course and the dress code is all black Skwiza.

Me: All black? If you are not wearing all black?

Bontle: Obvious you won't go inside the party.

Me:(swallowing hard) uhm. I think I should go lie down a bit. You will call me later.

Bontle: Is everything alright?

Me:(faking a smile) Yah Yah sure. Everything is cool.

I stood up and went to my room. I locked up the door and I threw myself on the bed. I took my old phone. I had missed calls from Samkelo and I called him back. He picked up.

Sam: My love.

Me: Hey bbe how are you?

Sam: Sad that I didn't see you after school and I tried calling but you didn't pick up.

Me: Sorry about that but I had to go somewhere with my dad after the paper.

Sam: Okay. You got me worried for a second.

Me:(laughing) Sorry. Well bbe Ivy is no longer on her wheelchair. God gave her legs a second chance.

Sam: Really? (With excitement) Bbe please don't joke like that.

Me: I am serious bbe. A woman of faith I don't know her name. She prayed for me and I stood up and walked again.

Sam: Wow! God is wonderful. So Matric dance?

Me: Yes I am going to be your partner.

Sam: Thank you my love but we have a little time left. It's just a week. I guess we will buy the clothes instead of having them designed from scratch.

Me: Yes. That's a good idea. And the girls?

Sam: I will send a text message asking them to meet up with me in my house. And I will officially apologize.

Me: Do I really have to be there?

Sam: Yes just to witness the whole thing. You will sit with them too. That's for protecting you because we may never know what they might do to you. Though most people know about us but they still see me as that player.

Me: I totally understand. And Lizeka?

Sam: I have apologized to her. It's her own business if she doesn't want to forgive me because I have honestly played my part.

Me: Okay then...um bbe so is it seriously compulsory for us not to wear all black?

Sam: Yes Thandeka. Please don't make that mistake of wearing black only. I don't want to find myself going back to that miserable life.

Me: How?

Sam: wearing all black again. It's like digging the sin you have buried and reliving it all over but on your own, without the group. So please don't think about wearing those colours.

Me: So what must I do because my brother wants us to go to the party-

Sam: The freaky party?

Me: Yes.

Sam: Please don't go to that party I beg you.

Me: Samkelo come on maybe nothing will happen.

Sam: Thandeka! Thandeka! Just don't go to the freaking party man! Argh!

He hung on me and I placed my phone on my bedside and looked at the ceiling thinking about whether to go or not to go.

I stood up and went to the bathroom. I took a shower. I love Samkelo but our relationship had a lot of terms and conditions. I thought about going to the party but add a little gold to my colour but Bontle said all black. I had no choice but to sit down and forget about the freaky

party. I went back to my room and lotioned. I wore my short pyjamas and put on the gown on top. I went to the kitchen and made something to eat. They all came to the kitchen all dressed up and looking good. Edward was more than cute. I found myself drooling over him but I snapped back to reality as soon as I saw that he noticed me.

Bontle: And then why are you on your pyjamas?

Me: I...I don't feel alright so you'll just have to go without me.

Andile: But the main purpose was go out with you Joy what's up with the slow down now?

Me: I know, I know Andile but I will go some other time relax.

Edward: There won't be another party like this. And I thought you were my date. Now I am the only one without a date.

Me: Bhuti Qiniso doesn't have a date.

Qini: I will meet her at the party.

Me: Oh.... Um I am sorry Edward. But maybe you will get someone there or even get laid.  
(They laughed)

Andile: What do you know about getting laid?

Me: Duh! I am 18 years Andile.

Bontle: Okay let's go gents.

Me: Bye guys.

Them: Whatever!

Me: Let me heal your broken heart Edward.

I went to him and gave him a tight hug. He wrapped up his muscular arms around my waist and we let go. I kissed his cheek and giggled.

Edward: Not even a baby kiss.

Andile: (pulling him by his arms) Hheyi Brah these is my sister and she's taken. Let's go. I laughed and watched them leaving.

I ate my food and switched off the lights afterwards because dad was sleeping. I went to Andile's room and took his laptop. I went to my room and watched some movies. I watched movies till late. My phone rang and it was Samkelo. I picked up.

Me: Hello.

Sam: Where are you?

Me: I am in my room.

Sam: Thanks for not going to the party hey.

Me: Okay.

Sam: Can I see you now?

Me: It's late and I want to sleep.

Sam: I will be driving my mother's car.

Me: Um no I will see you tomorrow at least.

Sam: Okay. I love you. Goodnight.

Me: Thanks. I love you too. And goodnight.

Sam: Thanks.

We hung up the call after the awkward silence, I was waiting for him to hang up but he didn't then I guess we hung up at the same time. I closed the laptop and I decided to sleep.

The following morning I woke up and did my morning prayer. I went to the bathroom and showered. After showering I wore my white simple dress and I went to the kitchen. Aunt Maud was making breakfast.

Me: Morning Aunt Maud.

Maud: Oh Thandeka you're back on your feet again. Makabongwe uThixo mntanami.

Me: Amen.

She gave me a hug and I offered to help her. We settled the table and the family came one by one. They all looked tired and drained. I smiled at them. Me: So how was the party?

Edward: Don't even ask dude.

Me:(laughing) come on what happened?

Andile: Thandeka you're making noise sisi.

Me: Shame sorry. (Dad joined us) Where is Bontle?

Andile: She's at her house.

Dad: What happened to you?

Me: They went out partying dad.

Dad: Yoh! You did well baby by not going to that party.

Me:(giggles) Yes daddy.

Dad: Eeh kids I have an announcement to make.

Us: Yes! (We all looked at him)

Dad: I am bringing someone over for dinner tonight.

Me: A colleague?

Andile: A stepmother you child!

Me: Dad? A stepmother? I thought you were fine without a woman.

Dad: Andile???

Andile: I am sorry dad but I had to say it as it is. Mam' Nomsa is cool.

Me: Oh so you know her and I don't? How come?

Dad: I was going to tell you when the right time comes Thandeka.

I stood up and went to my room. I locked up the door. I threw myself on my bed and cried. I just missed my mom and I didn't want dad to have another woman in his life. I was going to be second best. And the fact that Andile knew about it and I didn't made me angry. I took my phone and I had a text from Samkelo saying we will meet at the mall. Dad came and knocked. I opened the door for him. He went inside my room and sat on my bed.

Dad: Baby I am not trying to replace your mother but I like Nomsa and I want to be with her okay?

Me: Okay dad.

He stood up and gave me a hug. I giggled and he let go.

Me: Dad I am going out. Can I have-

He took out his wallet and gave me the money.

Me: Thanks papa.

Dad: I have been meaning to ask you. Are you going to the matric dance?

Me: Yes I am going dad.

Dad: Tell me if you need cash I will give you. Don't use your cards.

Me: Okay dad I will.

Dad: good. (He left for work I guess)

I stood up and went to my room. I picked out an outfit. I wore a white high waist jeans and a maroon crop top. I wore maroon Chuck Taylor all star and I tied up my hair in a bun. I took my sling bag and packed a few things. I put on red lipstick and I made my way to the kitchen and drank water. I texted Samkelo telling him that I was leaving and he said we would meet by Spur.

Andile: Going out?

Me: Uhm yeah.

Andile: You look beautiful.

Me: Thanks. Will you give me a ride to the mall.

Andile: Sure.

He took his keys and I followed him. He drove to the mall. Along the way he was telling me about Nomsa. I wasn't ready to have a stepmother but she seemed pretty cool.

We arrived by the mall. I stepped out of the car and Andile drove off to see Bontle. They were very much in love and I loved their relationship. I went to spur and I saw Samkelo. I

walked to him and he met me halfway. We shared a hug and we went to sit down. We looked at the menu and I was told to order anything that I liked. We placed the order and waited for it.

Sam: I want us to go around and check some dresses after this.

Me: Okay I don't mind. What colour do you prefer?

Sam: I don't know we will see.

Me: Samkelo are you still mad about the party thing?

Sam: Not exactly just that I didn't think you would even try taking chances on something that you know we shouldn't do.

Me: I am sorry Samkelo. Bbe it won't happen again. I promise okay?

Sam: Okay my love. I love you okay?

Me: I love you too.

Our order was ready and we ate with little chats here and there. After eating Samkelo paid and we went to different shops. We didn't find anything. We took a taxi to the beach and we walked on the sand. Just talking, taking pictures and we went to play games. I bought ice cream for us and after that we walked back to get the taxi.

Sam: I had a great time today bbe thank you.

Me: Thank you. It was great indeed.

Sam: I think we must go to Durban maybe we will find something.

Me: Okay I will tell my dad.

Sam: Okay.

He held my waist and kissed me intensely. We broke the kiss and hugged each other.

Sam: I love you.

Me: I love you too.

We went our separate ways. I went back home and I felt a little bit nervous about meeting Nomsa

I walked inside the gates and there was a silver yaris packed outside. I went inside the house and the family was on the table. They decided to start dinner without me. I went to the table and I looked at Nomsa. She was too young in my eyes. I mean my dad was going to be 60 years soon and Nomsa looked like she was 30something years old. But she was totally beautiful. I pulled a chair and sat down.

Me: Sanibona (greetings)

Them: Yebo. (Greeting back)

Me: Really Andile and the crew I wasn't greeting you. (They laughed)

Nomsa: Can we maintain some table manners please.

Me: (low tone) Bossy hey. Efika nje.

Dad: Thandeka what was that?

Me: Uhm nothing dad.

Dad: Nomsa these is my last born Thandeka. Thandeka these is Nomsa my partner.

Me: (faking smile) Nice to meet you Nomsa.

Nomsa: I would appreciate it if you can call me mom.

Me: But you're not my mother.

Dad: Thandeka!

Me: No dad. She's not my mother. I won't call her that. I rather say sisi Nomsa or Anti Nomsa but definitely not mother.

Andile: Thandeka show some respect please.

I didn't say anything. I dished up for myself. And ate because they were already eating.

Me: So aunt Nomsa how old are you? Don't you think you're a bit young to date my dad.

Nomsa: Love knows no age.

Me: Oh Love? I thought dad likes you. I didn't know that he loves you.  
Nomsa: If he doesn't love me young lady he wasn't going to ask me to marry him.  
Dad: MaNkosi??  
Me:(tears forming) Marriage? Dad? Andile?  
Andile: I didn't know about that too Joy.  
Nomsa: Oh please we've been together for a year. And yeah we are getting married on December.  
Me: Papa? (With tears)  
Dad: I was going to tell you Thandeka baby.  
Me: Mxm.  
I stood up and went to my room. I closed my door and went to my wore drop. I took my mother's picture and sat with it on my bed. I placed it on my chest and cried.  
Andile walked in and he sat next to me on my bed.  
Andile: Thandeka please give dad a chance to be happy for once in his life after mom.  
Me: So we don't make him happy Andile?  
Andile: We do make him happy but you know that he is a man and he has needs.  
Me: He's old Andile. Why must he date now and he didn't even tell me that he's getting married?  
Andile: He was going to tell you Thandeka.  
Me: And I don't like that woman she's too young for my dad. I think even aunt Maud is fine to marry my dad.  
Andile: Yes she is but dad likes Nomsa.  
Me: But we can make him like Aunt Maud. Maybe set them up for a date.  
Andile: Thandeka!?  
Me: Yeah Andile this can work. Please help me before you leave.  
Andile: No! Stop ruining dad's chance to be happy again. He loves Nomsa just accept it.  
He stood up and left my room. I sat on my bed and thought of the plan to get my dad and aunt Maud together. I was going through with it with or without Andile's help. I smiled to myself, I kissed my mom's picture and went back to the kitchen.  
They were having dessert so I joined in too. I helped myself and I ate. Nomsa was giving me all nasty looks and I will just smile at her telling my heart that "I will bring her down" I giggled at that.  
Nomsa: Mind to share the joke with us young lady.  
Me: Sorry sisi but my name is Thandeka.  
Nomsa: I will call you whatever I want to call you because you're such a disrespectful little pig.  
Me: What? Dad?  
Dad: She's right you have no respect at all Thandeka.  
Me: But Nomsa provoked me.  
Dad: Provoked you? You know what. You can forget about going to that matric dance. I will not pay for it because you're full of yourself.  
Me: Dad you can't do that.  
Andile: Dad that's unfair to Joy.  
Dad: I didn't ask for your opinion Andile! She's no longer going and that's final.  
I decided to shut up and continued with my dessert with tears streaming down my cheeks. After dessert I washed my dish and I went to my room leaving everyone behind. I locked my room and I cried myself to sleep.

The next morning I woke up it was a Friday. The school were closing for June holidays and I had to go to school. I went to the bathroom and did the daily routine. I wore my uniform and I

tied up my hair in a bun. I put on a lipgloss. I took my sling bag because nothing much was going to happen at school that day. I took my red lipstick and went to the kitchen I found Aunt Maud making breakfast. I kissed her cheek and she giggled.

Me: You look beautiful today but let me add a little something.

Maud: What? (With a smile)

Me: (taking out my lipstick) Close your eyes aunty.

She closed her eyes and I wiped the lipstick on a tissue just remove my lips touch on it. I put on the lipstick on her lips and she looked lovely. I giggled and took out my face mirror. I placed it at a distance in front of her face.

Me: You can open them now.

Maud: (widening her eyes) Wow. I...look different.

Me: And beautiful at the same time.

Maud: I think I should buy myself one.

Me: Yes! Now let me help you with breakfast

She giggled and we made breakfast together. The boys joined in. We set the table and dad was not with us. Andile looked at aunt Maud and smiled. Then he looked at me.

Andile: And then what did you do?

Me: Just added a little decor. I don't think that's bad. Do you?

Andile: Thandeka stop this please?

Me: Oh come on Andile don't be such a bore. Anyway where is your dad?

Edward: He's no longer yours?

Me: He is but uhm... Never mind that. Andile where is he?

Andile: I don't know.

Qini: He went out with Sisi Nomsa for breakfast.

Me: Oh I hope he will give me the money for my winter school. Since I won't be going to the matric dance.

Andile: I am sorry about that you know.

Me: No it's fine. I guess it's life hey.

Dad and Nomsa walked in. They were all lovey dovey. I stood up and went to the kitchen with my plate. I rinsed it and said my goodbyes to Aunt Maud. I went back to the dining table.

Me: Good morning dad.

Dad: You only see me or?

Me: Good morning dad and aunt Nomsa.

Them: Morning.

Me: Dad I need cash to pay for winter school classes that I will attend at Khombindlela high school ENgwelezane.

Nomsa: What's wrong about attending winter school at your school?

Me: Dad please can I get the money?

Dad: Didn't you hear Nomsa asking you a question?

Me: Okay I guess I won't get the money again. Bhuti Qiniso do you mind taking me to school?

Edward: Can I be your driver today Joy?

Me: I don't mind at all Edward. Brah Qini I am giving you a day off.

He laughed. Edward stood up and followed me to the door. Before I walked out, dad yelled at me.

Dad: Thandeka I was still talking to you damnit!!!

Me: Why should I explain now dad because you know that my Science teacher who happens to be your friend suggested that I attend classes there so why should I explain myself now?

Dad: Come back here Thandeka.

Me: I have to go to school. I will be late. I will attend at my school it's fine.  
I grabbed Edward's arm and we walk out of the house. We stepped inside the car and he drove off.

Edward: Can I pay for your matric dance expenses?

Me: What??

Edward: I mean I can see that it really means something to you and I would like to pay for it just to make you happy because I know it's horrible to have a stepmother like that.

Ms: Uhm Edward No. I am fine. I won't go. You don't have to worry yourself.

Edward: But I just want to help.

Me: No dude I am fine.

Edward: Okay let me pay for your winter school.

Me: Even if you pay for it. I won't have transport and I don't want to stay with my grandmother.

Edward: I will cover all the cost.

Me: Are you serious?

Edward: Yes.

Me: Why are you doing this?

Edward: Because you're my friend's sister and I would like to help. And I like you because you're passionate about your education.

Me: Uhm. Thanks Edward.

Edward: My pleasure. So if the school comes out just call. We will go to the bank and pay for the winter. And buy you a bus ticket.

Me: Thanks Brah that means a whole lot to me.

Edward: I am glad I can help.

I smiled and in no time we arrived by my school. He walked out and opened the door for me. "How impressive" I thought to myself. I smiled as I stepped out of the car. I gave him a hug and I walked to the gate. Samkelo was already waiting for me. I gave him a hug and a baby kiss.

Sam: You look beautiful.

Me: As always right?

Sam:(chuckles) I guess. (We walked) so did you talk to your dad about going to Durban?

Me: Uhm.. About that I am no longer going to the ball bbe.

Sam: What? Why?

Me: My dad said I don't have respect at all so he won't go.

Sam: I am sorry to hear that bbe but what did you do?

Me: I didn't like his girlfriend so yeah.

Sam: Your dad has a girlfriend?

Me: Fiance actually.

Sam: Yoh! That's hectic but bbe we can go to the after party then. We won't go to the ball.

Me: Okay I don't mind. I don't have to buy new clothes right?

Sam: No I won't buy them too.

Me: Okay love we will go then.

He smiled and kissed my cheek. The Bell rang and he went to his class. I walked inside mine and Lizeka was inside the class. She just froze when she saw me. I just smiled at her.

Me: Lizzy.

Lizzy:.....

Me: Are you alright dear?

Lizzy:

Me: I guess she's a statue.

I sat down on my desk and Miss Zungu came in with the register.

MissZ: Oh Thandeka. It's nice to see you on your feet again.

Me: Thank you. (The class clapped hands)

MissZ: Lizeka dear are you fine.

We all looked at her and she was still puzzled. Miss Zungu came to her and shook her then she snapped back to reality.

Lizzy: Uhhh Yeah Yeah I am fine.

MissZ: Okay good.

She continued with marking the register and we all just chilled after that. The school president/head girl. Came and addressed us about the matric dance and the after party. After that we were doing nothing. I went to Samkelo's class and I found him sitting with Sbahle on his desk. He saw me and stood up. I walked away. He ran after me. He stopped me from walking by holding my hand.

Sam: Bbe stop please look it's not what you think.

Me: It's not what I think and how do you know what I think?

Sam: I just assume.

Me: I thought she was no longer your friend.

Sam: She isn't my friend anymore we were just talking about general stuff.

Me: Don't fuck my heart up Samkelo please.

Sam: I am sorry bbe I won't.

Me: Okay.

Sam: Uhm so tomorrow the girls are coming home. I mean like all of them agreed. I will use my mom's garage because she won't be home.

Me: Okay what time?

Sam: 11am sharp.

Me: Okay I will be there.

Sam: Thanks. Let's go and buy something to eat.

I nodded and he held my hand. We walked together. And bought something to eat. We found a spot, sat down and ate together.

Lizzy:(from our back) Hey guys.

Us:( turning back) Hey.

Lizzy: Can I talk to you Thandeka.

Me: I don't wanna talk to you.

Lizzy: Just wanted to apologize for what I did to you.

Me: Okay I forgive you.

Lizzy: Thanks. We're still friends?

Me: Definitely not.

Lizzy: Okay. Thanks anyway.

Me: sure. (She walked away)

Sam:(looking at me) And then what was that about?

Me: She's talking about the tension between us. You know. Her loving you and all that.

Sam: Oh Okay.

We continued chatting while eating. I texted Edward telling him about when to come because the school was going to be out early that day.

When the school was out Edward was waiting for me at the gate. I hugged Samkelo. And let go.

Sam: And why isn't your driver picking you up?

Me: Arh. Edward offered to drive me to school.

Sam: And you agreed?

Me: Uhm yeah. He's my brother's friend so there is no problem at all.

Sam: Oh Okay. Bye then I love you.

Me: I love you too bye.

He kissed my forehead and left. I went to the car and we drove off. We went to Nedbank and paid for the winter school. I didn't know where to buy bus tickets around Richards bay so since it was still early. We took a tour and drove to Empangeni bus station. We bought the ticket for two weeks and we drove to town for lunch. Edward wanted to buy some shorts at Identity so we walked together to Identity. We were looking around when someone tapped my shoulder. I turned back and it was Sbahle.

Sbahle: I wonder if Sam knows that you're here shopping around with a white boy here?

Me: Please mind your business.

Sbahle: Oh so you're cheating on him?

Me: You-

Edward: You don't to explain yourself to her. Sam knows that you love him and you won't cheat on him. Now let's go and pay.

I nodded, I left Sbahle and friend standing there by the accessories. We went to pay for his shorts and we went to the car and drove straight home while listening to music and singing along..

We arrived at home and dad was on the couch with Nomsa. They were talking and laughing. I looked at Edward and he smiled.

Me: Sanibona.

Nomsa: Wow! Yebo.

Dad: How are you baby?

Me: I am fine.

I went to my room leaving them to bond while they still can because I was also working on my own secret mission. Talking about missions maybe I must ask Samkelo to help me because he is used to missions. I thought to myself and took my phone. I dialed his number he didn't pick up. I tried again and he picked up.

Sam: Hello.

Me: Oh hey are you alright?

Sam: Are you dating him?

Me: Him who?

Sam: You know exactly who. Edward!

Me: Edward? As in like Edward my brother's friend? But we spoke about this Samkelo.

Sam: Yeah we did but yet again you were all cosy with him Empangeni.

Me: Oh So your so called "friend" told you that and you believed her. And tell me why would I cheat on you after all the shit I went through because of you? After loosing the function of my legs because of you. Give me one good reason for me to cheat on you?

Sam: You lost the function of your legs because of me? And how did that happened?

Me: Don't avoid my question.

Sam: You can't hold me responsible for your legs and you don't even bother to explain it to me.

Me: Your fucken dick slave bewitched me damnit! Nxx! And you'll accuse me of cheating on you just because your friend with benefits told you so? Fuck you! Arghaa!

I hung up the call and I sighed heavily. I stood up and took off my uniform. I went to take a cold shower just to calm myself down. I was angry that he had the nerve to ask me that "Ka you kaking him" I thought that out loud. Mimicking his words in a funny way. I went back to my room and I lotioned my body. I wore my warm pyjamas. I went to the kitchen. I was looking for aunt Maud But I found Andile on the kitchen. He was cooking.

Me: Okay. Patrick you're cooking?

Andile: (looking at me) Yes Joy I am cooking. I also think this Nomsa is not cool after all.

Me: (laughing) She told you to cook?

Andile: Yes dude and dad supported her. So what is your plan with Maud?

Me:(going closer to him) I think we must give her a little make over. (Whispering)

Andile: You know what. We must tell her that every Friday she must come to work on her casual clothes. Aunt Maud has more meat on her bones just like our mother.

Me: Yeah! That's way too clever. I think we must set her up with someone and send the pictures to dad anonymously.

Andile: No Joy. We must not hurt our father on this process. I think-

Nomsa: (from our back) What are you two gossiping about?

Me: That's our business not yours.

Andile: Arghh we were just talking about old days when we used to make mom and dad's lives hard.

Nomsa: Oh. I hope you won't make mine hard because I can also do that.

Me: Believe me you're already doing it.

Nomsa: Excuse me?

Me: Arhh Nothing Aunty Aunty (Nigerian accent)

She clicked her tongue and left. We looked at each other and laughed.

Andile: You should start and pretend that you are warming up to her so that she won't know what hits her.

Me: Yeah I will try though it will be hard. I need a tongue control lessons.

Andile: Arghh just tell that boyfriend of yours to kiss you very hard and twist your tongue.

Me: Andile!!!!

We laughed and I assisted him with cooking.

Andile: Edward told me about winter school.

Me: Oh yeah. He really did help me.

Andile: I am glad then. Don't you want me to pay for your matric dance. I do have cash on my savings.

Me: No relax bhuti. But you can do my hair and nails because we are going to the after party.

Andile: With Samkelo?

Me: Yes.

Andile: Relax then I will give you cash. I hope you will behave yourself there. No sleeping with him.

Me: I will behave bhuti.

Andile: I don't want to see you on the streets when dad kicks you out if you happen to be pregnant.

Me: I don't want that too.

He nodded. After a few minutes we were done with cooking. We set the table and we called the family.

Everyone came to the table and Dad blessed the meal. We ate in silence.

Dad: Nice meal Andile.

Andile: Thanks dad. My mother's Joy assisted me.

Nomsa: Why do you have to say "Your mother's Joy"?

Andile: Because that's her name.

Nomsa: It's Joy.

Andile: Heeh... When mom named her, she said "You're My Joy". And I still remember that she told me that I must call her by My Mother's Joy because that what Thandeka was to her. She was her Joy. So don't come up here and try to explain and change things that you know nothing about. I think dad is making a huge mistake by marrying you Nxx!

He stood up and went to his room. Andile is one person who can control his anger in our family but that day he was angry because he never backchat an adult no matter what. After

Andile left the table there was awkward silence. I looked at dad and he was quiet. He was just eating his food. I finished my food and I washed my plate. I put Andile's food on the microwave because he didn't finish it.

I went to Andile's room and he was lying on his back looking at the ceiling. I went closer and sat on his bed. And he was crying. He had mom's picture on his chest.

Me: I miss her too.

Andile: I wish she didn't die you know. She was everything to us and dad too.

Me: I know.

He opened his arms for me and I rested my head on his chest. We talked about memories of our mother until we fell asleep. We were woken up by dad. He was holding the picture that Andile was carrying.

Dad: Thandeka go and sleep in your room. It's midnight now.

Me: (yawning) Okay daddy can you sleep with me tonight?

Dad: Okay baby. Goodnight son.

Andile: Goodnight Joy and Dad.

Me: Night buddy.

Andile: It's unfair that you're leaving me behind.

Me: Come we will sleep in my bed because it's huge then yours.

Andile: Okay.

He got up and we went to my room. I took another blanket. And we all went inside the blankets. Dad told us stories about our childhood. Things that we don't even remember doing. It was nice. We talked until we all fell asleep.

Next morning was a Saturday. We woke up around 10am. Andile and dad went back to their rooms. I took my phone and a lot of missed calls and messages from Samkelo. I remembered we were meeting up with the girls that day so I had to prepare myself for that quickly because I was late. Around 10:32 I was done. I made up a lie to dad about meeting up with a friend. He had no problem. He gave me a few hundreds and I took a taxi to the taxi rank. And another one to eMzingazi

I arrived and the garage was full. I was more surprised. The girls I saw were about 20/24 in numbers not age. I entered the garage and there was no chair left for me so I just leaned against the wall. They were all talking to each other and I could see in their eyes that they were confused. I wondered where Samkelo must have got the chairs to accommodate so many people. I looked at every one and there was no ugly girl there. They were all totally beautiful. Samkelo came inside the garage. Our eyes locked and I looked away. I was still mad because he accused me of cheating on him. He cleared his throat and everyone went quiet. They looked at him.

Sam: Eeh Thank you all for coming to this little gathering if I can say. Well one person is not here yet but I guess I will start without her. Well I guess you must be wondering why you are all here.

Them: Hell Yeah!!!

Sam: I will explain. I know I said it's a party but well it's not a party.

Them: Haaaaawuuuu!!!

Sam: Okay! Please slow down. I know as we are here most of you. In fact all of you hates me because I played you big time. (They didn't say anything) I am here to put my pride aside because I want to start a new life on a new page and put the past behind.

Girl: Just get to the point already Samkelo.

Sam: I am here to apologize to you all. I ruined your dignity, your reputation and your self esteem. The sex videos that I made. I was stupid and broken. I am sorry that you had to be the victims of my hatred because I wanted revenge for myself. The only wrong thing I did was

To do that revenge on the wrong people. I usually don't use sorry. I hope you all know that.

Them: Yeah!

Girl: Don't forget the words I love you too!

Others: Yeah!

Sam: I know I won't forget but I am sorry for everything I did to hurt you and the humiliation I brought in your lives. Please forgive me.

Girl: Wow! At least one dog has the balls to say sorry. I honestly forgive you Samkelo and you opened my eyes in a very hard way.

Other Girl: Nozipho!! You!

Nozi: Khanyisa.

Sam: Woah girls please don't fight. I am here to make peace with all of you.

MissZ: So this is the shit you called me to attend?

Us:(turning back) Miss Zungu???

Sam: Thabsile(Her name) please don't make this difficult I wanted to make peace.

Me: You screwed my class teacher Samkelo??

MissZ: He screwed us all dear. I told you to stay away from him.

Girl: I give you the crown Samkelo. You're a dog with horns. You're a wild life dog!

Girl:(crying) You fucked my mother?

Another girl: (crying) That's my aunt you bastard!

Sam: I am sorry I didn't know you were related.

MissZ: You want forgiveness?

Sam: Yes.

MissZ: All those who are willing to forgive you. They will line up here and they will all give you one slap and leave because there's no party here.

Them: Yeah! Yeah!

Sam:(shouting) okay! Okay! I am up for it.

MissZ: Good I will be the first.

They all lined up. Not even a single person wanted to leave without slapping him. I was the last person on the line. Miss Zungu started by giving him one hard slap that shocked everyone. I couldn't see Samkelo because I was at the back. They all slapped him and left. The other girl and I were the only people left. The girl punched him instead of slapping him and she left. I looked at him and his face was red. Red like red pepper. He had tears on his eyes. I looked at him and I wanted to laugh but I controlled it. I grabbed a chair and sat down.

Sam: Can we go inside my room?

Me: Yeah sure.

We binded the chairs together and we walked inside the house. I went to the kitchen and took ice cubes. I went to his room and I sat down with him on the bed. I placed the cubes on his face.

Me: Do you guys have a basin here?

Sam: Yes we have one on the bathroom.

Me: Okay. Wait here.

I stood up and went to the bathroom. I took the basin and poured little amount of water and I added the ice cubes on the water. I took his face cloth and went back to his room. I sat down and gave him the basin to wash his face.

Me: How do you feel.

Sam: My face is burning but the water is cooling it down.

Me: Okay.

He finished and he took the basin back to the bathroom. I sat on the bed thinking about what just happened. And he came back and sat on the bed without a word.

Me: So you and Miss Zungu?

Sam: It happened last year December.

Me: You were 17 years and you were screwing up a how old woman?

Sam:(looking down) She was 40yrs last year.

Me: Wow dude. You're fire neh?

Sam: It was all about completing the mission Thandeka of screwing older women last year December.

Me: Oh you had a theme? I guess the beginning of this year was-

Sam: Clever girls who are virgins. Look Thandeka I am sorry. According to your own understanding. You would say I was supposed to tell you but that was the only way you were supposed to find out that who did I fuck and who I didn't fuck.

Me: You are full of surprises you know.

Sam: I want us to put this behind us. I love you and I wanna begin something real with you.

Me: I love you too Samkelo.

Sam: I am sorry about yesterday.

Me: It's Okay.

We looked at each other and we kissed each other passionately. He laid me down on his bed and he got on top of me and he went down on neck and I moaned softly. He came back to my lips and kissed me. He was about to take off my shirt and there was a knock on the door.

His mom: Samkelo? Who is the owner of the chairs in my garage?

Sam: My friends mom. They will come and take them tonight.

His mom: You were having a party here?

Sam: No but a group meeting (I giggled)

His mom: Who's that girl you're with there? Do you want me to call Thandeka now?

Sam: You can call her mom. She'll be happy.

Me: It's me mama.

His mom: Oh dear. Please come and join us for lunch.

Sam: Mama?

His mom: Oh please Samkelo. Give Thandeka some space so that she can breath. You see her everyday.

Me: I am coming now.

His mom: Thanks baby.

She left and Samkelo kissed me again. I broke the kiss and pushed him off.

Sam: I was the one who asked you to come here not my mom.

Me: Oh please come on. Stand up.

We both stood up and fixed ourselves.

We joined his mother and his sisters on the kitchen table. His mom was surprised to see his face.

His mom: And then what happened to your face?

Sam: It's Thandeka's sunscreen lotion. It gave me allergies. We were at the beach.

His mom: Oh sorry my baby. You must go to the clinic today after taking Thandeka home.

Sam: Yes mom.

His mom: So are you alright Thandeka?

Me: Yes Mah I am fine.

She smiled and he dished up the food. It was just Nandos and rolls with green salad. His little sister blessed the food and we ate with little chats here and there. After eating we washed the dishes with Samkelo and he had to drive me home using his mother's car.

He wasn't a patient driver. He was flying on the road and I had to tell him to slow down. We arrived by my neighborhood and we parked a few houses away.

Sam: Today was quite a mess but I am glad it's all behind me now.

Me: I am proud of you for doing that.

Sam: Without you I wouldn't have done it. I love you.

Me: I love you too.

We kissed and I stepped out of the car. I went home and the house was quiet. There was a note saying they will come back late. I went to Andile's room and took his laptop. I went to my room and watched movies. I watched them until I fell asleep.

Next morning was a Sunday. I woke up and prepared myself for church. I wore a long black dress and black sandals. I brushed my straight up and I put on a red lipstick. I went to the kitchen and there was no one around. I guess they were all sleeping. I took an apple and I went out of the house. I took a taxi to church. I arrived at church and it was already full. I sat at the back. I was enjoying the service and my phone kept on vibrating on my clutch bag. I ignored it until I was pissed off. I went outside and picked up. It was Samkelo.

Me: What's wrong now. I am at church?

Sam: (with anger) Damnit! Thandeka what are you wearing?

I looked at myself and I didn't realize that I was wearing all black. My dress was black and my sandals. Even the bag was black.

Me: Shit! I completely forgot. I am wearing a black dress with black sandals.

Sam: Arghaa! My body is burning man! Please take off those clothes now! Argh!

He hung up on me and I panicked. I didn't know what to do. Go back to church and pray or go home and change my clothes

I quickly took a taxi back home. I was calling the name of Jesus along the way but silently. I arrived at home and I went straight to my room. My family was having lunch. I didn't even greet them. I took off the dress quickly and took off the sandals. I threw myself on top of the bed. I sighed heavily. My phone rang and I picked up without checking the caller ID.

Me: Yini? (What?)

Sam: Oh?

Me: I am sorry for that I didn't look at the caller id.

Sam: Oh Okay. Uhm thank you for taking off the clothes.

Me: What is the meaning of this black Samkelo?

Sam: Let me wear it for you.

Me: No don't-

He hung up the call. I called him, he didn't pick up my calls. Then after a few a minutes my body was burning. I don't know hell but that was the taste of hell on earth. I cried because that thing was painful. It was like they took my whole body and they were frying my body. I took my phone and called him. I was in tears and he didn't pick up. I locked my door and sat on the floor. I leaned by my door.

Andile: Thandeka! Your door is on fire!

I got a fright and I stepped away from my door. It was burning fire burning. I cried even more. Andile and the guys were trying to make the fire stop using water. I ran away and went to the shower. I opened cold water but the water was hot. I screamed and stepped out of the shower. I locked my bathroom door because I didn't want my brother to come inside and look at me because my body was red.

Andile: Thandeka what's happening sisi?

Me: (silence)

Dad: Thandeka mntanami.

Me: I am fine dad. I am sorry about the door. The fire was a mistake. I am sorry please forgive me.

Dad: Calm down baby. Please come out of your bathroom.

Me: I will after taking a shower dad.

Dad: Okay baby. Let's go Andile.

I heard their footsteps walking away. I sat on the floor leaning by the wall. I cried until I felt my body slowly cooling off. I quickly stood up and I took a cold shower. The water was normal. After showering I wore my pyjamas on my bathroom because my door was ruined. I went to my dad on the lounge. He was with the guys and Nomsa. I sat next to my dad and I rested my head on his shoulder. He wrapped his arm around me.

Dad: What happened baby. You came here running like someone was chasing you.

Me: I was at church. I wasn't running away I wanted to pee so bad.

Andile: And the door?

Me: That was a mistake.

Nomsa: You were smoking inside the house?

Me: What? Smoking? I don't smoke. I was trying to burn something and I mistakenly burnt the door.

Dad: It's Okay my daughter. I am glad that you're fine. Go and eat your food.

I nodded and stood up.

I went to the kitchen and took the food from the microwave and I poured juice for myself.

Nomsa came inside the kitchen.

Nomsa:(whispering) I hope this is not one of your schemes to make me sleep alone today because you will want "daddy" to sleep with you. Spoilt brat!

She clicked her tongue and left before I could answer her. I ate my food outside the house thinking about what Samkelo did to me. I found myself crying. My phone rang from my pyjamas pocket. I took it and looked at it. Samkelo was calling. I didn't answer. He tried again. I didn't answer. He tried and I finally picked up.

Me: Hello.

Sam: Are you alright?

Me: You were trying to kill me?

Sam: No but I was trying to make you feel what I felt. I told you not to risk anything with black colours only but you didn't listen.

Me: I said I forgot and I did say I am sorry. But to burn me with fire like that. It wasn't nice at all. How about I sleep wearing a black outfit so that you can burn all night?

Sam: Don't do that Thandeka! I told you that wearing black again is like taking back the sin that you vowed to leave and the consequences is to feel hell on earth Thandeka. So please don't ever do that. You know that the Bible says confess your sins and leave them. So please all black is our sin I don't want to take it back. I left my sins and I am trying to do right by my life. Don't make it difficult.

Me: Okay I am sorry babe.

Sam: I am sorry too for doing that to you. Please forgive me. I love you MaDinangwe.

Me: It's Okay. I love you too Ndunakazi.

He made the kiss sounds. I giggled and made them back. We laughed and hung up the call.

I sat outside the house thinking about this black outfit thing and I laughed because this meant when I am mad at Samkelo I can burn his body for days. I laughed really hard that I even had tears because as much as the black outfit was banned for us to wear it was going to work in my advantage sometimes or his advantage. I decided to call him again. I took my phone and dialed his number. He picked up.

Sam: MaDinangwe?

Me: Bbe I think we should burn all the black clothes we have. Or we can choose whether you buy black tops only or buy black jeans only.

Sam: I think so too. Because if you have black jeans only you won't think of a black top because you won't have one.

Me: Okay that's way too better if you agree because I was going to burn your body for the

whole night if you make me angry.

Sam:(laughing) I am glad you won't do it then my love.

Me: Yeah. I have to go we will talk tomorrow.

Sam: Okay my love.

I hung up and went back inside the house. I wanted to rest so I went straight to my bed and fell asleep almost immediately.

√  
√

It was time to put our plan in action because Andile had a few weeks left before he goes back to DUT. And Nomsa was a real pain in an ass, she was living with us. Attending my winter school at Khombindlela high school was very great. I was always with Samkelo because I had no friends and he also had no friends. I was coming from school on a Friday aunt Maud was having a tea break. I greeted her and rushed to my room. I wasn't wearing my uniform at school so there was no need to change. I took the cash Andile gave me for aunt Maud's make over. I went to her.

Me: My beautiful aunty. I need a favor.

Maud: Anything for my lovely baby.

Me:(smiling) Saturday night around 6pm I am meeting someone so I need you to come with me so that you can judge his character. I trust you with that but please don't tell my dad please.

Maud:(giggles) I hope I will judge him very well.

Me:(laughing) I hope so too. So please come with me I need to do a few things to you.

Maud: like?

Me: You'll see aunty please. If we stay out til late my brother will finish up everything please.

Maud: Yoh! Okay mntanami.

Me: Yes! Thank you! Thank you!

We took a taxi to the mall. We entered different shops looking for a beautiful dress. We finally found the red long dress that was totally beautiful. It showed her curves and figure nicely. Yeah! She had figure I guess that's because she had no kids. She didn't like the idea of me buying clothes for her but I insisted. I bought the dress, the scarf, black shoes they were not high but not flat either. We went to the saloon. I told them to do soft dreads on her hair and they did. After that she was more than beautiful. I told her that a lady that was going to help wear her clothes was going to come to her house. She didn't like the whole idea but I tried harder and we finally went back home but she was going back to her house.

I went home and I found the boys in the lounge watching soccer. Dad was also with them.

Me: Hello family.

Them: Hey

Me: Where is aunt Nomsa?

Dad: She had some crisis that she had to attend to at home. She will come back Monday.

Me: Oh okay.

I smiled and winked at Andile. Everything was going accordingly. I went to my room and I call the waiter who was going to force them to sit together in one table. His phone rang and he picked up.

Muzi(his name): Hey Thandeka?

Me: Hey Muzi. So tomorrow we are on?

Muzi: More than prepared Thandeka.

Me: Okay thanks. We will keep in touch then. Goodnight.

Muzi: Okay. Goodnight.

Andile entered my room and closed the door. The door was replaced. He sat on my bed.

Andile: So?

Me: Muzi is still on and the make up artist is still on. So let's cross fingers that everything goes well

Andile: Okay good job little sis. He also agreed that he was going to meet me at the restaurant.

Me: I will call aunt Maud tomorrow and tell her to meet me there too.

Andile: Good let me go before they suspect anything.

Me: Sure Brah yami.

We laughed and he left my room. My phone rang it was Samkelo. I picked up.

Me: Baby?

Sam: Why have you been neglecting me so much this days what's going on?

Me: uhm-uhm bbe I am sorry I have been busy. But I see you at school.

Sam: Come on Thandeka you're hardly with me because you're always on the phone. What is going on?

Me: Nothing is going on Andile. I am-

Sam: Who is Andile?

Me: Shit! I am sorry bbe I meant Samkelo. Andile is my brother and you know that.

Sam: I hope so.

He hung up on me. I guess he was angry. I placed my phone away and jumped up and down because our plan looked like it was going to be successful. Later I went to cook and we had dinner together. I went to bed early because I was tired.

The following morning I was woken up by my phone ringing. I took it and it was Samkelo. I picked up.

Me:(sleepy voice) Hello.

Sam: Hey how are you doing?

Me: Okay and you?

Sam: cool. Can I take you out today. I miss spending time with you Thandeka.

Me: Uhm can we do it some other time. I am actually busy today bbe I am so sorry.

Sam: Okay.

He hung up the call. It looks like I am trying to fix my dad's love life but I am ruining mine on the other hand. I thought to myself. I sent him a text of an apology but he didn't respond to it. I went to the bathroom and took a shower, brushed my teeth, I lotioned and wore my comfortable clothes. Aunt Maud was not coming to work that day. I told her to relax so I had to the house chores. I did all the chores and we had breakfast. Dad left for work. He was on a beautiful suit because he knew that he was going to meet up with Andile and Bontle to discuss a serious matter. I spend my day playing games with the guys and it was fun.

Later the make up artist called.

Nonhle: Hey I am done I am taking her to the restaurant now.

Me: Good. Please tell her that I will meet her there. Dad is also on his way to the restaurant.

Nonhle: Okay I will send you her pictures. She's totally gorgeous.

Me: (giggles) Thanks Nonhle.

Nonhle: okay dear.

We hung up and she sent me the pictures and she was more than beautiful. I ran to Andile's room and I show him the picture.

Andile: Damn! Where have she been? Look at her curves?

Me:(hitting him playfully) sies! She might be your stepmother soon.

Andile: (laughing) I wouldn't mind sharing her with dad.

Me: Agh let me leave before I vomit.

He laughed and I walked out.

We stayed up with Andile waiting for a phonecalls or anything on the other sim card that we

bought because we had to switch off our phones. The phone rang and we picked up putting it on loud speaker. It was Muzi.

Muzi: Hey guys. They just left the restaurant. They had a great time. Your father couldn't keep his eyes away from Maud. I think there is something there.

Us: Yes! Thanks Brah.

Muzi: My pleasure.

Andile: We will pay you Monday then.

Muzi: Sure goodnight then

Us: Goodnight.

We hung up. Andile and I looked at each other and we laughed. We hugged each other. We switched off the lights and stayed on the lounge waiting for dad to come home.

After a long time of waiting we had his car pulling over. We quickly ran to Andile's room and opened the door slightly. We heard giggles and laughs. They didn't turn on the lights. We listened to them.

Dad: I must say that I had a wonderful night.

Maud: Yes it was perfect but I am still worried about Thandeka don't you think we should check up on her.

Yoh! I held my breath. And hope they wouldn't.

Dad: Shh, forget about Thandeka. I am sure she has a good reason for not coming and we will hear that tomorrow. But now it just me and you.

Maud:(giggles) Okay. I guess I care too much.

Dad: And I love that. You can make a wonderful mother. But for now let's just enjoy this night.

She giggled and they went to dad's room. Andile and I high fived and we hugged each other.

Andile: I knew he wasn't going to resist her. I mean the woman was on fire.

Me: Yeah, Let's go to the door.

Andile: You're mad Brah. Let them blow each other in peace.

Me: Ewww. Let us watch a movie then.

Andile: Okay come.

He took his laptop and we sat on bed. We watched the movie together. After some time we had a car pulling over. We looked at each and jumped out of the bed. We looked outside through the window. And it we NOMSA stepping out of the car...

We panicked and looked at each other. I had to think of a quick plan fast.

Me: Let's cover our plan bhuti. Come!

I grabbed his arm and we ran to my room before Nomsa could enter the house. I quickly took my phone and switched it on.

Me: Wait here I need to make a phone call.

He nodded and I went inside the bathroom. I called Samkelo hoping that he will answer his phone and he did.

Me: (panicking) Sthandwa senhliziyo yami I need your help fast please.

Sam: What? Where are you Thandeka wami? are you alright?

Me: Yes my love I fine. Look bbe I will explain everything later but please wear the black outfit for me.

Sam: What? I can't. Why must I hurt you like that? No Thandeka.

Me: Babe I need to fake fever. I will explain everything late my love please I beg you.

Sam: No.

Me: But you said you'd do anything to make me happy Samkelo. (On a low tone)

Sam: This won't make you happy.

Me: Believe me it will work at my advantage and I can bare the pain.

Sam: Okay. I will. (I heard Nomsa Screaming)

Me: Minimize the clothes so that I won't burn my bed.

Sam: Okay I love you.

Me: I love you too.

I hung up and went back to my room.

Andile: They are already fighting dude.

Me: Look I will lie down here in my bed. I drank something to make my body hot. (I lied) So that we can say you were supposed to look after me yesterday because I had fever. So that they won't know that we set them up.(I started feeling hot)

Andile: Brilliant lie down now.

He opened the covers and I got inside the bed covers.

Me: Go and take my white face cloth not the blue one. Make it wet and you will place it on my forehead. Bring the meds and place them beside the bed to make it look real.

Andile: Sure.

He did just that and I could hear Nomsa shouting at my dad.

Nomsa:" You're fucking your maid in our bed Mfaniseni how could you "

Dad:"It's not our bed yet. It's my late wife's bed"(I giggled)

Nomsa:"And you! You're fired"

Maud: "please don't do that. I need the money"

Dad: "She's going nowhere! I think you're the person who must leave."

Nomsa:"what? Are you mad. My family is waiting for you to pay lobola next month "

Dad:"I won't do that. You don't love my kids and you don't appreciate them. How will you mother them?"

Nomsa:"how can I mother those spoilt rotten brats of yours "

Andile: (back in my room) Uyasiqhela lo!

Me:(low tone) calm down. (I was hell burning)

We then heard slaps going on. I didn't know who was slapping who. Andile quickly ran out of my room and went to dad's room.

Andile: (shouting) You're busy fighting for my father and his daughter is fighting for her life.  
Them: What??

In no time they were all in my room. Even Qiniso and Edward. Aunt Maud was wearing dad's shirt and a towel wrapped around her waist. She quickly came up to me.

Maud: Thandeka mntanami.

Me:(weakening my voice) I am...sorry for not..coming yesterday I just got sick and...Andile had to take care of me...

Dad:(shouting) Andile why didn't you call me??

Andile: I did dad but you didn't pick up the phone (he lied)

Nomsa: Because you were busy cheating on me.

Maud: This is not about you. It's about Thandeka.

Nomsa: Hell yes it's about me old bitch!

Qini: (shouting) Can we at least take Thandeka to the hospital!

Edward: Yeah and stop fighting for her dad.

Maud: Yes.

Me: No I don't need the hospital. Can I sleep with aunt Maud dad I will be alright.

Dad: Are you sure my baby?

Me: Yes daddy.

Dad:(touching her shoulder) Take care of my baby Maud please.

Maud: I promise I will.

He kissed her and Nomsa stormed out shouting "I am leaving this pathetic old man I don't know what was I thinking" I smiled a little and they all left my room beside dad.

Dad: Actually I am glad that you got sick yesterday Thandeka. Otherwise I wouldn't have gotten the chance to know the real flower that I needed. (Maud giggled) let me go and help Nomsa pack her clothes. Maud please come I will give you the medicine that will cool her down.

Maud: Okay. I will be back baby.

I nodded with a smile and they left.

I quickly grabbed my phone and called Samkelo. He didn't pick up and I wanted to cry because I was burning. He finally picked up.

Sam: (sleepy voice) Baby?

Me:(whispering) Please take off the clothes now. I am burning here. Thanks bbe.

Sam: Okay I am on it now.

Me: Sure. I have to go.

Sam: Sure.

I hung up immediately and placed my phone aside. I felt my body cooling down. Aunt Maud came inside my room and gave me the medicine. I downed it and she joined me inside my bed. We faced each other.

Me: So I can start calling you mom?

Maud:(giggles) I guess?

We laughed and continued chatting until we both fell asleep. We were woken up by dad.

Dad:(whispering) Do you feel better baby?

Me: Yes daddy.

Dad: can I take- (pointing Maud)

Me: (smiling) Yeah sure.

Maud smiled and stepped out of the bed. They left my room and I was left alone. I fell asleep with huge, fat, big, incredible smile.

It was the last day of the winter school. We were eating with Samkelo. I was telling him about aunt Maud or should I say mama and dad.

Sam:(laughing) Yoh! So that's why you were neglecting me?

Me: Yes bbe and I am sorry.

Sam: It's Okay my love. I understand now. I think you should have a blog of online dating. Or matchmaker.

Me:(laughing) Argh don't be silly. I can't do that.

Sam: You can be Doctor love ke.

Me: (laughing) Samkelo marnh please. And we have to go and look for outfits we will rock on that after party.

Sam: Yeah. Why don't you talk to your dad and we can go to the formal party too.

Me: No I am no longer interested. Do you want to go?

Sam: If you're not going I won't go. I thought maybe it was important to you.

Me: Well actually I don't really care about going to the ball so I won't bother myself.

Sam: You want the party wena bbe.

Me:(laughing) yah I just want to go and see what happens to that 60s club.

Sam: We will find out that Friday. No drinking alcohol for you though.

Me:(laughing) I wasn't planning on doing that.

Sam: Good. I want to go home now I am tired.

Me: We have one last class then we go home come.

I held his hand and we went back to our classes. I was also bored. Life sciences was boring for me. Finally the school was out we went to take a taxi to Richards bay because we didn't want to use the bus.

We arrived at Richards bay and we went to the mall. We bought some few snacks. Samkelo

offered to catch a taxi with me and walk me home. We stepped out of the taxi a little far from home because we wanted to walk together on the street. We eating what they call Kibhikibhi .

Sam:(hitting me with kibhikibhi) Mara you're beautiful my love.

Me:(giggles) So why are you hitting me with Kibhikibhi Samkelo?

Sam: I was being romantic man. (Smiling)

Me: (laughing) You have a bad way of being romantic. Geez your romance sucks.

Sam: (holding his chest) Ouch! That hurts.

I laughed and he ran after me. I was laughing and he finally catch up with me. He tickled me and I laughed really hard. I begged him to stop and he finally did. He held my waist and kissed me. I wrapped my arms around his neck and we kissed intensely. We broke the kiss quickly when we heard someone say "Young love" we looked at him and it was a coloured guy. Samkelo and I laughed and we continued walking. We kept on stealing looks on each other and smiled afterwards. I walked closer to him and pushed him a little using my hip.

Sam: Just because I am curve less?

Me: As if you have something.

Sam: I have some six pack and I can pick you up right now until we reach your house.

Me: You wouldn't.

He didn't ask twice nor waste time. He really picked me up and placed me on his shoulder. I was looking down. I couldn't help but laugh. He walked with me like that until we reached my house. Though we were two houses away. He put me down and looked at me.

Sam: So what do you say?

Me: Arhg come on I was hungry bbe. So that's why it was easy for you.

Sam: Yeah whatever. I will see you Monday then for shopping.

Me: Okay lover boy. My John Cena. I love you.

Sam: (laughing) I love you my pumpkin.

I giggled, he kissed my forehead and we hugged each other. He watched me as I walked inside the gate. I waved my hand at him. I blew a kiss and he catch it and placed it on his heart instead. I giggled walked inside the house.

√

√

√

After a week Andile and Edward left. They went back to school. It was me, dad and Qiniso at home. Mom Maud wasn't staying with us full time and she was no longer our Domestic worker. We had a new Domestic worker her name was Charity. She was 22years. She was doing that job because she was trying to raise money for her registration. She was quite a beautiful woman. She was staying with us because she was from rural areas meaning she couldn't travel everyday.

So it was a Friday of the Matric dance and the after party. I was coming from my date with Samkelo which was lovely. I went inside the house and it was quiet but I could hear sounds like "mmmm, Aaah, Yes bbe right there" coming from Qiniso's room. My dad wasn't around that weekend they were to Durban with mom. They left that Friday morning and they were going to come back Sunday. Dad was the one who paid for my after party clothes and everything. We also hired a car. Our parents paint half half for it. My dad knew that I was going with Samkelo.

I went to the kitchen and drank water trying to digest the sex sounds. I went to Charity's room because I wanted to stay with her until it was time for me to get ready and go. I knocked but there was no response. I went inside and she was not inside her room. I went to my room and plugged in my earphones. I listened to music until I fell asleep. I was woken up by Samkelo calling me. He was telling me that he was on his way. I quickly got up and took a quickest shower. I brushed my teeth and lotioned. I wore a powder blue short, covered with

lacy, I wore a white stomach out (crop top). I wore my white ankle All-star. I had no weave on it was just a hairstyle made with my natural hair. I put on a red lipstick and gold accessories. I took my white small leather back pack and went to Qiniso's room. I knocked and they couldn't hear me with whoever he was f\*cking because she was making loud moans. I went out without saying goodbye.

Samkelo saw me and stepped out of the car. We shared a hug and a kiss. He opened the door for me and I stepped in. He did the same.

Sam:(starting the engine) You look beautiful bbe.

Me: Thanks my love. You look good too.

He chuckled and we drove to the club. I won't go into details because nothing interesting really happened. But it was full and people were dancing and having fun. I wasn't dancing because I can't dance so I was just looking at people even Samkelo was dancing. Midnight I was bored and Samkelo was starting to get drunk a little. I went to him and told him that we need to leave. We were outside walking to the car.

Sam: You will drive bbe because I can't drive.

Me: Okay.

We stepped in and I drove him to his mother's house. After some time we arrived and he opened the door but he didn't go.

Sam: Aren't you coming in?

Me: And your mom?

Sam: There is nobody around and I am scared of sleeping alone please come. I didn't mind because dad was not around.

We went inside the house and we went straight to his room. We took off our clothes and took a bath together. We went back to his room to lotion. He gave me his big t-shirts to wear and he wore his boxers only. (That time kwakuthiwa itranks lol) So we got inside the covers and we faced each other locking up our legs.

Sam: Yeah I had a great time tonight.

Me: Yeah sure you did. I was actually bored partying is not my thing.

Sam:(sleepy voice) Yeah you kinda looked like a lost chicken.

I punched and he tickled me. I couldn't stop laughing. He tickled me until he was on top of me. I begged him to stop and he did. Then silence followed and we looked at each other with a smile. We kissed each other slowly until the kiss got heated up. His hands were all over my body. He took off the t-shirts I was wearing and he played with my boobs giving me a ticklish feeling. He sucked my boobs while his fingers went down on me. I gasped as I felt his finger entering my world. I felt his penis getting hard against my thigh. I was wet and he went down on me using his tongue. Moans escaped me I couldn't control them they literally came out of my mouth. I was feeling the pleasure that I never felt before. He came back to my lips and kissed me.

Sam: Should I stop? (Lazy voice)

Me: No...don't stop...

Sam: it's okay if I- are you ready or you want me to stop?

Me: Yes I am.

Sam: Bbe it will hurt.

Me: I wanna feel it even if it's hurt.

That was the line of my favorite song that I said to him that day. He walked out of his room and came back with two condoms. He kissed me again while he took off his boxers. He broke the kiss and opened the condom. He slide it in, on his guy and he departed my legs. He kissed me again and I felt a strong hard thing like it was wood. It poked my vagina and I screamed. He told me to relax and I tried by all means. He tried again and I felt tears coming out of my eyes. As he kept on trying until he was inside. He started moving in and out. I felt nothing

nice about sex that day. He finished, I think I did come I didn't know. He took out the condom and wrapped it with tissue. There was no lot of blood just a tiny amount but I had to go and bath.

Sam: Can I join you.

Me: No I would like to bath alone.

He nodded and I left. I sat on the tub thinking about the virginity that I just lost. If was it worth it feeling all that pain? Was Samkelo going to stay or he was done with me? I asked myself those questions. After a few minutes I went out of the tub and Samkelo came through after me. I went back to his room and the bed covers were changed. I quickly stepped inside the bed and I pretended like I was sleeping.

Samkelo came back and joined me. He held my waist and kissed my cheek.

Sam: Thandeka?

Me: Yeah?

Sam: I love you okay?

Me: Okay I love you too.

Sam: Thanks for trusting me and I promise I won't break your heart intentionally.

Me: Okay let's sleep please.

I didn't want him to talk any further. He kissed my cheek and we fell asleep immediately.

The following day we woke up with Samkelo my vagina was on hell. I didn't even wanted to have breakfast I wanted to go home.

Me: Please take me home before bringing the car back.

Sam: Can we talk please I don't like it when you're like this.

Me:(faking laugh) come on I am just tired and I need my bed that all.

He nodded without a word and he took the cars and I followed him. We drove home in silence. He parked three houses away. I didn't want to sit and chat so I kissed his cheek quickly and opened the door. I walked home. I didn't want him to talk. I didn't know how I felt about what happened the previous night. I arrived at home, Qiniso and Charity were watching Tv. They were very cosy. I just greeted them and made my way to my room. I switched off my phone, locked my room and fell asleep immediately.

I spent my whole weekend sleeping until dad and mom came back home. I woke up and went to my bathroom and brushed my teeth. I went to them on the lounge. I smiled and gave them a hug. There was a young girl maybe 16/17yrs they came with.

Me: And who is these beautiful sister here?

Mom: My Sister's daughter. She's going with me.

Her: Hey Thandeka. I am Olwethu.

Me: Hey nice to meet you (we hugged each other)

Dad: She's here to visit your mom but she won't stay with us.

Me: And school?

Olwethu: I will go back next year. I had problems this year so I ended up dropping out

Me: I am sorry to hear that.

Olwethu: It's Okay.

Dad: When the time comes you will go together with her to the Reed dance.

Me:(swallowing hard) Reed dance?

Mom and dad: Yes...

Me: Oh yeah yeah. Reed dance I forgot about it.

Olwethu: I am excited about it. I just can't wait to go there and see Isilo samabandla.

Me: Uhm...yeah hey...dad and mom should I make you guys something to eat maybe?

Dad: No we are fine. I think you should go and prepare for school tomorrow. Where is Qiniso and Charity.

Me: They are outside.

Dad: Please call them for me.

I nodded and walked outside just to call Qiniso and Charity. I found them kissing each other around the pool area. It rang a bell in my mind that Charity must be the girl that Qiniso was busy with that day. Do you know that little jealous when your ex kiss a girl right under your nose? Maybe you don't but I didn't like what was happening. For the fact that he once kissed me on those chairs. I felt like screaming for a moment but I controlled it and acted like a big girl. I cleared my throat and they got a fright and looked at me. I didn't look at Qiniso but I looked at Charity.

Me: Dad said I must call you both.. Oh and I am sorry to interrupt.

Charity: Thandeka please don't tell your father.

Me: Why should I tell him? It's not like it's the first time-

Qini: Thanks Thandeka. She won't tell him bbe don't worry.

Charity: Thanks dear. I mean I love my job and I also love my man too. I don't want to loose either of them.

Qini: (kissing her cheek) And I love you too bbe.

Me: Let me leave you.

I walked away and went straight to my room. I locked myself up. I threw myself on my bed and I thought about what I just saw. But Qiniso was bound to move on since I chose Samkelo over him but I love Samkelo but then again I was jealous over my ex seriously? Mxm. I got up and went to my bathroom. I took a shower thinking about what was I going to do about my virginity because it was gone for ever. I sighed heavily and walked out of the shower. I lotioned and wore my pyjamas.

I was rearranging my books when my dad knocked on my door. I got up and attended him.

Me: Dad.

Dad: Andile wants to talk to you? What happened to your phone?

Me: Oh flip my phone is off. I will call him back using yours please.

Dad: Okay.

He gave me his phone. I closed the door and called Andile. He picked up.

Me: Bhuti KaThandeka.

Andile: Kuki kaKandeka wani?? What happened to your phone?

Me: It's off. I forgot to put it on the charger.

Andile: Okay. Are you alright?

Me: Yes buddy and you?

Andile: I am fine. Did you give your boy a love portion or you put him under some spell?

Me:(laughing) No why?

Andile: He's been calling me asking if you're alright. Did you guys fight?

Me: uhm no we didn't. I will call him back after I charged my phone.

Andile: Kuyazifela ngawe lokhu. (He loves you)

Me:(laughing & singing) Nami ngiyagcwala ngaye (I love him too.)

Andile: (laughing) Young love.

Me: Duh? Where is Edward Jones?

Andile: Mama's boy. He is with his mom. Take care of yourself then Joy.

Me: Send my regards to him and Bontle. And you too take care of your ugly self.

Andile: (laughing) Futsegi! Ngiyakuncanywa ke ntwana yami.

Me: Nami Brah yami.

He chuckled and we hung up. I smiled and went to give dad his phone. He was busy on his study room. I went back to my room and I continued with what I was doing. I didn't feel like calling Samkelo so I just let my phone be.

Later everyone was sleeping I guess. Olwethu and mom left that day. I went to the kitchen

and took some snacks. I went to the lounge and watched TV. Qniso walked out of his room. He was topless and he was wearing his boxers. I looked at him and then I quickly looked back at the TV screen.

Qini:(yawning) Why ain't you sleeping?

Me: I am not sleepy?

Qini: (sitting next to me) What are you watching?

Me:(shifting) Just a movie. I don't know the tittle.

Qini: I don't bite.

Me: I know but you're half naked so that makes me uncomfortable.

Qini: Uncomfortable in a bad way or a good way.

Me: Uhm- is there a good way of being uncomfortable?

Qini: Don't avoid my question by asking me another question.

Me:(standing up) Good night Qini- I mean Bhuti Qniso.

Qini: I thought you are not sleepy?

Me: Uhm yeah but I.. Look I have some school work to do.

He nodded and I gave him my snacks. I went to my room and closed the door behind me. I sighed and went to brush my teeth. I switched off the lights and went inside my bed. Within a few minutes there was a knock on my door.

Me: Yeah?

Qini: Why are the lights off I thought you're studying or doing your school work.

Me: Ehh I am sleepy so I am trying to sleep if you don't mind.

Qini: Okay goodnight.

Me: Night.

He walked away and I finally managed to sleep in between my thoughts.

The following morning I woke up and did the daily routine. I was going to school. I joined the family for breakfast.

Me: Good morning.

Them: Morning.

I sat down and helped myself with breakfast. A few minutes later dad stood up and gave me pocket money.

Me: Can I ride with you today please dad.

Dad: Oh okay come then.

I smiled and took my bag. I said my goodbyes to Qniso and Charity. I followed my dad and we stepped inside the car. He drove off to school, we were chatting about general stuff until we made it to school. I stepped out of the car. Samkelo was already waiting for me by the gate. I had no choice but to go to him. I smiled and he didn't.

Me: Will I get a hug or a fist?

He didn't say anything but he gave me a tight squeeze and let go. He held my hand and we walked inside. He wanted us to talk so we went to our usual spot.

Sam: Did I do something wrong?

Me:(looking down) No you didn't do anything wrong.

Sam: So why are you avoiding me. It's like I did something wrong but you don't want to tell me.

Me: No bbe I am sorry. I just wanted to.... I just wanted to...

Sam: You also don't know? (I nodded shyly) It's Okay then I am glad to see that you're fine I was worried about you. And I even took a risk and called your brother.

Me: (giggles) Thanks hey. I am sorry to ignore you like that. Just that after what happened I thought maybe you won't call nor text me so I was trying to save myself.

Sam: I wasn't going to do that to you Thandeka I love you and I mean it.

Me: I love you too and I have something to tell you.

Sam: I am listening.

Me: Uhm dad wants me to go to the Reed dance.

Sam: What? Are you serious?

Me: Yes.

Sam: Shit! Eish bbe what are we going to do because you need that Certificate so that your dad will see it.

Me: I seriously don't know.

Sam: Uhm look. You can talk to one of the old ladies that will be checking your virginity just to get your name registered.

Me: You mean bribe her!?

Sam: Yeah that's the only way.

Me: What? Are you mad? And how do you know all this?

Sam: I am trying to help here Thandeka what does your question supposed to mean?

Me: Just answer my question Samkelo. Or you have done it before? Or it's what you usually do? Sleep with girls and get them to bribe those ladies just to get the certificate??

Sam: I should've known that you will think of something like that. Will you ever believe that I am no longer the guy I was?

Me:..... I do Sam-

Sam: But your words Thandeka they don't show it. Here I am, thinking that I am working over my past and I got you on my back but you keep on using it against me. You know what do it your own way.

He said that and left me just like that thinking about what did I do wrong?? Like seriously was I wrong??

I went to my class after Samkelo had left me standing alone. I sat on my desk and thought about what he told me. "Maybe it's not a bad idea after all" I thought to myself. I sighed and buried my face on my hands.

Lizzy: Are you alright Thandeka?

Me: Yes I am fine and you?

Lizzy: I am cool but I miss us. I miss our friendship.

I won't lie I missed Lizeka too but I was told to stay away from her. I didn't want to risk anything.

Me: Yeah. We had a good friendship going on but life happened right?

She nodded and sat down. Miss Zungu came inside the class. I wanted to laugh thinking about what happened that weekend but I tried to control myself. And she was also stealing looks on my side. It was awkward knowing that Samkelo rode such an old woman at an age of 17. Finally Miss Zungu walked out of class and our day began.

During break time I was sitting alone outside and eating my lunch.

Guy:(in my back) Can I join you?

Me: (looking back) Yeah sure why not? I am bored.

Guy:(sitting down) Thanks. My name is Thobelani Maphanga.

Me: I am Thandeka Dhlomo.

Thobe: it's nice to know you. I know you might be wondering that why I am here?

Me: (smiles) Yes I am.

Thobe: Well I don't have friends and I would like to be your friend if you don't mind.

Me: Just friends? I have never been a friend with a guy before.

Thobe: Yes I want us to be just friends. I know you have Ndunakazi as your boyfriend. And I am on the same class with him. I also have my girlfriend or should I say girlfriends. And I have a daughter.

Me: Wow a daughter? How old is she? And her name?

Thobe: She is 1yr old and her name is Zenande.

Me: Nice can I see her picture?

Thobe: Okay. \*showing me on his phone\*

Me: Wow she's totally beautiful. I like her smile.

Thobe: Thanks. So we can be friends?

Me: Yeah sure why not?

Thobe: Thanks.

We continue talking about ourselves just getting to know each other. He was a very nice guy and I was loving being with him already. He was tall and dark but strong dark. He was cute on his skin and he had pink lips. Well built body.

Me: So can you walk with me to the toilet. You won't come inside.

Thobe: (laughing) I wasn't going to do that vele.

Me: (laughing) Yeah. \*we stood up\*

Thobe: We didn't seal our friendship. A hug?

Me:(giggles) Why not?

We hugged each other and mmmm simakade his chest bawo!.. We backed away from each other and we walked to the toilet. I gave him my things and walked inside. I did my business and washed my hands. I went back to Thobelani.

Me: Do you mind walking with me I need Samkelo.

Thobe: I don't mind. As long as you will also walk with when I want to see one of my girlfriends.

Me: Sure case ntwana.

We walked together to the spot where Samkelo was. He was with a bunch of guys from his class. They were debating about soccer. I stood at the back and I cleared my throats. They all turned back and looked at us.

Me: I am sorry to interrupt but can I have my man for a second?

Guy: Who is your man here?

Me: He knows himself.

Sam: Gents I will see you later neh?

Guy2: Awu mjita you're leaving?

Sam: Yeah you heard her. She wants her "man"

They laughed and chanted "sure boy" Samkelo held my hand and looked at Thobelani.

Sam: Maphanga ntwana?

Thobe: Nduna Dawg. I will see you later then skhokho. (Directing that to me)

Me: Sure ntwana. Thanks neh.

Thobe: That's what friends are for.

I giggled and he walked away. We found a spot.

Sam: So you and Thobelani?

Me: We are just friends.

Sam: Since when?

Me: Since today and he is a cool guy. We just clicked. I guess we were meant to be friends.

Sam: but you've never had a male friend before right?

Me: Yeah but there's a first time for everything right and the guy is cool so yeah.

Sam: I hope it won't go too far.

Me: Relax he has his girlfriends and a kid nothing will happen between us.

Sam: Okay.

Me: uhm I wanted to say I am sorry about what I said earlier I didn't mean to snap at you like that and bringing up your past it was wrong.

Sam: I forgive you sthandwa senhliziyo yami.

Me:(blushing) Thank you. Uhm so bbe I was thinking if maybe you can wear black clothes

for me so that I won't go the Reed dance.

Sam: No we can't use black clothes anymore. They won't work like that anymore. Look Thandeka (holding my hands) Black clothes are a no go zone area seriously now.

Me: Why?

Sam: Because we've taken our relationship to another level by making love together. Our bond is more concrete now so we can't wear black clothes to burn each other anymore.

Me: What will happen if we do?

Sam: That means I will re-live my dark life. So please don't wear them bbe please I don't want to find myself hurting women again.

Me: But I thought once you out you won't go back.

Sam: I won't go back to the group but I will re-live my dark life. So promise me you won't.

Me: I promise. I will burn all my black tops and leave black jeans and pants today so that I won't forget.

Sam: Thanks sthandwa sami. So what are we going to do about the Reed dance situation?

Me: I guess I will have to bribe the old lady there is no other options I have.

Sam: I am sorry for putting you through this thing if I knew about the reed dance I wasn't going to do it. I was going to wait until it pass.

Me: Don't be sorry I also wanted it so don't blame yourself my love. And I thought dad had forgotten about the reed dance.

Sam: So bbe how was it? You know.

Me: (looking down) It was painful, I mean very painful there was no pleasure that I felt.

Sam: I am sorry but once you get used to it you'll be fine you won't feel any pain.

Me: I don't want that pain again yoh! I hope the second time will be better than the first time.

Sam: (smiling) I hope so too.

He kissed me and we broke the kiss when the Bell rang. We hugged each other and walked our separate ways

After school I wanted to go home but we had an afternoon class. It was Maths so we were attending with other classes. But we were divided into groups. Both Samkelo and Thobelani were in the group I was in. I was walking with Thobelani. We were just talking and laughing.

Thobe: Can I sit with you skhokho?

Me: Sho ntwana no problem.

We continued talking with Thobelani. Samkelo passed by and whispered something on my ear.

Sam: Can I see you before you leave?

Me: (looking at him) Okay.

He nodded and left. Lizeka passed us and she sat with Samkelo since the space was limited. Mam Nkosi, Maths teacher came and started teaching. But it was another teacher not the one who teaches Maths in my class. She taught Samkelo's class.

Thobe:(whispering) I want that friend of yours.

Me: (whispering back) Who? Lizeka?

Thobe: Yes. She has the killer body.

Me: Maybe you will get her.

Thobe: And tap that ass.

Me: (laughing) And-

MrsN: Hey! Hey! You two? Maphanga and?

Other girl: Thandeka

MrsN: Yeah Thandeka mind sharing the joke?

Me: Erh... I am sorry for disrespecting your period.

MrsN: You were laughing at that?

Me: No. But I can't share the joke.

MrsN: It's either you share the joke or you continue teaching what I was going to teach.

Me: please don't make me stand in front of the class please. Because I won't share the joke.

MrsN: Leave my class. Or should I call your father. I know you once have an offence here.

Me: please don't tell my dad.

Sam: Thandeka some of us wants to study so please do one thing. Teach the class or share the joke or leave.

Class: Yeah please marnh!

I looked at Samkelo in disbelief. I cleared my throat and went in front.

Me: Let me teach them. (I was pissed)

MrsN: This is no joke young lady.

Me: Do I look like I am joking?

Class: Yooh!

She gave me the text book and the chalk. I looked at the things that were ticked on the book and started writing on the board.

Me: Please do this two equations raise your hand if you need assistance.

Lizzy: But we haven't done algebra.

Me: even if so, its not new. You did it last year so work out those two equations.

MrsN: You heard the teacher.

They all looked at their books and started writing. I attended a few and they were doing well but others it was just bad. I went to the board and did the equations with them. I explained algebra. I gave them their homework. I attended questions and I was done.

MrsN: I am impressed. Thanks Miss Dhlomo. I hope there will be next time.

Class: Yeah.

Me: No ways! I am not doing that again

MrsN: Meaning you will no longer talk in class while the teacher is teaching?

Me: Yes.

She nodded and I went to take my bag because the class was over. Thobelani stood up and followed me.

Thobe: Don't run away give me your number.

Me: Give me your phone. I am running away from Samkelo. After what he did I don't want to talk to him now.

Thobe: (giving me the phone) But you were good.

Me: I hate being in front of students dude. Take your phone. (Giving it back)

Sam: Can I talk to you Thandeka?

Me: Oups the car is waiting for me so tomorrow neh?

I quickly ran to the car and got in at the back.

Qiniso was with Charity.

Me: Hello.

Them: Hey.

Me: Are we going to the mall for grocery?

Charity: No why?

Me: I was asking because you are here.

Charity: I was accompanying my man and one more thing Qiniso is mine now so don't think about doing anything to sabotage our relationship

Me: Why would I do that?

Charity: You're his ex right?

Me: Mxm.

Qini: Bbe calm down.

Charity: No she must know bbe and she must not mess with our relationship.

I didn't say anything I took out my phone and plugged in my earphones and listened to music. I had no time for nonsense after the one Samkelo did.

We arrived at home and I changed my clothes. I gathered all my black tops and put them inside the plastic bag. I went to the kitchen to make something to eat for myself. Mom and Olwethu walked inside the kitchen.

Them: Hey.

Me:(huggs) hey ladies how are you?

Them: fine and you?

Me: I am good! I am good!

Mom: End of July you girls are going for virginity check up eMzingazi.

Me: (choked my saliva) What? That's Sunday nje.

Mom: Yes and the reed dance is on September.

Me: Oh we will go Sunday only?

Mom: No. The virginity check ups are done every month end. You will go for July and August because any day in September will be the big day for you my girls.

Me: Oh okay.

Olwethu: You don't look excited about it.

Me: I am doing this to please my dad. I don't want to do it.

Mom: And you have to prove him wrong baby. (I faked a smile and nodded) let me go and iron his clothes.

Us: Okay.

I went to my room with Olwethu. She was talking and my mind was miles away.

Olwethu: You're no longer a virgin right?

Me: What?

Olwethu: come on I can see that you're stressed about this because you're no longer a virgin. Look dear I am not a virgin too.

Me: huh?

Olwethu: I am also doing this because dad can kill me if he can find out that I am no longer going to the reed dance because I have lost my virginity. I lost my virginity last year but I never stopped going for virginity check ups.

Me: How do you do it for them not to see?

Olwethu: I slide in uQO inside my vagina.

Me: what? QO the drug?

Olwethu: Yes it's easy like going to the toilet. I use Qo than it's minus one problem.

Me: \*I Fainted\*

I woke up when I felt cold water being splashed on my face. I coughed up and opened my eyes. I looked around and I was in my room on the floor. Olwethu was the only person in my room.

Olwethu: You almost gave me a heart attack dude.

Me: I was shocked that's all.

Olwethu: It's understandable. I didn't tell anyone about you fainting so please get up and try to change your clothes.

Me: Okay.

I stood up and went to the bathroom. I took the mop and mopped the floor. I changed my clothes.

Me: Hey if you don't mind you can look over those plastic bags. I have my black tops. I wanted to give them up for charity or burn them so you can pick a thing a two.

Olwethu: Okay. Why black only though?

Me: That's a secret.

Olwethu: Oh okay. So what are you going to do? You will use the pill?

Me: No I won't. I was only shocked because you also use that thing but I know that some girls use it. But yoh!

Olwethu: Yeah, and some were caught and they had to pay a fine because they were disrespecting culture. But You can also use a white candle you know. You can shape it into a ball and put it on your vagina they will see that you're still a virgin.

Me: I am not doing that.

Olwethu: So what are you going to do?

Me: I'll think of another plan. You have to stop using the pill. Taking the pill is dangerous.

Olwethu: Taking the pill is more like sniffing cocaine or any drug so I won't stop because I don't have money to bribe them so the pill is my only hope.

Me: Do you know the woman we can bribe?

Olwethu: Yes I know the woman we can bribe but she lives at Mandlanzini.

Me: Do you think she'll be present on the check up day?

Olwethu: She's always present but we can go Saturday and meet up with her.

I nodded and I helped her check out the tops. I gave her some jeans too. And a few skirts.

She left to show mom her things and I took out my books. I did my homework and studied. I was called in for supper. I joined everyone in the table.

Me: Mkhabela wami.

Dad: How are you Dinangwe?

Me: I am fine dad and you?

Dad: I am fine baby. Maud told me that Sunday you're going to Mzingazi.

Me: Yes. September is the reed dance month.

Charity: You're still a virgin Thandeka?

Me: (clearing my throat) Yes why?

Charity: No I was just asking. My mom always told my older sister that if you're not a virgin and you go to the dance. Your reed will be broken and you will pay a fine.

Me: Oh that's sad. (Getting worried on the other hand)

Olwethu: That's just myth. It's not true. Any reed can break down.

Mom: Yes olwethu is right.

Dad: Don't worry my baby all will be well.

Me: (smiling) okay dad. Can I go to the mall Saturday with Olwethu. Mom and dad?

Them: Okay.

Me: Thanks.

I winked at her and she smiled. After eating Olwethu and I washed the dishes. We went to watch generations. After generations dad drove them home. I stood up and went to the kitchen. I drank water.

Qini: I am sorry about what Charity said to you.

Me: Oh come on it's not a big deal. Goodnight.

Qini: Goodnight.

I went to my room and took a shower, brushed my teeth, lotioned and wore my pyjamas. I got inside my bed covers and took my phone. I had five missed calls from Samelo and two from an unknown number. I called the unknown number back. It rang and the guy picked up.

Guy: (sleepy voice) Thobelani speaking hello.

Me: You're sleeping already?

Thobe: eish Brah I am tired. I wanted you to save my number okay?

Me: Okay ntwana. Goodnight.

Thobe: Goodnight.

I hung up the call and placed my phone aside. My phone rang again it was Samkelo. I picked up.

Me: Hi.

Sam: Hey I tried calling you earlier?

Me: I was busy.

Sam: You didn't think about calling me back?

Me: I was going to.

Sam: Oh you don't like talking to me right now or I am disturbing you?

Me: You're disturbing me.

Sam: I am sorry.

He hung up the call. I didn't care about that I just placed my phone aside. I tried to fall asleep in between my thoughts.

Next morning I woke up and did the daily routine. I took my bag and went to the kitchen to eat breakfast. My dad was still sleeping so I was with the two love birds.

Me: Morning.

Them: Morning.

I sat down and helped myself with breakfast. After eating I washed my dish and I went to my dad's room to take some money making sure that I don't wake him up. I left and waited for Qiniso. He drove me to school. We arrived at school and Samkelo was waiting for me at the gate entrance. I went to him and he met me halfway giving me a tight morning hug. He let go and he held my hand.

Sam: Good morning.

Me: Morning how are you doing?

Sam: I am good and you?

Me: I am fine. Yesterday you wanted to talk about? Sam: Can we go and sit over there?

(Pointing the spot) I nodded and followed him. We sat down.

Sam: Thandeka I understand that Thobelani is your friend but bbe do you really have to be with him all the time?

Me: But that's what I did with Lizeka and there was nothing wrong about it.

Sam: Thobelani is a guy Thandeka.

Me: Are you saying I am going to fall for him?

Sam: No bbe but I don't get to see you more often because of him.

Me: Oh you can sit with us like you did when there was Lizeka around. If you need me alone you just have to say it. He won't mind.

Sam: Okay I am sorry about yesterday I saw that you were angry at me for doing that.

Me: Why did you do it?

Sam: I was just pissed off and I am sorry my Joy.

Me:(giggles) Okay apology accepted.

Sam: Thanks.

He smiled and came close to my face. He kissed me intensely and we broke the kiss. We looked at each other and smiled.

Sam: We don't live at Mzingazi anymore.

Me: Really? Where do you live?

Sam: Phase 2 here Aqudene township. Mom had a rdp house but she extended it. Yesterday they moved our things during the day. When mom came back we moved.

Me: That's nice. At least your house is near by now. Even if I faint you will take me there.

Sam:(smiling) And I will un-faint your beautiful self.

I giggled as he kissed me again. We broke the kiss as soon as the bell rang I was wet as hell and my heart was beating fast. I look at Samkelo and he was turned on. I laughed and we stood up. We hugged each other and went our separate ways.

√

√

Saturday during the day. Olwethu and I were already on the taxi to Mandlanzini. We got off where we were supposed to and we made our way to the woman's house. I was hoping and praying that she won't say she wants more than R1000. We knocked and she invited us in. We sat down.

Her: Olwethu.

Olwethu: Mam'Khoza.

MamK: What can I do for you young girls?

Olwethu: We need to get our names on the list.

MamK: Okay let me go and get the other paper.

She stood up and disappeared from our presence. She came back with a notebook and a pen.

MamK: Write your details here.

Me: How much?

Mamk: For you two it's R600 but you will pay R200 now for deposit and the rest you will pay once you get your certificate.

Me: Okay no problem.

MamK: And this year Olwethu I don't need you girls to come for virginity check up because there are a lot of you. It will be hard for you all to get checked up by me only so I will just write you names that you were present and you're still virgins then you will come to the reed dance.

Us: Thanks.

I took out a R200 note and gave it to her. She wrote down that we paid and we walked out. We waited for a taxi.

Olwethu: If we're not going for a check up. Where will we go Brah?

Me: Eish I don't know dude...

We both looked at each other and sighed heavily.

We passed by the mall and bought some goodies because we had to make it look like we were out for some fun at the mall. We then took a taxi home. Mom and dad were outside by the pool. I went inside the house with Olwethu. I placed the bags on the kitchen counter.

Qiniso was eating.

Me: Where is Mrs?

Qini: Really?

Me: What? I am just asking.

Qini: I don't know I am not her keeper.

Me: Oh okay. Let me leave you than.

I went to my room. Olwethu was watching TV on the lounge. I took my phone and called Samkelo. He picked up.

Sam: My Princess.

Me: How are you Sam.

Sam: I am fine Ivy and you?

Me: I am also fine. Just missing Ethan's daddy a lot.

Sam: I miss you too Ethan's mommy. How did it go with the lady?

Me: Everything is sorted but we are not allowed to go tomorrow because there are lot of girls who are no longer virgins. We will go to the reed dance only.

Sam: Yoh! You guys don't like to be virgins hey?

Me: Duh! You're good at persuading us right. You'll be like (mimicking his voice) "bbe should I stop" .than " Relax bbe I'll be gentle " than it will be impossible to say no.

Sam: (laughing) Thandeka kodwa! I didn't say that to you nje.

Me: Just say you don't remember.

Sam: Okay my love. Just come to my house tomorrow with your friend.

Me: Your mom?

Sam: It's month end so they are not around.

Me: Where are they?

Sam: Every month end they visit my sisters father. My mom and him are still together.

Me: And why don't you go with them.

Sam: He's not my father so why should I go? And besides I don't really like Mthunzini.

Me: Oh okay. We will come tomorrow then. We were told we will leave in the morning.

Sam: Okay. You will call me when you're by the school. I will come and fetch you guys.

Me: No problem. I almost forgot about the place. I was going to take a taxi to Mzingazi.

Sam:(laughing) I was going to laugh at you than.

Me: You're a bad boyfriend. But I love you.

Sam: I love you too my better half.

I giggled and hung up the call. I took my books and studied them.

While I was studying I got a call from Thobelani. I picked up.

Thobe: Skhokho.

Me: Ntwana yami.

Thobe: Can you please come out with Olwethu.

Me: Olwethu?? How do you know Olwethu?

Thobe: Don't ask please. (Laughing)

Me: You're dirt Thobelani!

Thobe:(laughing) I know my friend. Please than.

Me: Okay.

I stood up and fixed myself. I took my phone and went to the lounge. Olwethu was alone.

Me: Let's go.

Olwethu: Okay. (She stood up)

Me: And than how do you guys know each other?

Olwethu: (giggling) I met him last week at the mall. He recently told me that he schools at Aqudene High School so I asked him if he knows you. Than he told me he does.

Me: Secretive bitch!

Olwethu: You're also secretive about your black tops.

Me: (laughing) Yeah hey.

We spotted Thobelani, we went closer to him and we hugged each other.

Me: So I'll be a spare wheel?

Thobe: Yeah skhokho. I am always a spare wheel when you're with Nduna.

Me: Okay.

I walked behind them. I took out my phone and I chatted with Samkelo. We talked about naughty things. Until the two love birds were done talking.

Thobe: That must be Ndunakazi making you laugh like that.

Me: Come on. So you are done?

Thobe: Yes. Thanks skhokho.

Me: Sure. Let's go home than Makoti.

We laughed and hugged each other. We walked back home. Mom and dad were on the lounge.

Dad: Where are you coming from?

Me: I was taking a break from studying.

Mom: Than who is the boy Olwethu was walking with?

Olwethu: A boy mam'ncane?

Mom: Charity saw you on the street.

Dad: Thandeka are you teaching Olwethu your dirty ways?

Me: Dad? Dirty ways? I don't know what you are talking about.

Dad: You remember what you did with Ndunakazi.

Me: Dad that's the past dad. I wasn't teaching her any dirty ways. That boy wanted to talk to him.

Dad: If you ever get pregnant Thandeka you-

Me: I will leave your house dad I know that.

Dad: Don't talk to me like that young lady!

Me: I am sorry.

Dad: Get out of my sight now Thandeka!

I nodded and headed to my room. I locked myself up and I listened to music just calm my anger down. I ended up falling asleep.

The next day I woke up when Olwethu knocked on my door. I was still on my clothes. I woke up and opened up for her. She was ready to go.

Olwethu: Hey please get ready now.

Me: Okay.

I quickly went to the bathroom and took a shower. I brushed my teeth and lotioned. I wore black jeans and a yellow t-shirt. I wore black sandals and took my bag. Olwethu had made my bed. We went to the kitchen and I grabbed an apple. Mom and dad were at church. So we took a taxi to Aqudene. I texted Samkelo and we waited for him by the school. He came to us walking slowly. I could tell that he was still sleeping. He gave me a tight hug and didn't let go.

Olwethu: Are you guys going to hug each for hours.

Sam: mmm I don't want to let her go.

Me: Bbe please we can't stand like this on the street.

Sam: (laughing) Okay. Let's go ladies. Olwethu are you alright?

Olwethu: Yes and you?

Sam: I am cool. And my Princess?

Me: I am fine boyfie!

We laughed. In no time we arrived by his crib.

Sam: (whispering) At the moment my room is not clean. So don't throw tantrums at me.

Me: (whispering back) Who said I was going to stay in your room?

Sam: Thandeka?

Me: I am kidding.

Olwethu: So where will I stay? I want to sleep by the way.

Sam: Sleep in my sister's room. Come.

We walked with her and Samkelo show her the room.

Olwethu: Ain't you going to sleep with me Thandeka?

Me: Uhm..

Sam: No she's going to sleep with me.

Olwethu: What are you going to do there?

Me: Nothing Olwethu.

Olwethu: You don't want me to come so that we can do a three sum?

Sam: Argh bbe let's go she's sleepy already.

I laughed and we walked out of the room.

We went to Samkelo's room and we closed the door behind us. He grabbed me by my waist and kissed me. I responded to the kiss. We kissed passionately. He took off my clothes. I was kind of shy to take off his clothes. He did that part himself. He made me wrap my legs around his waist while he leaned by the door. He went down on my neck sending chills down my spine making me moan in pleasure. He used his fingers on me and I felt pressure as he sucked my titts.

Sam: Should I go inside?

Me: Protection?

Sam: I don't have one bbe.

Me: I don't want to be pregnant Samkelo.

Sam: I will pull out.

Me: Okay.

He kissed me again and he tried inserting himself. I placed my hands on the wall for balance and I pressed my teeth together because it was painful like he was breaking my virginity again. When he was finally inside he held my waist and assisted me with moving in and out. I felt pleasure slowly kicking in. As I was still trying to register the pleasure he quickly pulled out and released the sperms on the floor. I wrapped my arms around his neck. And we were both breathing heavily.

Sam: Should we go another round?

Me: Yes maybe I will feel pleasure on this one.

Sam: Okay sorry if I was harsh.

Me: Can you kiss me already and stop telling me you're sorry.

Sam: Your wish is my command.

He kissed me and we did countless rounds the whole day. We stopped the time we got tired. We cuddled until we fell asleep. Later that day Samkelo walked us to get a taxi. And we went back home. Mom and dad were proud of us

.  
√  
√

Months went by. I was still friends with Thobelani. They were still dating with Olwethu. Mom and dad were going stronger and they were much more in love than before. Qiniso and Charity were still together. My studies were going well and Samkelo and I. We were still in love with each other.

It was September already. So it was Friday and we were going to the reed dance for the whole weekend...

Dad: Go well than my kids I am very proud of you.

Us: (looking down) Thanks.

They both hugged us and we took our bags. Qiniso was driving us to Mzingazi where we were going to take a bus that was taking all the girls to the reed dance. On the road I was thinking about my father's words "I am very proud of you". I was seriously ashamed of myself for fooling my dad because I was no longer a virgin and sex was something that I was used to and enjoyed it big time. But I told myself that what he doesn't know won't hurt him. We arrived where the ceremony took place. KwaNongoma if I am not mistaken. I won't go to deep details but we were going to sleep in tents. There were lots of girls. At night they were singing traditional songs and doing the Zulu dance. I wasn't really paying attention because I was scared to be in that place.

Olwethu: (whispering) Tomorrow you must make sure that the Prince doesn't see you because you will be his next wife.

Me: Argh dude why would you say that?

Olwethu: I am just saying. (She laughed)

Me: I have Samkelo I don't want marry a Prince. Let alone be a second or third wife.

Olwethu: Yeah.

I looked away and I was missing my boyfriend like hell. I wanted to cry because I didn't want to be in that place. I wanted to sleep in my bed but I had no choice. Later I decided to sleep though they were still singing and dancing but I managed to sleep. Early in the morning we were told to wake up and go the river to take a bath. I wanted to scream but I had no

choice. We walked to the river singing. And hell the water was dirty. But I had no choice. We took a bath using the dirty water and we went back to our tents and wore our traditional gear. The ceremony began. Each and every girl had a loooooong reed on their hands. We walked a distance to present the reed to iSilo Samabandla. The ceremony was beautiful for “real virgins” but for me I was bored. Saturday night there was kind of a party going on and it was fun. We were given our certificates and Sunday afternoon we went back home. We gave mom and dad our certificates and they were more than proud of us.

√  
√  
√

2 months later.

After the reed dance I had no time for games. I prepared myself for Final exams. Samkelo, Thobelani and I studied together. The subjects that were common which was Maths and Accounting. For languages we only did Paper two together because novels and poems do need attention. I didn't even had time to spend together as a couple with Samkelo.

November my dad proposed to mom Maud and she said YES! They were going to get married the following year in June. As our final exams had began Samkelo and I used to sneak out after every paper that we were writing on the same day. We used to go to his crib and have sex as a way of distressing. It was so nice and funny sometimes. We were not using protection at all because he did the withdrawal method and I didn't fall pregnant. My periods were still coming. The final exams were not that hard. I was positive that I was going to get that car my dad promised me.

So it was a Friday. December 1st. Samkelo and I were going to a pens down party that was going to take place by the beach. There were artists invited and it was going to be a huge thing. Dad knew about it and Olwethu was coming with me but she was going with Thobelani. We had hired a car. I was wearing blue jeans short with a maroon loose top and my maroon Chuck Taylor. I had black braids in my head. Olwethu was also in blue short and a white loose shirt with a with white ankle all star. I packed a few clothes in my bag. And we went to dad and mom in their room. We knocked.

Dad: It's Thandeka?

Me: Yes we're leaving dad the car is outside.

Dad: Okay do you have money?

Me: Yes.

Them: Okay bye.

Use: Bye.

Mom: Be responsible and don't drink alcoholic drinks.

Us: Yes mom.

We walked out of the house. The guys came out and met us halfway.

Them: Ladies?

Us: Gents.

We giggled and hugged our partners. Samkelo hugged me tightly and squeezed my ass while he was slowly kissing my neck. I sighed and he came to my lips and we kissed each other intensely. I broke the kiss as soon as I felt his manhood poking my thigh.

Sam: (lazy voice) Aaah bbe why did you stop.

Me: You're turning me on dude and your guy is poking my thigh.

Sam: Let's just skip the party and you'll spend the night with me. the house is empty.

Me: We will just forget about the party just like that?

Sam: It's not like you'll enjoy it. You'll be like a lost chicken again.

Me:(laughing) Okay let's go and have our private party.

We laughed and went to the car. Thobelani and Olwethu were busy kissing each other in the

backseat. They stopped when we cleared our throats. Olwethu was shirtless. She quickly wore her shirt.

Us: Are you trying to make a baby there?

Them: Hell no!

We laughed and Samkelo started the engine.

Thobe: (lazy voice) Please take us home Brah.

Me: (singing) Somebody's horny, horny.

We laughed and they kissed each other again. Samkelo held my hand and he drove the car using the other hand. We arrived by Thobelani's crib and they stepped out of the car. And walked inside the yard. Thobelani had a room outside.

Samkelo and I drove to his crib. We arrived and stepped out of the car. We went inside the house and he closed the door. He didn't even wait for us to go inside his room. But he kissed me, we were on the passage. We kissed each hungrily and we took off each other's clothes. I wrapped my legs around his waist. We did the foreplay and inserted himself inside me. We started moving slowly. And I was in my own world. Our pace picked up and we moving too fast. We were both moaning each other's names on top of our voices. As soon as he was about to come he pulled out. We hugged each other as we breathing heavily.

Sam: That was out of this world.

Me: Woah! Yeah. Let's clean up here.

He nodded and I got off him. We cleaned the floor and we continued with our private party on his bedroom til we were tired. We cuddled each other and we fell asleep.

Next morning we did two morning rounds. And we bathed together, brushed our teeth, lotioned and wore our clothes. We made breakfast and ate together. After breakfast we washed the dishes and we drove to Mzingazi to pick up Olwethu.

We arrived and text them. They both came out of the house and Thobelani walked back inside the house. Olwethu was walking in a funny way. Samkelo and I looked at each other and we laughed. She stepped inside the car while we were still laughing.

Olwethu: What so funny?

Me: How big is he Olwethu?

Sam: Thandeka??

Me: I am sorry bbe but I had to ask.

Olwethu: Eish dude I don't want to talk about it. That guy killed me.

Samkelo and I laughed at her really hard.

Olwethu: This is not funny guys.

Me: I am sorry dear but I feel for you. You must pull yourself together because we don't want mom and dad to notice something.

Olwethu: Yeah hey.

We teased her til we arrived by the house. She stepped out of the car while I was still kissing my babe.

Sam: I love you bbe. I had a wonderful time last night.

Me: I love you too. I had a wonderful time too. Bye than.

Sam: Bye.

We baby kissed and I stepped out of the car. We walked inside the house with Olwethu and her funny walk.

We walked inside the house. Mom, dad, Qiniso and Charity were on the lounge. They all looked at us.

Mom: Olwethu what happened to you?

Olwethu: Nothi-

Me: She fell on top of the stone. That's why she's walking this funny.

Charity: She looks like she's been gang raped or something.

Me: Dad when is your maid going home for the holidays?

Dad: Thandeka!?

Me: No dad. Does she know how serious gang rape is?

Charity: Were you gang raped dear?

{“I hope she's a virgin so that she can cure this HIV virus”—“so that she can cure this HIV virus “—” so that she can cure this HIV virus “} Those words echoed at the back of my mind. Squeezing the balls of that old guy flashed back in my mind and I couldn't hold my tears I just broke down.

Mom: Thandeka baby?

Me: (crying) You don't know a thing about having a bunch of fools who think they can use your virginity to cure their fucken HIV. I might have got away from it but I was closed to being a victim. If you don't have something better to joke about you bitch you better shut up. I have every right to throw you out anytime if I don't want you here. This is my father's house. Nxx!

I ran away and got inside my room. I locked myself up and I threw myself on top of my bed. I cried my lungs out. Dad was knocking on my door.

Dad: Thandeka my daughter please don't do this to yourself. Open up. Thandeka?

I didn't respond. He begged me until he gave up.

I took my phone and called Samkelo. He picked up

Sam: Bbe?

Me: (crying) Their voices are still inside my head Samkelo. I can't get them out. I can't. She made.... She made me remember what I thought was dead.

Sam: You're talking about the guys who almost raped you?

Me: I almost got infected that day. I thought my world was going to end. How do girls who do be victims of rape. Let alone gang rape survive? I am sorry to bother you.

Sam: Hey Hey bbe look you're stronger than you think. By God's mercy you survived. It's situations we go through that makes us stronger and I am here for you. You're not bothering me.

Me:(sobbing) I love you Samkelo.

Sam: I love you too MaDinagwe. Try listening to music and sleep you'll be alright my love.

Me: (smiling faintly) Thanks bbe. Please kiss me through the phone.

He made the kiss sounds and I giggled a little. I made them back. I hung up and listened to music. I managed to fall asleep.

I woke up late. Dad was sitting on my bed. He was looking at me. I looked at the door because it was locked and it was broken.

Me: Dad my door?

Dad: I will replace your door. I was worried about you my baby. I think you must get some professional help.

Me: I am fine dad. It was just a minor flashback.

Dad: Do you want me to get another house helper?

Me: No dad it's fine. Let her stay.

Dad: Okay. I don't want you to feel uncomfortable in your own home.

Me:(smiling) You worry too much old man. You'll have a heart attack. I don't want you to die too.

Dad:(laughing) I promise I will try to minimise the worry my baby. Patrick is home.

Me: What? Who?

I quickly stepped out of my bed and ran to the lounge. He was talking to someone on the phone. Everyone was watching TV.

Me: Will you please hung up that call.

Andile:(smiling) I will call you back later. I have a crisis that I have to attend.

He hung up the call and stood up.

Me: I am the crisis?

Andile: Yes you are. My mother's trouble maker.

I giggled and I snuggled myself on his arms. We let go and he kissed my forehead.

Me: (looking around) So where is Edward?

Andile: (laughing) Argh wena! Really?

Me: Come on he's a cool guy.

Mom: With jokes for days. \*we laughed\*

Andile: I am happy to see you sisi wami.

Me: I am happy to see you too Bhuti wami. Did you congratulate the love birds on their engagement.

Dad: I don't remember him doing that.

Andile: Come on dad. I did call mom.

We laughed. Andile and I went to his room just to catch up and gossip. It was really fun and I was happy to have my brother back.

√

√

Four weeks later. Charity apologized to me and I forgave her. Olwethu went back to her normal walk. We had Christmas together as a family. Me, Andile, dad, Qiniso, mom and her family. The holidays were really nice because my brother was there but I missed Samkelo. He was not around KZN. He went to visit his dad but we used to talk on the phone though we always had stupid arguments about nothing actually. I was more in love with my dad and I didn't want to leave his sight. I used to visit him even at the hospital. End of December the matric results were issued and I passed my grade 12 well. I got five distinctions in Maths, Accounting, Physical Sciences, English and IsiZulu. My dad was more than proud of me that meant he was going to buy that car he promised me that he'll buy. Samkelo, Lizeka and Thobelani also passed very well. I was actually proud that my bbe even got a distinction in Maths since I was helping him with Paper2. I was very proud of myself too.

New year's eve we went to Ngwelezane to visit my grandmother and the rest of the family. I was going to study at Durban university of technology. I was going to do Architecture. Samkelo was still waiting for a response from the universities he applied to. I was in my room watching a movie with Olwethu. My phone rang and it was Samkelo. I picked up in excitement.

Me: Bbe

Sam:Hey

Me: Bbe are you alright?

Sam: Uhm yeah... Well no.

Me: Why? What's wrong?

Sam: UKZN program that I applied for is full.

Me: I am sorry to hear that. And what are other universities saying?

Sam: Wits gave me a firm offer in Bcom Accounting.

Me: Wits? Wits? In Johannesburg?

Sam: Uhm... Yes bbe I-

Me: Oh that's nice. Erh look congratulations hey I am happy for you. I have to go Samkelo. Bye.

I hung up the call before he could breath a word. I placed my phone aside.

Me: Can you give me space a little. You can take the laptop.

Olwethu: Are you alright?

Me: Yeah sure I am fine.

She nodded and took the laptop. She walked out. My phone kept on ringing because Samkelo was busy calling I ignored him and I cried myself to sleep silently.

Next morning I woke up with massive headache. I stood up and went to my bathroom. I was a little dizzy. I held the sink for balance and I drank water. I washed my face and I went to the kitchen to join the family for breakfast. They were all on the table.

Me: Morning Family.

Them: Morning.

Me: Daddy can I go with you to work today?

Dad: No Thandeka. What are you going to do in my work place?

Me: I can help out and be your P.A

Dad: No.

Me:(tears threatening my eyes) But dad-

Dad: No.

Mom: Let her go with you. I think she's nervous.

Andile:(laughing) She's scared of the big world out there without coming home to daddy.

Me: You're too forward Patrick you know that!

Andile: But it's the truth Joy.

Dad: Okay you can come with me baby.

Me: Thank you! Thank you!

I took my breakfast and went to my room. I looked inside my wore drop for something to wear while I was busy chewing the bacon that tasted soo good. My phone rang I went to it. I answered without checking the caller ID.

Me: (giggling) Dr Dhlomo's P.A how can I assist you. (giggling) I am kidding you crispy ass. It's Thandeka speaking you need my help?

Sam: (clearing throats) I see you're in a good mood this morning.

Me: Who wouldn't be if you have thee best father in the world.

Sam: He bought the car already?

Me: Argh cut the act Samkelo what do you want?

Sam: Bbe I need to talk you.

Me: About what? Wits? Come on I don't have a problem with that you can go. But I have to go now I need to take a shower bye.

Sam: Hey hey wait. Can we meet up later today I will come by your hood using mom's car.

Me: You're back?

Sam: I am on my way I needed to talk to you.

Me: Oh okay. I will see you later than.

Sam: thanks I love you bbe.

Me: I love you too bbe.

We hung up the call. And I ran to the bathroom and took a quick shower. I brushed my teeth and I lotioned. I wore my brown jeans and a white loose shirt. I wore brown ankle boots. I combed my hair loose. I took my red lipstick and look at it. "Argh lipstick for what?" I put it on my hand bag. I took my phone and plate I left the room. I left the plate on the sink and I looked for dad on the lounge he was not there.

Me: Olwethu where is my dad?

Dad:(from his bedroom) Wait for me in the car.

Me: Okay. Bye girl.

Olwethu: Bye.

I stepped inside dad's car at the backseat. He came in after a while and started the car. We drove to the hospital having a very good conversation. We arrived at the hospital and we walked to his office. He showed me everything I had to do for him.

Me: I will sit here I won't follow you around?

Dad: No you won't.

Me: But I wanted to follow you around.

Dad: No you can't. Stay here Thandeka and do your job.

I nodded and looked down. He left the office after taking his things. I did my job crying. I needed to follow my dad around but he didn't allow me to. So I sucked it up and did my work. Lunch time and tea break I was with my dad. Until it was time for us to go back home. I was tired as hell.

At home I went straight to my room and took a shower. I lotioned and wore my summer pyjamas. I put on the gown and wore my slippers. I went to the dinner table and I had supper with everyone.

Andile: You look tired Joy?

Me: I am never going back to the hospital dude. That was a lot of work Brah.

They all laughed and continued eating. My phone vibrated on my pocket. I took it out and Samkelo was texting saying that he's outside.

Me: I have something that I have to give to a friend dad I will be back just now. (I looked at Andile)

Dad: What friend?

Me: A High School friend.

Andile: Don't you want me to go with you.

Me: Yeah sure bhuti please.

Dad: Okay you can go.

Me: Thanks.

I stood up and went to my room. I took a few things and put them inside a plastic bag. I went to the kitchen and winked at Andile. He stood up.

We left the house. I saw Samkelo's mom car parked three houses away.

Andile: I covered your ass up in there.

Me:(giggles) Thanks. Where will you stay.

Andile: I will wait for you here just make it quick. Tell Ndunakazi that I said big up to him. He did a great job by passing.

Me:(laughing) Okay.

He nodded and I ran to the car. Samkelo stepped out of the car and met me halfway. We shared a brief hug and we stepped inside the car. I sat on the passenger seat putting my feet on his lap.

Me: Bbe please give me a massage.

Sam: Okay bbe. So bbe are you alright?

Me: Yeah sure and you?

Sam: I am fine now that I see you. Bbe look I don't want distance to tear up our relationship.

Me: How will it work?

Sam: We can visit each other. My dad will rent a flat for me. You can visit and I can also visit.

Me: Okay my love I am sorry for snapping at you last night.

Sam: It's Okay love I missed you.

Me: Not like I did. \*we kissed and broke it\*

Sam: I will see you tomorrow hopefully since your brother is waiting for you.

Me: Okay bbe. I love you.

Sam: I love you too my love.

We kissed each other again intensely and we broke the kiss. He stopped massaging me.

Me: Just two more minutes give me that massage please.

Sam: (smiling) Okay.

He massaged me but in a different way than the first time.

Me: What did you do to your hands now Samkelo?

Sam: Nothing bbe why?

Me: Mxm just stop with the stupid massage. Yoh! Uyadika man sometimes! Argh!

I opened the door and left him.

I walked pass Andile and he walked after me.

Andile: Slow down dude are you crazy?

Me: Eish I am sorry.

I breathed in and out we walked inside the house. Mom and dad wanted to talk to us on the lounge.

Dad: I wanted to ask since you two will be studying at the same university.

Andile: But not the same campus. She's at Ml Sultan and I am at Steve Biko.

Dad: Okay. I wanted to hear from you if want to share a flat or you want separate flats.

Andile: I am sorted for this year dad. I will be residing at Alpine residents for seniors so you can pay the flat for my sister joy. She can stay at Musgrave or Essenwood because it's near by campus. I can get a flat for her.

Me: Why can't I stay with you?

Andile: Because I don't want a flat this year sisi. I got the res that I wanted.

Me: Okay as long as I won't have a roommate.

Dad: That roommate can die on day two.

We all laughed at that.

Dad: So you won't get a room mate. I will rent a single flat for you.

Me: Thanks daddy.

Dad: You can go to sleep.

Us: Thanks.

I went to bed with a huge smile. Samkelo kept calling me. I switched off my phone and dossed off.

By the end of January I had settled down in Durban. Thobelani was also going to study in DUT doing Office Management and Technology. Dad and Andile got me a flat by Musgrave. It had a bathroom, Kitchen, a lounge and a bedroom. He bought me a car a silver yaris back in those days when it was still a hit! I was living alone and I was slowly getting used to the place though I used to cry every night because I missed my dad. But I missed Samkelo the most. I wanted him to hold me and tell me he loves me but my pride couldn't let me talk to him. I was still mad at him for what? Just a massage? Ever since I walked out on him that day because of the massage I never took any of his call nor respond to his text messages. I was in my room on a Thursday night. I was crying because I needed Samkelo. I took my phone and called him. He picked up quickly like he was expecting my call.

Me:(crying) Bbe I miss you. I miss you so much.

Sam: I miss you too Thandeka. I have been going crazy without you.

Me: I am sorry. I don't know what came over me please forgive me.

Sam: It's Okay bbe. Where are you?

Me: I am in Durban. When are you leaving for Johannesburg?

Sam: Tomorrow.

Me: Can you spend the night with me than you can leave Saturday morning.

Sam: I will have to buy a ticket than. I was going to take a taxi but I will have to buy a bus ticket.

Me: Okay bbe thanks. I love you let me sleep now.

Sam: I love you too my Princess. Goodnight.

I hung up the call and I tried to fall asleep.

The following Friday morning I had nothing to do. I got up from my bed and prayed. I took my phone and called dad. It went straight to voicemail. I organised someone who was going to pick Samkelo at the station and bring him to me. I went to the bathroom. I took a shower and I went back to my pyjamas. I made something to eat for myself. I ate and I spent the rest of my day eating and sleeping. Until I had a knock on the door. I got up from the couch and attend the door. I opened and it was Samkelo.

Me: Damn you!

We laughed and hugged each other. I closed the door and kissed him. He picked me up and walked with me to the couch. He made me lie down on the couch and he got on top of me. I was enjoying every minute of it. We made love on the couch. After that we sat on the couch and I rested my head on his chest listening to his heart beat.

Sam: That was good bbe.

Me: Yeah it was big time.

We laughed and he reached out for his pants and took out a key. He gave it to me.

Me: What is this?

Sam: It's a key to my flat for you to show up anytime when you need to my love. I love you.

Me: Wow bbe thanks. Let me get the spares too.

I giggled and stood up. I went to my room and I took the spare key to my flat and I went back to Samkelo.

Me: So bbe this one is yours from me to you my love.

Sam: meaning I can come by anytime?

Me: Anytime my love.

We laughed and we stood up and prepared supper for ourselves. We ate and went back to my bed room and we had a lot of fun together inside my bedroom. The following morning he had to leave it was hard but I had to tighten up a bit. I told myself I was going to make it up there. I couldn't stop crying so I called my dad. He picked up this time around.

Me: Daddy?

Dad: You've been crying again Thandeka?

Me: No dad but I miss you.

Dad: I miss you too my Angel but you have to stop calling me every time. So that you can get used to the place baby.

Me: You don't want me to call you anymore.

Dad: No baby not like that but you can call twice a week maybe not 3 times a day.

Me: Okay I am sorry daddy.

Dad: No don't be sorry bbe. I love you okay.

Me: I love you too.

I hung up the call. I took my things and drove to the mall just to clear my head.

High school for me was much more better than University because university need all your attention as a student. Just that I was doing something that I was passionate about Architecture. Thobelani and I were still good friends. Edward Jones too I was just close to him but we were not friends actually. My brother was always busy I didn't have a lot of time to spend with him. But I was getting used to the place and loving it big time.

On a valentines day I woke up in the morning. I took my phone and called Samkelo but his phone went straight to voicemail. I was sad because I wanted to wish him a happy valentines day. Since it was a Saturday I wasn't going anywhere. I stayed in my flat and watched movies. There was a knock on the door. I stood up and attended to it. Me: Edward Jones?

Edward: Happy valentines day Joy. (giving me flowers. Red roses)

Me: (giggles) Thanks but I didn't get you anything for you. Come in.

Edward: Come on it's no big deal but I just wanted to do this

Me: What-

He smashed his lips on my lips and kissed me. I tried to back away but he mumbled “I love you so much I have always loved you” I wasted no time I kissed him back and he picked me up and we walked to my bedroom. He threw me on top of the bed and got on top of me. He kissed taking off my pyjamas top and I took off his shirt. He took off the pyjamas pants and I wasn't wearing any panty. He used his fingers on me and I moaned loudly in pleasure.

Voice: (shouting) THANDEKA!!!

I quickly pushed him off me and grabbed the covers to cover my body. Andile and Samkelo were standing on my bedroom door.

Andile: Edward you've been fucking my sister?

Edward: No Brah it's not what you think I –

Sam: I trusted you Thandeka and did this to me. I thought you were different I thought-

Me: Bbe it's not like that it was just one lousy mistake I am sorry. I didn't sleep with him. I-

Sam: Shut up! Just shut the hell up! (Throwing a gift on my bed) Happy valentines day. It's over between us. You can continue with him. Nxx!!

Andile: I can't even stand your sight Thandeka!

Me: Bhuti-

Andile: Kuki? Kuki wani? Huh? You disgust me!

They both left me crying. I couldn't believe it myself what just happened.

Edward: Thandeka I –

Me: Please leave! Just leave now!

He wore his shirt and left. I was left alone and I cried my lungs out.

I spent the whole month of February crying and thinking about Samkelo. I tried calling him, texting him but he blocked my number. And blocked me on every social networking site. I cried until I told myself that “fuck him I can make it without him” but it was hard. But I had to do it and move on with my life. Andile was not talking to me either so I just let them be and pulled myself together.

Beginning of March. It was a Monday morning I woke up and went to the bathroom. I showered, brushed my teeth but the toothpaste had a wired taste. I felt like throwing out. I opened the toilet seat and threw up. I finished and flushed. I closed the toilet and sat on top of the seat. I stood up and opened my drawer where I kept my pads. I saw all the three pockets of pads they were unused. I laughed sarcastically.

Me: No Lord God don't do this to me please. No!

I quickly went to my room and lotioned my body. I wore my clothes. I called Thobelani. He picked up.

Thobe: Skhokho.

Me: Can you come to my flat now please!

Thobe: Okay ntwana.

I went to my kitchen and made something to eat. I sat on my lounge and ate my breakfast. After some time Thobelani was on my doorstep. I opened up for him. We went to sit down on the lounge.

Thobe: What's up dude?

Me: I think that I am pregnant.

Thobe: What? No you can't be pregnant. Your dad? Samkelo Brah?

Me: It his damn child. I never slept with anyone but him. Please go and buy the pregnancy tests for me.

Thobe: okay skhokho.

I stood up and went to my room. I took the money and gave it to him.

Me: Buy Five of them please.

Thobe: Okay.

He left. Waiting was killing me. I went to my room and I looked at my tummy. It was a little bump and it wasn't soft like always. I just broke down. I thought about my dad and cried. I thought about the contract I cried until Thobelani was back. I wiped my tears and took the pregnancy test. I went to the bathroom and did the test. I waited for a few minutes and they all came back positive. I went back to Thobelani.

Me: They are positive Brah. I am pregnant.

Thobe: You have to tell Samkelo.

Me: Please borrow me your phone.

He gave me his phone and I dialed his number. I put him on loud speaker. He picked up.

Sam: Maphanga boy.

Me: Samkelo it's Thandeka. Please listen to me. I-

Sam: I don't have time-

Me: Hheyi fuck you Brah. I am not going to beg your love back. I want you to listen to me.

Sam: What?

Me: I am pregnant.

Sam: Oh wow congratulations Thandeka.

Me: Its your child damnit.

Sam:(laughing) I see you must be loosing your mind. Edward is neglecting you now so you think you are going to say the child is mine.

Me: I didn't sleep with him.

Sam: Please leave me alone Thandeka. I have no child with you. I didn't make you pregnant. He hung up on me....

## Chapter: 2

After Samkelo had hung up on me. I couldn't believe what he said. I felt my palm, my forehead and my whole body sweating. I couldn't hold my tears. I saw my world crashing down and every dream that I had vanishing.

Thobe: I am sorry Thandeka. Give him time dear he will come around. I think he is still mad at you.

Me: (sniffing) He better come around before I do something I will regret.

Thobe: Don't talk like that Thandeka just be positive.

Me: Positive? Positive Thobe? What about my dad and the contract that he made me sign. He is going to throw me out and cut me off once he learns that I am pregnant. Worse Samkelo's child.

Thobe: But you have to tell him because you will need his support.

Me:(sighed) It's hard. I shouldn't have trusted the pulling out method.

Thobe: I am sorry ntwana yami.

Me: It's cool Brah. I have to think of a way forward for me and my baby. I won't beg Samkelo. Eish. Let's go man. We still have classes to attend.

Thobe: Yah Let's go.

I stood up and went to my room. I wore decent clothes and I took my bag. I locked my flat behind and we walked to school. It was a very short distance. We were both going to the same campus. We arrived, we hugged each other and went our separate ways.

After my classes I went Ritson campus I wanted to buy their wors roll. I was really in love with it. There was a long line of students but I had to wait because my baby wanted the wors roll. My turn came and ordered. I paid and waited. My order arrived and I went to sit down. I started eating.

Girl: Do you mind if I join you?

Me:(chewing) No! No! I don't mind.

She smiled and sat down. She was also eating the same thing as mine.

Me:(swallowing) Are you also pregnant?

Her: (laughing) No I am not. I bet you're pregnant then.

Me: Yes I am dude and I wish I can fly to heaven and live there for nine months.

Her: Why?

Me: Baby daddy is denying the baby because he caught me kissing another guy in my bed.

Her: So he thinks you were sleeping with him.

Me: Yes so now he wants nothing to do with us because he thinks the baby is not his. And on the other hand my dad will throw me out if he finds out that I am pregnant. I signed a contract stating that he will disown me if I can be pregnant while I am still studying.

Her: Shhh.. Don't cry hey.

Me: (wiping my tears) Huck! I didn't even realize that I am crying. I am sorry.

Her: It's Okay. My name is Sanelisiwe. I am doing my third year in Child and Youth Development.

Me: I have never heard of it before.

Sane: Well we work with vulnerable children and youth. Those kids and young people who have been neglected, raped, abused or troubled in any way. And your situation is very sad but I think I can help you but if you're willing to do whatever it takes just to keep the little one safe while continuing with your studies. You must be willing to hide.

Me: How can I do that?

Sane: (looking at the time) Ouch! I have to go now my bus will leave soon. Give me your number. I took her phone and dialed my number. I gave her the phone back and she left. I was left behind thinking about what she said. I couldn't help but think of what was her plan and was she going to help me and my little Samke/Sam. I finished up my food and I walked out of the cafeteria. I made my way to my flat. I was listening to my thoughts about my baby.

Voice: Joy.

Me: (turning back) Edward?

Edward: Yes. Are you alright?

Me: Yes I am fine and you?

Edward: I am cool. I am sorry about what happened the other day.

Me: It's cool Brah. Nothing you can say can change anything. How is my brother?

Edward: He is not talking to me.

Me: I am sorry. Hey look I have to go. I think we can do this some other time.

Edward: Okay bye.

I nodded and I continued walking. It was painful because Andile wasn't answering my calls and my texts. He was ignoring me. I told myself that he was going to come around.

I arrived in my flat. I took off my clothes and I threw myself on top of my bed. I took my phone and called dad. I was missing him. Though he told me not to call everyday but I was missing badly. He answered his phone.

Me: Daddy?

Olwethu: They went to the mall.

Me: Oh how are you then?

Olwethu: I am fine and you?

Me: I am good. Do you enjoy being a learner at Aqudene High School?

Olwethu: Yeah yoh! It's so nice and I really like it here.

Me: Okay send my love to everyone then.

Olwethu: Okay bye.

Me: Bye.

I placed my phone aside and thought about what Sanelisiwe said to me. I must be willing to hide?? Hide from what? From who?

[Sorry I made a mistake the name of the girl is Sanelisiwe not Samkelisiwe]

While I was still thinking there was a knock on my door. I stood up and attended the door. It was Thobelani. I opened for him.

Me: Ntwana?

Thobe: I bought food for you and your little champ

Me:(giggles) Thanks Brah. Let me get us some drinks first.

I went to the kitchen and took fruit tree juice and two glasses. I walked back to the lounge.

Thobe: Are you going home for the Easter holidays?

Me: Yes I am but I won't tell them yet. June dad is getting married dude. Think about it I will have a huge bump.

Thobe: You'll be fine dear just relax.

There was a knock on the door. That person was actually banging the door. I quickly went to it just to check who it was and it Andile. I opened.

Me: Are you trying to break my door?

Andile: Are you pregnant? Is it true that you're pregnant Thandeka?

Me: Who told you that?

Andile: Just answer the damn question damnit!

Me: Samkelo must have told you that. I was just joking. I am not pregnant.

Andile: Why would you joke about that?

Me: I just wanted to see his reaction if I say that.

Andile: Can I sit?

Me: Yah. (We sat down)

Andile: Sisi please try and move on. I know you loved the guy and he loved you too but it will be hard for him to forgive you after what he saw you doing.

Me:(crying) But I didn't sleep with Edward Andile.

Andile: But any guy can be convinced that you did and that it was not the first time. We found you two in bed naked. How can you expect him to believe that you took a guy to your bed the first time he tried his luck on you.

Me:(shouting) The fucken hormones maybe they made me act like that.

Andile: Thandeka you just admitted that you're pregnant?

Me:(crying) Yeah I am vele Andile. I am pregnant. I am sorry to disappoint you and dad. I am so sorry. But please don't tell anyone yet.

Andile: (hugging me) I am sorry sisi. It's okay we all make mistakes. I won't tell him. It's not my place to tell him anyway. Samkelo is the father right?

Me: Yes and he wants nothing to do with us Andile.

Andile: He will come around. Don't force him to anything. If he forever believes that he is not the father than it his lost.

Me: Thank you bhuti.

Andile: It's Okay sisi wami. I was going to school by the way. I have to study I have a test tomorrow.

Me: You're going to school at night?

Andile: Yes the library closes at 12midnight and we have transport provided so I am saving my cash for petrol.

Me: We will go together for Easter holidays?

Andile: Yeah if you want to. Oh! So that's why you were always following dad your baby loves dad.

Thobe: Hahaha This child Thandeka!

Andile: (standing up) Grandpa. I wonder how will he react.

Me: He'll throw me out broeh.

Andile: He won't do that.

Thobe: Let me go too skhokho. I was also going to school. I have a test week next week.

Me: Okay bye guys.

I hugged them both and they left. I closed the door behind them.

I went back to the lounge and ate my food. I was enjoying my food when my phone rang. I quickly stood up and took it. It was an unknown number.

Me: Hello.

Sane: Hey it's Sanelisiwe.

Me: Oh hey thanks for calling me back.

Sane: Yeah so I will just explain to you what I was talking about.

Me: I am listening.

Sane: I think to avoid being thrown out by your father. You must not tell him that you're pregnant.

Me: But how? Because soon or later he will see my tummy.

Sane: You will go home for Easter holidays because your tummy doesn't show yet. Then after that you won't go home until you give birth.

Me: He is getting married in June. It will be impossible to hide my tummy.

Sane: You will tell them that you have a trip. Which course are you doing?

Me: Architecture.

Sane: Perfect. You will say. You're going on a trip with your class mates to visit different construction companies. Just to build a relationship with them so that after your Diploma they will know that you guys exist.

Me: And then after I gave birth where will I take my child to?

Sane: I will direct you to a Social worker. She will give you options. It either you give the baby up for adoption.

Me: I don't want people to adopt my child.

Sane: Okay. Other options may be finding a temporary foster home for her/him. Or taking her/ him to a children's home. There is a perfect one at Sherwood. Edith Bensons Babies home. It's a home for babies. You can visit your baby if you want to see her/him. That will save you from losing your dad and your education while you protect your baby at the same time.

Me: Wow! Can we meet tomorrow?

Sane: Okay no problem.

Me: Thanks a lot. I will think about it and talk to my brother about it.

Sane: Okay dear bye.

Me: Goodnight.

We hung up. I sighed heavily thinking about what Sanelisiwe told me.

I called my brother. It rang and he picked up.

Me: Bhuti. Can you please come back there's something I want to discuss with you please.

Andile: Okay sisi I will come now.

Me: Thanks.

I hung up and waited for him to come.

I trusted my brother with time but waiting for him that night took about forever and it got me worried. I sat on the couch looking at the blank space of the television. I took a deep breath and tried not to think too much about this plan because I had my own pros and cons. I heard a knock on the door and I jumped to it. I opened and Andile came through. He was breathing heavily like someone was chasing after him.

Me: What happened bhuti wami?

Andile: I almost got mugged dude but I managed to run away from those thugs.

Me: I am sorry to hear that let me get you water.

I walked to the kitchen and poured water for him. I went back to him and I gave him the glass of water.

Andile: So talk to me. What is it?

Me: I met a girl today...- I told him the whole plan –

Andile: It's a good plan special keeping the pregnancy away from dad but I don't trust her.

Me: Why?

Andile: These people may seem like they want to help you only to find that they just want to make money with your baby. Would you live with yourself when you loose the baby in this process?

Me: I hear you bhuti. I also thought about that. But I can make my own research about this children's home because I can't risk telling dad what if he throws me out?

Andile: I will support you. I have a some cash. I can rent a place for you two if he throws you out.

Me: No you won't be able to manage me and the baby. What about my studies? Because dad pays for them unlike you. You have a sponsor.

Andile: You can apply for NSFAS.

Me: No bhuti. I am taking my chance with this thing. I won't agree to put my baby on a foster family because they can have a deal with them but on a children's home it will be impossible to steal a child there. And after two years I will take my daughter and we will move to Capetown.

Andile: It was going to be better if you have access to the money that mom left for you.

Me: Yeah but the clause said I must finish my studies than I can have the money. So after finishing my diploma. I will take that money and buy a house for me and my baby.

Andile: That's wise. But I will go with you when you meet that social worker.

Me: Okay thanks bhuti. So please back me up than on dad's wedding.

Andile: Okay I will. We have to fake some letter or papers that he will sign so that it can look real.

Me: I don't think I know how to do that.

Andile: Don't worry about that I will do it for you. Are you sure you don't want me to talk to Samkelo

Me: No. Please just leave him like that. I won't beg him and I want you to do the same. Please.

Andile: Okay sisi I won't talk to him. Let me go than. You will let me know.

We stood up and I walked him out.

Me: Okay bhuti I will keep in touch. Thank you so much. Mntakamama.

Andile: Okay. Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight.

We hugged each other and he left. I went back to my flat. I locked the door and I went to the kitchen and started cooking while listening to music I was trying to keep my spirit up. After cooking I ate with my little bundle of joy. I finished, washed my plate and I went to my room. I didn't feel like taking a bath so I just threw myself on top of my bed. I looked at the ceiling thinking about the good times I had with Samkelo. How he always managed to put a smile on my face. How he used to kiss me saying "I am trying to calm my anger" I found myself laughing at that thought. "I miss you Samkelo and I wish one day you can come back in my life. And be with us. We love you" I thought out loud as I couldn't hold my tears. I set them free from my tears bank. I felt my heart paining. It was hard to accept that Samkelo was no longer part of my life but I promised myself that I was going to love our baby even more. I ended up falling asleep in between my thoughts and tears.

I felt the sun rays invading my room signaling a new day. I quickly got up and dragged my feet to the bathroom. I had an early class that day. I took a shower, brushed my teeth with

water only and rinsed my mouth with Listerine. I felt fresh and alive to take whatever challenge of a new day. I lotion my body and I wore navy jeans with a loose purple shirt. Black sandals, I put on a purple lipstick and I fixed my bed. I opened the windows and packed my books. I was late so I grabbed an apple. I was lazy to walk I decided to drive my car. Within a blink of an eye I was on campus. I rushed to the lecture venue because I didn't want to be late. The lecture began and I ended up making half of the class sleep. I assume it was me because I have heard people saying "pregnant women make people sleep". During the lunch break my feet were killing me. I went to the cafeteria on my campus and I bought a full meal. I went to eat inside my car. Sanelisiwe texted me asking me about my whereabouts. I texted her directions and I continued with eating. After some time I head a knock on my window. I opened the door for her.

Sane: Hey are you fine?

Me: Yes dear and you?

Sane: I am fine. I spoke to the social worker. And she said you can meet her today. At 3pm. Their offices are located at commercial building. I can go with you if you have no problem with it

Me: No it's fine you have done enough already. I will take my brother with me. Thank you so much. This might be the real big break that I need.

Sane: I am glad to help where I can. I will hate to just walk away. Can we be friends at least?

Me: I can use a friend. So I have no problem at all.

Sane: Okay thanks. I have to go my next class is at 1oclock. I will see you later maybe.

Me: Okay thanks again.

Sane: My pleasure.

She smiled and I opened the door for her.

I took my phone and called my brother. He picked up.

Andile: Mama ka Samke?

Me: Samke?

Andile: Yes. That's her name.

Me: Who said it's a girl.

Andile: I know it's a girl. If its a boy you were supposed to look ugly.

Me: (laughing) Yoh! I wonder how do you know that. So bhuti Sanelisiwe gave me the address. The social worker wants us to meet today at 3pm.

Andile: No problem Joy. I will come to you. I hope you're driving today.

Me: Yes I am.

Andile: Okay I will call you after my last class.

Me: Okay thanks bye uncle kaSamke.

Andile: (laughing) bye.

I hung up. I smiled to myself. I held my tummy and I slide down the car seat with the other hand. I bonded with my baby until I ended up falling asleep on the car.

I woke up when somebody was banging my window. I rubbed my eyes and looked at that person who had the nerve to interrupt me from my beauty sleep. It was Andile, I unlocked the door and stepped out of the car. I stretched myself.

Andile: Did you go to your classes or you were sleeping inside the car.

Me: I was tired broeh. I thought I was going to wake up but I failed. I will cover up tomorrow.

Andile: Samke is going to be a problem if she's going to make you sleep.

Me:[laughing] She made half a class sleep this morning and I couldn't help but laugh at that.

Andile: You're crazy you know.

Me: Argh how did you find me, are you spying on me Patrick?

Andile: You have time for jokes you know. You told me that you're here and besides I knew I was going to find you here. Come let's go. I will drive.

Me: Okay

I took the passenger seat and Andile took the driver's seat. He drove off.

Me: I miss dad. I wish I can see him.

Andile: You're carrying one hell of a crazy baby. She chased her dad away by making you kiss Edward and now all she wants is her grandfather, the man you're trying to run away from.

Me: Eish these child. Ufuzo umalume wakhe ngokuhlanya angithi? [She took after his uncle with all the craziness right?]

Andile: [Laughing] You're crazy dude. Show me the office number we are here already.

Me: Okay.

I took out my phone and show him the address. We both stepped out of the car. We took the alleviator leading us to the office of the social worker.

We found it and knocked on the door.

Voice: Come inside.

We cleared our throats and fixed ourselves. We went through the office. A grown up lady was sitting behind the table.

Her: Please take a seat.

Us: Thanks.

Her: I am Mrs Thusi. And you're?

Me: I am Thandeka Dhlomo and these is my brother Andile Dhlomo.

MrsT: Nice to meet you two. I will get down to business. I know the whole story already. Sanelisiwe told me everything. My honest opinion will be putting your child in a children's home. It's better than the foster home. Some foster families don't take good care of children but in a children's home your child will grow up with other kids and she or he will be well taken care of. But there are procedures to be followed.

Me: I am listening.

MrsT: Do you have any relatives?

Me: Yes. I have two grannies. My father's mother who lives at Engwelezane township and my mother's mother who lives at Eastern cape.

MrsT: Okay when removing a child from the mother the first option we look at is relatives of the mother. If they are stable the law or procedure says the child must live with the relatives.

Andile: But our problem is we don't want them to find out. We are going to keep her pregnancy a secret. So taking a child to relatives is not an option.

MrsT: It's going to be hard than because we are going to need proof that you have no one to look after the child.

Me: Please Mam help us. Even if it means asking for favours here and there. I just want my baby to have a shelter. I can pay if it means paying.

Andile: Yes mam we can pay as long as my sister's child will be safe and well taken care of.

MrsT: It will cost you if you want me to bribe the way in.

Andile: How much?

MrsT: R20 000

Andile: It's fine we will pay the money.

MrsT: Are you sure.

Me: Yes we are sure.

Mrs: If you have so much money why don't you find someone to look after the baby.

Me: I can't stay with a child in my flat. Dad can show up anytime and if he can find the child there than I will be doomed. And I can't rent another place and pay for the nanny that will cost too much.

MrsT: You really love your baby young lady I like that. Others were going to abort the child but I am glad that we have child and youth care workers students like Sanelisiwe who loves children and who are willing to help. You're brave Thandeka and I admire that. Andile please support your sister you two make a great team.

Us: Thanks.

MrsT: So I will contact you two and we will go to Edith Benson babies home just to look at the home. Than I will work on finding space for the child. When are you due?

Me: September if I am not mistaken. Because I believe that I fell pregnant during December holidays.

MrsT: Okay we still have time. So Let's hope by June we will definitely know that what will happen to the little one about finding a shelter for her/him.

Us: Thanks.

MrsT: My pleasure. You have to study hard than so that after two years you can take your child out of the children's home.

Me: I promise I will try harder.

MrsT: Okay I will keep in touch than.

Us: Thanks.

We stood up and shook hands. We left our contact details and we went back to the car.

We stepped inside. I was starting to get relieved that at least my child was going to have a home.

Andile: So we're going to contribute half of the price for Samke?

Me: You really going to do that for her.

Andile: Yes umshana wami nje. I would love to do that for her.

Me: Thanks bhuti wami. So it's R10 000/R10 000 right?

Andile: Yes. You do have it on your account?

Me: I have more than enough.

Andile: Good. So you're a pregnant virgin hey?

Me: [laughing] Andile! Don't remind me that please.

We both laughed and continued talking. I dropped him off where he waits for his transport and I drove to South Beach. I wanted to clear my head and just take a walk on the sand.

I arrived by the beach and I went to buy ice cream and I walked on the sand looking at the beautiful waves and children playing around.

Voice: You look so peaceful and beautiful.

Me:[turning around] Oh thanks

Guy: I hope I am not disturbing you.

Me: No you're not. But I was about to go back to my car.

Guy: Okay let me take your digits I would like to buy you another ice cream some day.

Me:[smiling] I don't give my numbers to strangers.

Guy: ouch! Facebook account name?

Me: Thandeka Dhlomo.

Guy: Okay you will get an invite from Themba Smith.

Me: Coloured? Or white?

Guy: Coloured but I speak Afrikaans. I speak Xhosa. My dad is Xhosa. My mom is a coloured.

Me: Okay nice to meet you. I have to go then Themba.

Themba: Okay nice to meet you too Thandeka.

I smiled and walked away. The guy was hot as fuck I even forgot that I was pregnant...

I went back to my car and I took my seat. I played some music. I started the car and drove off. Along the way Celine Dion – "Loved me back to life" played and my mind traveled back

to the day when Samkelo and I did the red and white party. The smiles and kisses he gave me that day, it all came back like it happened yesterday. I found myself crying thinking about all the things I have been through because of him but with just one stupid mistake he gave up on me. "Maybe he wasn't meant to be in our lives baby, but I miss him. I miss your daddy everyday" I thought out loud wiping my tears away. I played another song. In no time I was in my flat. I made something to eat and went to my bedroom just to chill with my kid. I took my phone and logged on Facebook checking if Themba didn't invite me and hell yes the guy invited me. Did I even think twice about accepting him? No man why waste time. I accepted him almost immediately. And he started texting me while I ignored the text and checked out his wall. The nigga was hell dope. He was fineee, I checked his relationship status "open relationship" I laughed a little and I checked his text.

Themba:\*Hey sweetie I hope you remember me\*

Me:\* Yeah I do. I don't have a memory problems that I can forget somebody that I met a few hours or minutes ago\*

Themba:\* Oh okay. I sense some rudeness there\*

Me: \* It must be the baby don't blame me\*

"What?" I screamed out loud. Because I sent the message and I couldn't take it back. "This little rat is driving me crazy" I thought out loud.

Themba:\*Did you just say baby? Are you pregnant or you have a child\*

Me: \*Eish I am sorry about that I am pregnant. Look I have to bounce\*

Themba:\* Not so fast, can I take you and your baby out for dinner tomorrow night?\*

Me:\*Really? You would do that for us?\*

Themba:\*Yeah. So is it a yes or a no?\*

Me:\* Let me talk to the baby first just to check with her if she's up for it\*

Themba:\* Please tell her it's a date, meaning you two better look very nice \* I giggled as I read that.

Me:\* She says she's up for a challenge and the outfit? Make sure you don't choke yourself to death when you see us\*

Themba:\* Lol I love your baby already\*

Me:\* I suppose she loves you too hey. Night Themba\*

Themba:\*so I won't get your tens\*

Me:\* Okay.. 073...\*

Themba:\*Thanks night\*

Me:\*Thanks\*

I logged off and smiled to myself. I ate my food and I fell asleep right there on my bed holding a bowl without even taking a bath nor changing my clothes.

The following morning I was woken up by a knock on my door. I was sleeping so peacefully. I was irritated as hell. I stepped out of my bed and went to attend the door. It was Thobelani. I opened.

Me:[Yawning] Do you even know that what time is it?

Thobe: Yes it's 3oclock.

Me: You're lying broeh.

I quickly ran to my room and took my phone. It was really 3pm. I had missed calls from Themba and Sanelisiwe. I screamed and went back to the lounge.

Me: I missed my classes dude.

Thobe: You were sleeping?

Me: Like a baby broeh. And we have a date tonight. Just me, Samke and Themba.

Thobe: Potential stepfather?

Me: [Laughing] Stepfather my foot! Come help me get an outfit for tonight. The guy told me to be the bomb.

Thobe: Is he going to propose already?

Me: No! You silly ass.

Thobe: [laughing] I was kidding.

I pinched him and we opened my wore drop. We picked up a good outfit.

I took my phone and called him back. He picked up immediately.

Themba: "I was getting worried"

Me: "I am sorry. I was sleeping. I just woke up now"

Themba: "The little one is making you sleep?"

Me: "And I missed my classes. She wants me to fail man. This child has no mercy at all"

Themba: [laughing] "I hope she won't make you sleep tonight. I am picking you up at 6pm"

Me: "Okay let us get ready"

Themba: "Okay looking forward to it"

Me: "me too. I will text you my address"

I giggled and hung up the call. I texted him the address

Thobe: He seems like a nice guy?

Me: They are all nice at the beginning.

Thobe: Was Ndunakazi nice?

Me: Can we not talk about that male b\*tch!

Thobe: Thandeka??

Me: Hhayi whatever. Please go and make us something to eat.

Thobe: Okay.

I went to the bathroom while he left. I took a long ass shower. I finished and wrapped my body with a towel. I lotion my body first and wore my pyjamas. I went to the kitchen and the food was ready. I joined him and we ate together.

Me: This is good. Thanks.

Thobe: My pleasure.

After eating we washed the dishes and it was time for me to get ready. I brushed my teeth with water and rinsed it with Listerine. I wore a tight red dress, it was above the knee it showed my medium ass and curves pretty well. I put on black stilettos. I styled my hair using a straightener and I put on a red lipstick. I took my black long coat and put it on, hiding my dress underneath.

Thobe: I guess it's him. He's here.

Me: I am coming now.

I checked myself on the mirror and I was looking hot. I took a few selfies and I went to the lounge. Themba was looking good and fresh. He stood up and came towards me. He took my hand and kissed it.

Themba: The little one told you to wear a coat only?

Me:[giggles] Yes shall we?

Themba: After you mam.

Me: Skhokho please don't burn my place and please no 3sums must happen in my bed.

They both laughed and we left Thobelani alone. He was driving a white compressor. He opened the door for me and I stepped in. He took his side and drove off.

Themba: By the way you look nice.

Me: Thanks. You look good too.

Themba:[chuckle] That's the first.

Me: It was the baby saying that not me.

Themba: I guess I will be dating her not you?

Me: You didn't talk about dating me.

Themba: Come on I am taking you on a date. That's the first step.

Me: I suppose.

He smiled and played some music. It was so relaxing. He was playing my kind of music. I was loving the guy already.

In no time we arrived in some building. They looked like flats. He stepped out and opened the door for me. He took my hand and closed the door. He walked with me inside the building.

Me:[whispering] I thought we were going out on a date.

Themba: Who said I can't create my own date?

I giggled and we walked inside the beautiful apartment. The lounge was beautiful and clean for a guy. It had a big screen on the wall, white couches and a black fluffy carpet. And a glass coffee table. It was decorated nicely. He took off my coat and I was left with my dress.

Themba: Mmm you look lovely.

Me: Thanks.

He took my hand and we walked inside his big bedroom but we were passing. We made our way to the balcony where there was a table with candles and roses petals. He pulled out a chair for me and I sat down. He kissed my cheek and left. He came back with food. He gave me a plate and he sat down with his plate. He said grace and we started eating with small talks here and there just trying to get to know each other. He was 24 years old. He was working, it was his first year working as a chemical engineer at some laboratory around Durban. He was living alone, his family was in Cape Town. He came to Durban for studying and work. He asked about baby daddy and I told him everything. After dinner we had dessert. It was a wonderful night. We danced to the music and talked until I was sleepy. We sat on his couch.

Me: Thanks for the night it was lovely can you please take me back to my flat now.

Themba: [holding my hand] Can you two ladies be mine? I promise I will take good care of you and I will love you two as long as I live.

Me: We can't be your burden Themba. I mean okay I love you but I can't just invite another man in my life after Samkelo and I-

I couldn't finish my little speech because I felt his candy lips against my lips. He kissed me slowly and passionately. I was loving every single moment of it. But he broke the kiss.

Themba: And I love you too Thandeka. Don't worry about the rest. Love will show us the way. Samkelo is the past and don't let him stand in our way of happiness.

I nodded and he kissed me again. He broke it.

Themba: Let me take you home so that you two can rest.

I smiled and he walked me out. I took my coat and we went to his car. We drove straight to my flat. He opened the door for me and I stepped out. He gave me a hug and a kiss on the forehead.

Themba: Goodnight my angel.

Me: Goodnight my love.

He smiled and I walked away. I walked inside the flat and Sanelisiwe and Thobelani were playing games on my lounge.

Me: Sanelisiwe?

Sane: Thandeka? Bbe these is your friend? I know her.

Thobe: Really?

Me: Yeah. The girl I told you about who helped me about the baby.

Thobe: Oh that's nice. Please go and change we are going out now.

Me: Out?

Them: Go!!!

I went inside my room and there was a outfit for me already. I changed into it. It was a white short and a blue loose top and a white ankle all star. I tied up my hair. I took my bag and my car keys. We all went to the car and Thobelani was driving.

We arrived to a club which was very packed. There were a lot of people. We went to the bar and I ordered a non alcoholic drink. Thobelani and Sanelisiwe ordered vodka. They dragged me to the dance floor. "I can't dance" I tried to shout through the loud music but they didn't hear me. They made me move and before I knew I was moving to the beat correctly. A guy danced with me and I didn't mind. It was so funny for me because it was my first time dancing like that. I was having a good time until somebody held my arm and whispered "I thought you were sleeping at home with the baby"...

I didn't want to turn back because I didn't know who was whispering those words. I tried to move and ignore him but he didn't let go of my arm. I turned back and Themba was looking at me. My heart skipped a beat. I looked at him without a word. He looked at me waiting for a response. But I didn't say anything. He dragged me out of the club and walked with me to a quiet corner.

Me: What are you doing here?

Themba: I asked you that question first.

Me: Uhm I- I was- I am here with my friends. They dragged me to do this thing with them.

Themba: How can someone drag you to come to a club?

Me: The same way you did just now.

Themba:[his jaw tightened] Okay I see. I am taking you to my place. You will sleep there.

Me: Why?

Themba: Because you're pregnant. What are you doing in this kind of places anyway. People fight in clubs what if they fight and something happens to you and the baby? Do you want to loose the baby?

Me:Of course not.

Themba: Then don't ever think about coming here while you're pregnant. I am not saying don't go out with your friends and have fun but now is not the right time Thandeka.

Me: Yes daddy.

Themba: It's fine than go back to the dance floor. Go and risk your child's life in there.

Me: And how did you know that I am here?

Themba: I came here with my friends.

Me: Oh okay.

Themba: Am I taking you to my place or you're going back inside.

Me: Take me to your place but I need to tell my friends that I am leaving.

Themba: You will send a text

Me: I am driving my own car though.

Themba: I won't allow that. You're sleepy.

He took out his phone and called someone. A guy came out of the club and he greeted us. I gave him my keys and I walked with Themba to his car. He opened the door for me and I got in. He closed it and took his side. I texted Thobelani about my sudden departure. We drove to his place in silence. I fell asleep on the car seat.

The following morning I woke up. It was a Saturday. I was wearing a big white t-shirt. I looked around Themba was not inside the room. My phone rang and it was Andile calling.

Me:[Yawning] Bhuti.

Andile: Where are you? I am at your place. I wanted to take you to the Doctor today for your check up.

Me: You didn't tell me Andile.

Andile: I sent you a text moron!

Me: Yoh! I didn't see that text bhuti I am sorry.

Andile: Where are you?

Me: I am at a friend's place [Themba came in blowing a whistle]

Andile: Who's that?

Me: My friend Bhuti.

Andile: Is that friend a man? Thandeka? You're sleeping out with other man? What's wrong with you huh?

Me: Nothing is wrong with me! I didn't want to stay alone.

Andile: Do you even know that we're supposed to go check out the children's home today at 10 o'clock?

Me: Flip! I forgot about that email. I will get ready now and come back now.

Andile: One can vow that this is my baby you know.

Me: You're the uncle.

Andile: Mxm.

He hung up on me.

I immediately stepped out of the bed and went to Themba who was leaning by the door looking at me. I wrapped my arms around his neck.

Me: Good morning.

Themba: Good morning my angel how are you today?

Me: I am fine and you?

Themba: I— am— perfect

He said leaning over for a kiss. I stopped him.

Me: I haven't brush my teeth Themba.

Themba: So?

Me: Duh?

He smiled and held my waist. He kissed me and his mouth had a mint taste. We kissed each other deeply. We broke the kiss after a while.

Me: I have to go. We have to check out a children's home with my brother and the social worker today.

Themba: Why?

Me: The problem is...[I told him the whole story]

Themba: No don't do that.

Me: Why?

Themba: I once lived in a children's home. My parents were broke and they both ended up being drunkards. I wasn't coping at school so my teacher saw that and asked me where the problem was. I couldn't tell her but I got tired of my mom beating me for nothing so I decided to tell her the whole story. There were no relatives I could go to because my parents don't get along with their extended families or relatives. I was taken to a home. And believe me Thandeka that place is meant to build children but it's breaking them. The care workers there are tired of looking after children. They used to shout at us for no reason. But it was better than being beaten up and the food? The children eats from donations schemes sometimes expired food. I won't advice you to take your little baby there. Is the organization owned by the government?

Me: No it's not owned by the government.

Themba: Then don't. It's better if it's owned by the government because the government provides things for children but us who stayed on non governmental organization it was really bad because we only rely on donations so don't take your baby there.

Me: What must I do because I need my education for this child and myself. Telling my dad means loosing everything. I signed a contract. If this was my second year I was going to take risks and tell him the truth but this is my first year. He will figure it out that I fooled him about the reed dance.

Themba: I will pay for a nanny for the baby. She can live with you.

Me: My dad can show up anytime in my flat and see the baby.

Themba: What if he does while you're still pregnant?

Me: He won't because they are busy planning the wedding. After the wedding they are going on their honeymoon.

Themba: Let the baby stay here with me. And we can find the nanny. Me, you and your brother will take care of the baby.

Me: Are you serious???

Themba: Dead serious!

Me: "Samkelo where are you??" I thought to myself.

Me: [clearing throats] can we meet with my brother in my flat and talk about this?

Themba: No problem bbe. Let's go and take a shower.

I nodded and we both went to the bathroom. I was shy to be naked in front of him. I kept on brushing my teeth with water using a spare toothbrush while he was running the water for us.

Themba: Are you scared to join me?

Me: What? Hell no! Don't be silly.

Themba: Don't worry bbe. Yesterday I changed your clothes and I made you wear that shirt. I have seen your body.

Me: Oh okay. No biggie than.

I took off his T-shirt, I put on a shower cap provided and I joined him inside the shower. I stood in front of him and he washed my back using a bathing sponge.

Themba: You have a smooth skin.

Me: Mmm thanks.

After he washed my back, I took the sponge and washed his. We then bath ourselves and rinsed our bodies. We wrapped our bodies with towels and walked back to the bedroom to lotion. I wore the clothes I was wearing the previous night. We had breakfast that he prepared.

Me: You have a nice apartment.

Themba: Thanks.

Me: How many rooms?

Themba: 2bedrooms, a lounge, a kitchen. I don't count the walk in bathrooms. So That's 4 rooms. If your brother agrees the other bedroom will be for the baby and her/his nanny.

Me: I don't know what to say you know. Thanks.

Themba: I am trying to protect the little guy/girl and make his/her mother happy.

Me: I am happy already.

He kissed me and we continued eating. We washed the dishes and we took our car keys. I drove my car and he drove his.

In no time we were in my flat. We both walked inside and my two friends and Andile were on my lounge eating.

Me: You're here to destroy and waste my food?

They laughed and we all sat down.

Sane: Let me leave. I have a date with my man.

Me: Your man? I thought you and Thobelani?

Thobe: [laughing] We're just friends with benefits. You know I have my Princess Olwethu.

Andile: Olwethu??

Thobe: I think I should go too. [Rushing out]

Me: You will tell me about your date Sanelisiwe?

Sane: Yes. He's the best guy. I just don't believe he's back in my life.

Themba: It's an ex?

Sane: Duh? Yes.

We laughed and they both left. We were left alone and Andile started talking.

Andile: So who is these guy with you?

Me: These is Themba Smith my boyfriend.

Andile: Boyfriend??? Can we talk in private?

He said dragging me by my arm. We went to my room and he closed the door.

Andile: Are you mad?

Me: I love him!

Andile: You love him? Wow your love comes easy hey. And you're too trusting.

Me: He's not a bad guy. He is sweet. I love him Andile please give him a chance.

Andile: You should be focusing on your baby and try to fix your relationship with her father.

Me: [laughing sarcastically] You're unbelievable! Samkelo left me. I didn't leave him.

Andile: You broke his heart Thandeka.

Me: I am not going back to Samkelo.

Andile: Your child will grow up knowing another man as father?

Me: I don't care.

Andile: I won't support this shit! Do whatever you want with your baby. Sell it if you want to but I will talk to her father.

Me: If you dare Andile!

Andile: What are you going to do?

Me: I don't need Samkelo in my life. Why should I beg him? I love Themba and I want to be with him. Andile: I don't have time for this!

Me: I beg you bhuti wami.

Andile: Fix things things with your baby daddy!

He shouted and left. I sat on my bed and cried. Themba came inside my room and sat with me on the bed. He held me tight and I cried inside his arms. He brushed my back.

Themba: Don't cry baby. All will be well. I won't leave you even if you try to fix things between you and Samkelo.

Me: He said he wants nothing to do with me. I don't want him back in my life. I know I was wrong but he never gave me a chance to explain. I didn't sleep with that guy. It was just a mistake.

Themba: It's Okay baby. Stop stressing about him. If he wants to be part of the baby he will come back to you and be part of his baby.

Me: Thanks.

Themba: How about we go the Doctor?

Me: Okay.

He kissed my cheek. I stood up and changed my clothes. I wore a simple dress and sandals.

I was done and we held each other's hands. We drove to the Doctor. We made an appointment and we told to come back after 3hours. Themba suggested we drove to gateway.

He was talking until I fell asleep on the car seat. I woke up because I felt air blowing me. I wasn't walking on my legs but I was on Themba's arms. We were inside the mall.

Me: Themba! Put me down.

Themba: But bbe you were sleeping peacefully I didn't want to wake you up

Me: People are looking at us please put me down bbe please.

Themba: Kiss me first.

Me: Yoh! Awusadiki nje wena! [Laughing]

I kissed him intensely and we broke it after some time. He smiled and put me down. I couldn't help but giggle. He held my hand and we walked to buy something to eat. He was cracking jokes and I couldn't help but laugh.

Themba: Bbe look at your friend. I think that must be her ex.

Me: [laughing] Where sthandwa sami?

Themba:[pointing them] There..

Me: O-

I couldn't believe my eyes. I rubbed them and blinked twice. They were not deceiving me but they were seeing him as he truly was. He was looking as fine as hell. They looked good and happy together. Themba snapped his fingers crossed my astonished face.

Themba: Bbe are you alright?

Me: [clearing throat] Yes my love I am fine. Let's go and wait for the Doctor.

Themba: But it's still early.

Me: Themba please-

Sane: [running towards us] Thandeka please wait for us.

Me: [mumbling] Shit!

Themba: Are you sure you are alright.

Me: [faking smile] Yes Mr Smith.

He smiled at me showing his dimples. I giggled looking at how cute my coloured boy was.

Sanelisiwe came to us dragging her EX! along.

Sane: Woah! I am almost lost my breath. I am glad to catch you two in time. What are you doing here? Because I....

I didn't hear the rest of her speech because my eyes were glued up to her ex who was also staring at me. His eyes started being crowded by tears and they streamed down. I decided to break the eye contact and focus on my man.

Me: So bbe can we go?

Themba: Your friend was just telling us about her ex bbe.

Me: Oh my bad. I didn't hear that.

I looked at him again. He had wiped his tears off his cute face.

Sane: Yeah so Thandeka. These is my ex and my current boyfriend.

Me: Current again?

Sane: [laughing] Yes I guess. But he is my life and I am glad to have him back in my life. His name is Samkelo Ndunakazi.

Themba: Thandeka!?

Me: Bbe calm down. It's nice to meet you Samkelo. Sanelisiwe can't stop talking about you.

Sam: I wish she had spoken about you too but too bad she didn't.

Me:[sarcastic laugh] Oh please dude why would she talk about me it's not like we're best buddies. If you don't mind you two I was going to have lunch with my man and go to the Doctor afterwards for a check up.

Sane: No problem we will go with you two. You don't mind bbe?

Sam: No I don't mind my love.

Me: Themba?

Themba: It's fine we can go with them.

I nodded and we walked to steers because I was craving for their burgers. The guys ordered while I sat on the table with Sanelisiwe.

Sane: Do you know Samkelo?

Me: He was in the same school with me. I have seen him around not that I know him.

Sane: Okay I see.

They came back and we all ate together.

Sam: So Themba my man what are you doing with your life at the moment, studying or working?

Themba: I am doing both.

Sam: Mm that's nice. And you Thandeka?

Me: I didn't come here to be interviewed by you about my life so please ngehle kancane.

Themba: Bbe? That was rude.

Me: Why should I be nice? Is he going to pay me for being nice?

Sane: Thandeka please don't ruin this moment for me. I just reconciled with my boyfriend.

Me: Sexual reconciliation?

Themba: Thandeka!??

Sane: Please Thandeka.

Me: Tell him to get off my case. Nxx! Arghaa. Samkelo Ndunakazi my foot! Nxx! Can we go Themba please?

Sane: But I would like to go with you to the Doctor.

Me: You're going-

Themba grabbed my arm and whispered "let her come with us and please cool down". I whispered back "make me cool down". I looked at him and he kissed me slowly and softly. I placed my hand on his cheek and we continued kissing until I felt at ease. We broke the kiss and he kissed my forehead. I giggled and focused on my food without looking at Samkelo and Sanelisiwe. We all ate in awkward silence until we finished.

Themba: It's time to go. Shall we?

Me: Yes Mr!

He held my hand as we stood up and they did the same. We went to the parking lot and we all stepped inside the car. Themba drove to the Doctor. We arrived and they all went through with me. The Doctor did the scan and told me that my baby was alright. I was 12 weeks pregnant. She printed out the scan picture and we all went back to the car.

Sane: Thandeka I got a text from your brother. He wants to see us all.

Themba: And me?

Sane: He asked who was I with and I told him. He asked if we all meet up at Thandeka's flat. Your social worker is there too Thandeka.

Me: Your boyfriend too must come with us?

Sane: He is with me so yeah.

I nodded and looked outside through the window. I placed my hands on my tummy.

Themba: Is she moving?

Me: [smiling] No.

He nodded and concentrated on the road. In no time we were outside my flat.

Themba: Bbe you can go through I want to call my friend back just now.

Me: Okay.

Sanelisiwe and Samkelo were already in front of us. They were talking walking slowly. They arrived in my doorstep but they didn't go through.

Me: Y'all gonna stand here?

Them: We are coming.

I nodded and walked through.

Andile and the social worker were having juice and biscuits. I greeted them and went to the kitchen. I took a packet of chips and joined them. We all sat down in awkward silence while waiting for the others. They all came back. Themba was looking at Samkelo and Sanelisiwe in a strange way.

Andile: Samkelo broeh. [They shoulder hugged]

Sam: Mjita uryt?

Andile: Sure ntwana and you?

Sam: I am good.

MrsT: It's good see you here but I will just talk because I assume you all know about the baby. Thandeka you didn't show up today when we were going to see the children's home.

Me: Oh about that I am no-

Themba: Thandeka bbe can I talk to you for a few minutes outside?

Me: Do you guys mind?

Them: No.

I nodded and we both stood up.

We walked out of my flat.

Themba: Let's go and talk in my car.

Me: Themba??

Themba: Please!

Me: Okay! Okay!

We walked to his car and we stepped inside at the backseat. He held my hands.

Themba: That's your baby daddy?

Me: [looking down] Yes it's him.

Themba: Look I want you to change your story to them.

Me: How?

Themba: I heard him and your friend talking outside your flat.

Me: About?

Themba: I didn't hear everything but she was telling him the plan of taking the baby after she's born and give her to him.

Me: What?

Themba: It's looks like Sanelisiwe is working with Samkelo and the social worker to take the baby from you. I heard her saying "once the baby is born she'll go to a children's home and you can come and take her there. We will say she died to her" and Samkelo second her by saying that his mother will look after the baby.

Me: Tell me you're lying Themba please.

Themba: I am not.

Me: What am I going to do now?

Themba: You know what you will go back inside and tell everyone that you're sorry for not going to see the children's home today.

Me: And?

Themba: You will say that you're willing to take a baby to that home. Have them believe that they have the baby.

Me: I can't give away my baby.

Themba: You won't. When the birth date is near you will come and live with me. I will take you to a private hospital when you give birth. I will cover the costs. And the baby will live with me and the nanny while you continue studying.

Me: What will I say to people?

Themba: We will say that the baby died....

I won't post in the morning.

Me: I have to tell my brother about this.

Themba: Andile doesn't trust me nor like me. He likes the baby daddy. And he believes he deserves a chance but he doesn't know that he wants his child to stay away from the mother.

Me: So he will also know my baby is dead?

Themba: Yes. And when you're done with your studies you can tell him the truth.

Me: Mmm I hope I won't loose my child through all this drama and hatred.

Themba: You won't loose your child. You have my full support if they steal her/him away from you I will haunt them down til I find them. Your happiness matters to me.

Me: Thanks my love.

I kissed him and we stepped out of the car. We went back to the flat. We sat down on the couch.

Me: Sorry about that. So Mrs Thusi is it possible for us to go now and see the place?

MrsT: Really? Uhm [clears throat] Yeah Sanelisiwe there is no problem right?

Sanelisiwe looked at Samkelo and he smiled.

Sane: Yeah no problem. We can go even now.

Me: Okay let's waste no time.

They all stood up. Themba and I did the same.

Andile: Your boyfriend is also coming?

Me: Is there a problem?

Sane: [sarcastic laugh] The stepfather.

Me: Don't test me Sanelisiwe. And Samkelo why is he coming with us. The last time I check this was Edward's child not his right?

Andile: Thandeka stop it.

Sane: I thought you said you don't know him.

Me: Stop pretending bitch-

Themba: Thandeka please cool down bbe please.

Me: She's getting under my skin. Come I am riding with you.

Themba: Okay.

He held my hand and we walked out. Andile locked up and gave me the key. I was with Themba on his car. We were following the social worker's lead.

Themba: Bbe you have to keep calm and keep it low. Don't let them get to you okay mam?

Me: Okay my coloured boy.

He laughed and I kissed his cheek.

Within a blink of an eye we were at Edith Benson babies home. We all walked inside. We met the manager and the supervisor. They show us the place and the care workers. And we also saw the babies who stay at the home. The place was beautiful and child friendly but there were so many children under care. After we saw the place we said our farewell and went out.

Sam: Thandeka can I talk to you in private?

Me: I have nothing to say to you Samkelo.

Sam: please I am begging you.

Me: Okay. I'll be back bbe.

Themba: [kissing my cheek] It's Okay. Just keep it cool.

Me: Come on you know I am a cool baby mama.

He laughed. I let go of his hand and followed baby daddy.

Me: Make it snappy boy.

Sam: Boy?

Me: Do you want to talk or what? I am leaving you.

Sam: I know that the baby is mine. When the Doctor said you're 12 weeks basically that means you got pregnant during December. I want to be part of my baby Thandeka.

Me: I don't have time for games. These baby is not yours. Don't you remember seeing me with Edward?

Sam: Please Thandeka don't do this to me.

Me: You went back to your ex Samkelo. The very same Sanelisiwe who broke your heart. She fucked your friend you're back with her because you saw me with Edward? I made you like this. My patience and my love. You forget too easily. So please man leave me alone.

Sam: You hurt me Thandeka. I didn't expect that from you. I trusted you with all my heart. And now you have moved on to another guy.

Me: What was I supposed to do because your baby is making me a bitch. Do you think I wanted to kiss Edward? No I didn't. It just happened. Your baby is driving me crazy. Worse case about caring her is that she loves my daddy the same daddy I am running away from. She's making me sleep, I skip classes because of her and she's making a bitch so don't come here and tell me that I move on too fast.

Sam: I am sorry Thandeka. But please MaDinangwe let me part of my child.

Me: No! I have to go.

I left him behind and went to Themba. Andile came up to me.

Andile: Did you try to fix things with Samkelo?

Me: I am not fixing anything with Samkelo.

Andile: You don't have to do it for yourself but for your child.

Me: I don't need him bhuti Andile please. Let me do this my way. I cried the whole month because of him. He didn't even want to hear me out. I don't want to hear him out too.

Andile: He is-

Me: No! You love him too much Andile. I don't want him. I love you bhuti wami. But no. I will see you tomorrow.

He nodded and I stepped inside the car. Themba started the car.

My phone rang and I took it out. It was my dad. I smiled.

Me: Mkhabela.

Dad: How are you MaDinangwe?

Me: I am fine baba and you?

Dad: I am fine. Are you getting used to Durban?

Me: Yes daddy but I miss home and I miss you.

Dad: You're coming back Friday?

Me: Yes.

Dad: Your mother wants your help with the wedding dress.

Me: Okay dad. I love you.

Dad: I love you too.

He hung up. I smiled to myself.

Themba: Daddy's little girl hey.

Me: Yes hey.

We laughed and listened to music. I kept on looking at him as he sang along. My heart was happy to have found such a man....

Sorry for posting late...

We all drove back to my flat. We went through. They sat down while Themba and I made something to eat for them. We took it back to them and they assisted themselves.

Me: Thank you to all of you for doing this for my little Samke.

Sam: Samke??

Me: Eish you know nothing konje wena! My brother believes that I am carrying a baby girl so he named her Samke- I don't know Samke what?

Andile: [laughing] But Joy you can be rude sometimes you know.

Me: Don't blame me broeh. You are leaving after eating right?

Them: Yeah.

Me: Good. I am tired of visitors.

Sam: Will it be a sin if I spend the night with you two?

Me: Who me and Themba?

Sam: No! You and our baby.

Me: What? No! It's not like the baby has been born already and ain't you here for your ex-recently current girlfriend again. [Themba laughed]

Sam: You like doing this right?

MrsT: But honestly Thandeka you shouldn't shut the father of the child out of the baby's life.

Me: Did you hear what he said? The nigga wants to spend the night with me and the baby who is still inside my tummy. The tummy is not even showing yet. Duh! I don't need him. I have my boyfriend or can't you see him. Bbe please stand up so that he can see you.

Themba: No Thandeka cool down sthandwa sami. He's just kidding maybe.

Sam: I am not kidding.

Me: Ex recent girlfriend again what do you have to say about your boyfriend's request?

Sane: If he wants to spend time with his baby and the baby mama I don't see a problem there.

Me:[laughing] Y'all are crazy please finish up and leave.

Andile: You really don't want to fix your relationship with Samkelo?

Me: He's with his ex. The one who broke his heart. And I am with Themba the one who loves me even if I am pregnant.

MrsT: Let's hope and pray that he's not taking advantage of you. I don't know a man who was going to love you while you're carrying another man's child.

Themba: Now you know him right? That's me Themba Ethan Smith. I love her and her being pregnant didn't stop me from loving her. So do you have any problem with that?

The whole house went silent. I laughed a little and stood up. I took the dishes and I went to wash them. I finished and I went back to everyone.

Me: I think it's time for all of you to go. I will contact the social worker and baby daddy when I give birth.

Sam: But Thandeka I-

Me: No Samkelo save it please. Whatever you're going to say just save it to yourself!

They all stood up, my brother gave me a hug and left. I was left with Themba.

Themba: Let's go to my apartment.

Me: You want me to spend the night with you?

Themba: Yes.

Me: Okay. Let me pack a few things.

Themba: And a few that you will leave in my place just in case you happen to sleep there unplanned.

Me: Just like the day I was in that club.

Themba: I was so mad at you that day. Yoh! Putting a child's life in danger like that.

Me: You really love kids. And you care.

Themba: I- I- My big sister died. She died with her baby.

Me: What happened?

Themba: Do you remember me telling you about my parents being broke and drinking?

Me: Yes.

Themba: My sister failed to cope and she left. She left me basically. She went to live with her boyfriend who was a leader of a gang. When she got pregnant she came back home because she was scared of her life and the baby's life. Other gangsters wanted her dead because they wanted to get back at her boyfriend. When she came back home at night my dad chased her out. It was late around 9pm. In the morning the police told us that she was found dead on the street. They stabbed her and they indigenously operated her and took out her baby. She was a about five months pregnant. From there my parents really broke down and they blamed themselves for what happened to her. [He was crying] They did nothing but drink alcohol even more after her funeral. That's where I was taken to a children's home by my teacher because my mom took out her anger on me. If I had power or if I was old enough I was going to protect my sister but I was a child I couldn't do anything for her. So I hate to see a pregnant woman suffer. That's why I want to protect you and your child. I want to do to you what I couldn't do to my sister. If you decide to tell your dad maybe. Don't tell him if you're at Empangeni because I won't be around to take you if he happens to chase you out. But above it all I love you seriously Thandeka.

Me: I – I love – you – too Themba.

I was shocked but I managed to give him a tight hug. We let go after a few minutes. I wiped his tears away.

Me: I am sorry about your sister and I am sure that wherever she is she knows that you were going to protect her if you had power to protect her.

Themba: Thanks.

I kissed his cheek and I held his hand. We went to my room and I packed a few clothes and the stuff I was going to leave at his place. I gave him my bag. I took my flat keys and I locked up. We went to his car and drove off.

We arrived at Themba's flat. He was living at Marine view flats located in South Beach. We walked inside his flat and we went straight to his room. I threw myself on top of the bed.

Me: Please take off my clothes I want to take a shower.

Themba: Okay.

He got on top of me and kissed me. And I responded to the kiss. We kissed each other for a long time and he took my shirt. I took off his, he broke the kiss and looked at me.

Themba: I also have to take off my clothes?

Me:[giggles] Yes. You'll shower with me.

Themba:[smiling] Okay.

He kissed me again and he unzipped my jeans and I did the same to him. He took them off and took his jeans off. He came back to me and kissed me taking off my bra. He went down on my neck while he played with my breasts. I moaned lightly. He took off my panties and I took off his underwear. He got in between my legs and sucked my breasts. I was already wet and I wanted him to go inside me. But he used his fingers instead. I removed them though I used to pretend to Samkelo sometimes but I hated the finger fucking thing. He went down on me and licked my private island making me loose my control as I moaned in great pleasure. He went up and opened the drawer which was on the bedside. He took out a condom and opened it. He slide it on him. He went back to me and kissed me while he separated my legs even wider. He tried to go inside me but I shifted off. He kissed me and held my waist. He tried again, with slow movements he was finally inside me and he started moving. He did it like no one has ever done it before and I was loving each and every minute and seconds of it. We climaxed and we laid on our backs trying to catch our breaths.

Me: I said take off my clothes. I didn't say sex me.

Themba:[laughing] I also didn't say take off mine but you did. But that was good.

Me: Yeah it was. Let's go and shower. [We stood up]

Themba: We will go to the beach after showering?

Me: I can't walk properly you killed me.

Themba:[laughing] Stop lying!

I laughed and we went to the bathroom and took a shower together. We finished and lotion our bodies. We wore our clothes and Themba took some cash on his wallet.

Themba: Where do you want to eat because I won't cook for you today?

Me: I am in the mood of chicken lickin so Let's go there.

He nodded and we walked to chicken lickin. It was already dark outside. We arrived and ordered. We waited for our order and it arrived. We sat down and ate.

Themba: Your brother will always cry.

Me: Why?

Themba: You're eating hot food.

Me: Its soul fire.

We laughed at that. After eating we went to the beach and took a walk by the sea. We held each other's hands and talked about a lot of things. Basically getting to know each other more. We walked until I was tired and we walked back to his flat. We washed our feet, changed our clothes to pyjamas. We stepped inside the bed covers.

Me: I am leaving Friday and my brother will come Monday.

Themba: Yoh! Bbe how will you drive yourself home. You will sleep in the car. How many hours?

Me: 3hrs max but if you're fast 2hrs and 30minutes.

Themba: I will drive you home.

Me: How?

Themba: We will leave in the morning using your car. I will be driving and I will come back to Durban using a taxi.

Me: You can do that?

Themba: Yes and when you come back. I will do the same. Take a taxi and drive you back.

Me: You're such a darling. Thanks.

I kissed him and we broke the kiss. We cuddled and I fell asleep right away.

The following morning was a Sunday morning. We woke up, and did the daily routine. We had breakfast.

Themba: I always go to church on Sunday so if you don't mind you can come with me.

Me: I don't mind at all.

We finished breakfast, washed the dishes and we drove to a nearest boutique. I bought a proper outfit for church. I payed and wore it inside the shop. We than drove to church. We were a little bit late but the service was just perfect. The church had cute guys and they made my head spin. After church Themba went to greet his friends or church mates. It was two guys. One was short and dark in complexion and the other was tall and he was also coloured.

Guy1: The last time I saw you Ethan was on the club that day you left without saying goodbye.

Themba: Sorry Brandon but I had to go with my lady here.

Brandon: Oh she's pretty. Mind doing an intro broe

Themba: Bbe these is my friend Brandon and my other friend Bheki. They are the only friends I have. Gents these is my lady Thandeka.

Them: Nice to meet you Thandeka.

Me: Nice to meet you too guys.

Bheki: How about we go and have lunch.

Themba: No problem.

Brandon: You will pay Ethan.

We laughed and we walked out of church. They were both driving their own cars. Themba opened the door for me and I stepped inside the car. And he did the same. He started the engine.

Me: Your friends are working?

Themba: Bheki is working. And Brandon is doing his final year. He's actually doing his training in Bcom accounting.

Me: He wants to be a Chartered Accountant?

Themba: Yeah.

Me: Wow that's nice.

Themba: So you really know how to draw other things besides buildings and house plans?

Me: Yeah I can even draw you if you want to.

Themba: I would love to

Me: Okay I will draw you in my flat because my things are there.

Themba: I can't wait.

We arrived at the restaurant and we ordered. My baby ate everything. So I wasn't picky when it comes to food. His friends were cool but too forward. He was also too forward when he was with them. Brandon was the coloured one and Bheki was Zulu. After eating Themba paid and we drove back to his flat to take my bag. I left a few clothes. We drove to my flat and when we arrived he assisted me with cleaning it. We finished and we had drinks.

Me: Come to my room than I will draw you. Bring a chair.

Themba: Okay.

We to my room and I took my drawing tools.

Me: Take off your clothes.

Themba: Bbe? My clothes?

Me: Yes and sit down on that chair.

He took off his clothes and sat down on the chair. I went to him and took off his shoes. I show him the pose and I went to my sketch board and started drawing him up. When I was done I show him the drawing and he was impressed.

Themba: Wow! This is really good. I will frame it.

Me: [laughing] Okay.

Themba: Since you made me take off my clothes how about I take off yours.

I giggled and he kissed me. He threw me on top of my bed and got on top of me. The rest is ancient history.

The week went by I was busy catching up with my school work. And submitting my assignments. It was hectic. I didn't see anyone that week because I was busy. Friday came and I went on campus to submitted all my assignments. I drove to Themba's work place and I waited for him outside. He came and took the driver's seat.

Themba: Morning bbe.

Me: Morning how are you doing?

Themba: Fine and you?

Me: I am okay. I have been missing you the whole week and now I am leaving.

Themba: You were catching up with your school work. You have to pass but I missed you too.

We kissed each briefly and we drove off.

Themba: Are you ready to go home?

Me: [sighed] Yes I am.

I fell asleep along the way. I was woken up by Themba telling me we were in Richards bay. I yawned and stretched myself.

Themba: Thanks to your GPs I found the place. Otherwise I was going to get lost because you fell asleep.

Me: I am sorry. I am just tired.

Themba: We are driving to your father's house?

Me: Yes.

We drove home. We parked the car three houses away. I faced him.

Themba: You looked so messed up bbe let me fix you.

Me: You mean I am ugly?

Themba:[laughing] No. But they will see that you're pregnant the minute you set your feet on the door. You must look nice.

Me: Whatever!

I took my hand bag and took my face wipes. I wiped my face, lotioned it and put on a lipstick.

Themba: Now you look beautiful.

I smiled, we stepped out of the car and he came towards me. He gave me a tight hug. We backed away and we kissed each other. We broke the kiss and I wiped his lips.

Me: I don't want you going out there looking like a moffie.

Themba: Uyandiqhela!

Me: Kik wena bbe umhle

Themba: Hhayi man! I am a man don't say it like that.

Me: You're ugly than.

Themba: I don't mind. I will miss you.

Me: I will miss you too. I love you.

Themba: I love you too.

We hugged each other once again and we baby kissed. We both waited for the taxi and it came. I told the driver to show him the taxis that are going to Durban. I stepped inside my car and drove inside the yard. I took out my bag and I walked inside the house. It was quiet. There was no one home. I went to my room and it was clean. I took off my clothes and I threw myself on the bed. I fell asleep immediately.

I was woken up by my dad. I screamed and hugged him. I didn't let go. Mom was laughing.

Mom: Don't give him a heart attack please.

Me:[I let go] I missed my papa.

Dad: I missed you too.

I giggled and I stepped out of the bed and hugged mom and olwethu. Mom looked at me. I was wearing my bra and panties only.

Mom: You look chubby.

Me: The pecks of eating everything you want.

We all laughed.

Me: Where were you?

Mom: We were at Qiniso's graduation.

Me: Wow that's nice so he's working now?

Dad: Yes.

Me: Where is he?

Dad: They went to celebrate with Charity.

Me: Oh okay that's nice. Can we go and eat out today. The Princess is back.

They laughed and left my room. I took a quick shower and I wore black jeans, caramel shirt and black boots. I took my phone and I had missed calls from Themba. I called him back. He answered.

Themba: Bbe?

Me: How did you go?

Themba: Well my love. How is the family?

Me: The family is good-

Dad: [shouting] We're leaving you behind Thandeka.

Me: Bbe that's my dad. I have to go. I love you.

Themba: I love you too.

I hung up and I went to my dad. They were outside already. Mom looked at me and I quickly removed my eyes away from her.

Me: Let's go.

We all stepped inside the car. My phone rang and I picked up.

Me: Andile?

Andile: You ass you left without me.

Me: [laughing] I thought you said you're coming back Monday.

Andile: No I will come back tomorrow. Bontle is also coming back.

Me: Okay see you tomorrow Pat!

Andile: [whispering] Okay mama KaSamke.

I laughed and hung up.

Dad: That was your brother?

Me: Yes. He's coming back tomorrow.

Dad: Okay.

We drove to spur and had dinner there. Dad paid and we drove back home. Olwethu wanted

to sleep with me that night. We catch up on what has been happening in our lives but I didn't tell her about my pregnancy. She went on and on until I fell asleep.

The following morning I was woken up by Andile. I was pretty mad because I was sleeping peacefully

Me: I am not even happy to see you because you disturbed my beauty sleep.

Andile: It's 10 o'clock and you're sleeping. Mom will come back from the mall and she will find you sleeping and she'll suspect something.

Me: [crying] I don't want to wake up.

Andile: You have to control your hormones dude.

I sniffed and stood up. I went to my bathroom and took a shower. I brushed my teeth my way and I went back to my room. I lotioned and wore a white short and a big basketball T-shirt. I cleaned my room and I went to the kitchen. I found Qiniso and Charity kissing each other. I cleared my throat. They stopped.

Me: Sanibona [greetings]

Them: Hey.

Me: I couldn't congratulate you yesterday since you were not around but Congratulations.

Qiniso: Thanks.

Charity: I guess you have to say that twice. [Showing me the engagement ring]

Me: Yoh! Wow that's huge. Congratulations to you two.

Them: Thanks.

Charity: if you didn't play with him these must've been you.

Me: Really? Ain't you happy that I stepped aside and gave you that opportunity?

She didn't answer me. I looked at her and opened the fridge. I took a tub of yoghurt and I went to the lounge and watched some cartoons. Andile was in his room. Olwethu was at school or home.

Mom: [from the door] I need to talk to you Thandeka.

Me: About your dress?

Mom: No.

She went to the kitchen and came back. She sat down with me.

Mom: Are you alright?

Me: Yes I am.

Mom: Do you remember the contract you signed with your father?

Me: [my heart raced] Yes I remember it.

Mom: You haven't ruin it?

Me: Uhm no I haven't.

Mom: Mm Let's prove that. Here take this in your bathroom and come with it to my room.

She placed the box on top of the table and she went to her room. I took the box and looked at it. It was a pregnancy test. I felt my forehead sweating as I thought of a quick plan but my mind went blank for a second.

I quickly took out the test and left the box on top of the coffee table. I stood up and ran to Andile's room. I went inside without knocking. He was half naked. He was walking around his room.

Andile: What happened to knocking before you enter dude. What if you found me butt naked?

Me: Come on! It's not like your dick is made with gold. I need your help.

Andile: Mine is made with diamonds.

I laughed at that and he wore his pants. And came towards me.

Me: Don't wear them yet. Please urinate here. I am in trouble. Mom told me to do this test.

Andile: [laughing] What if it comes back positive?

Me: Andile dude please hurry up.

Andile: Okay! Okay!

Me: [giving it to him] Don't let your urine burn that test.

He laughed and went to his bathroom. After a few minutes he came back and gave it to me. I took it and put it inside my short pocket.

Me: Thanks.

Andile: Next time knock.

Me: I won't knock. I want to see that diamond dick.

He laughed and I left his room.

I went to the lounge and Charity was looking at the pregnancy test box. I took it away from her hands.

Me: Keep your hands away from things that doesn't belong to you.

Charity: Who is the owner of that test.

Me: That's none of business

Charity: Are you pregnant?

Me: Get off my case please!

I made my way to my dad's room. I knocked.

Mom: Come in.

I opened the door and I went to her. She was sitting on the bed. I gave her the test. She looked at it then she looked at me.

Mom: Take off your shirt.

Me: Why?

Mom: I want to look at you.

Me: So that?

Mom: Do as I say.

Me: Yoh! I am not taking my shirt off. You said I must do the test and I did it. Now you want me to take off my shirt for what? Hhaybo.

I took the test and I left their room. I went to my room and locked it. I teared off the pregnancy test box. I took my sling bag and put the pieces on it and the test. I took my car keys.

I went to Andile's room. I knocked.

Andile: Who is it?

Me: It's me. Let's go to Aqudene phase one. I want to buy some chicken gizzards.

Andile: Samke wants them now?

Me: Come on Let's go Patrick.

Andile: I am coming.

Me: Okay.

I went to my car and I sat on the passenger seat. Andile came and took the driver's seat. We drove to Aqudene while listening to music. We arrived at the corner of the street where they sell chicken gizzards. We stepped off and I went to the bin first and threw away the test and the box pieces. I went back to the others.

Me: Hey guys can I have three hot gizzards.

Andile: Three??

Me: Yeah.

Seller: Okay sisi.

Me: I will sit here and eat them now just in case I want more.

Andile: Yoh!

They gave me one. I ate it at once and took the second. I ate it. It was so nice, hot and warm. I took the third. Andile left me and walked back to the car.

Me: Please prepare two more bhuti.

Seller: Okay.

Voice: She will cry all the time if you eat hot stuff.

I looked up and Samkelo was looking at me.

Me: I didn't ask for your opinion.

Sam: I was just saying.

Me: How much in total bhuti?

Seller: R35

Me: Samkelo please pay for all the gizzards I ate here.

Sam: Why should I pay?

Me: You want who to pay?

Sam: Okay I will pay.

He took out his wallet and paid.

Me: Please buy two more. I will eat them at home before I sleep.

Sam: Okay.

He paid and the guy gave me two more and the two that I didn't take. I took them. I stood up and kissed Samkelo's cheek. He smiled.

Me: Thank you for that.

I walked back to the car. I put the gizzards on my bag and I stepped inside the car. Andile started the car.

Andile: What did baby daddy say?

Me: I made him pay for everything that I ate there.

He laughed and turned up the music. We went to visit Bontle around her house. We had a great time with her. We drove back home late.

We arrived at home. The family was already having dinner. Andile and I sat down and greeted dad.

Dad: Where were you?

Andile: We went to visit Bontle.

Dad: okay how is she?

Me: She's doing fine. Andile must marry her next year. [They laughed]

Dad: That's true.

Andile: I will consider it but not next year.

Me: Okay.

Charity: So Thandeka what did the pregnancy test say?

Dad: What?

Me: [pulling a serious face] What pregnancy test?

Charity: The one I saw on the lounge

Me: Fool! That was a chocolate box.

Dad: Are you pregnant?

Me: No dad I am not. It was a chocolate box that Andile bought for me.

Andile: I did bought chocolate for her, maybe you saw the wrong box Charity.

Me: What do you know about pregnancy test?

Charity: I am not dumb.

Me: Well that proves that you're.

Dad: Thandeka! If you dare become pregnant I –

Me: You will disown me I know.

Dad: You're coming with me to the hospital tomorrow.

Me: I am not going to any hospital. For what dad?

Mom: why are you scared because you're not pregnant? I bought the test for her because I saw her breasts. And she's chubby. I thought she's pregnant but the test came back negative.

Dad: They can tell a lie. So tomorrow we're going to the hospital. Do you hear me?

Me: [looking down] Yes I hear you loud and clear. Excuse me.  
I stood up and went to my room. I threw myself on top of my bed and I ate my gizzards. I didn't feel like crying.

I fell asleep with my clothes on and the sticks and plastics that had gizzards. The following morning I was woken up by Andile shaking me. I opened my eyes and yawned.

Andile: Wake up dude. Dad said you must get ready now.

Me: I guess there is no running away from this one hey. We might as well say our goodbyes now.

Andile: Don't say that Thandeka.

Me: It's the truth broeh. Let me go and freshen up.

He took the plastics and sticks. He left my room. I took off my clothes and went to my bathroom. I did necessaties and I wore a simple dress. I took my hand bag and I went to the kitchen.

Me: Morning.

Them: Morning.

Me: I am ready dad.

Dad: Let's get going.

Mom: You won't have breakfast?

Me: I am not hungry.

She nodded and I followed my dad. I stepped inside the car at the backseat. We drove to the hospital in silence. We arrived by the hospital and we went straight to his office. He gave me a cub where I will urinate on. I went to the door as an aim of going to the toilet.

Dad: Just do it here. You're my daughter there's nothing to be ashamed of.

I nodded and urinated on the cup and gave it to him. He took the blood sample and did the HIV test. He did the pregnancy test. He looked at the HIV test.

Dad: You're HIV negative. And [looking at the other test] You're pregnant.

Me: I am sorry dad.

Dad: Save it! You're a woman enough now that you can bring a baby here on earth.

Me: It was a mistake.

Dad: You will go back to my house and take everything that belongs to you. Leave all the bank cards and the clothing store account cards.

Me: What about my studies?

Dad: I don't know. I won't pay for your flat anymore, I won't pay for your studies the following year and third year since I already paid for the your tuition of the current year. You're on your own because you don't listen to me and you're disrespectful.

Me: [crying] Dad I am sorry. Please forgive me.

Dad: Leave my office now. By 9am you must be out of my house Thandeka.

Me: My car?

Dad: You can keep it. It will remind me of you so I don't want it. You're a shame and disgrace. Andile is older than you but he has no child. You're 19yrs but you are going to have a child. Just go.

I didn't say anything further. I took my bag and I went to take a taxi back home.

I arrived at home and I went straight to my room. Olwethu followed me.

Olwethu: What happened?

Me: I am pregnant and I am leaving.

Olwethu: No Thandeka that can't happen.

Me: Where is Andile?

Olwethu: He left with Bontle.

Me: Okay please help me pack my clothes.

Olwethu: Talk to mamncane maybe she can talk to your dad.

Maud: [from the door] I won't get involved. It's between her and her father. She failed to listen to one simple rule. "Don't fall pregnant"

Olwethu: But it was a mistake.

Maud: There's no mistake in getting pregnant.

Me: Please go and close the door for me.

Maud: I will.

She closed the door and I packed all my clothes on my suitcases. The clothes which had no space I took them and put on a plastic bags with all my shoes and sneakers. Olwethu assisted me pack everything in my car. I went back to my room and I took out all my cards in my purse and I placed them on the dressing table. I took my personal account card and I went to the lounge. I took all my pictures on the wall and on the TV stand.

Charity: Are you going somewhere?

I looked at her and I didn't answer her. Olwethu took the pictures from me and I walked out of the house.

Me: Thank you hey. I will miss you. We will keep in touch hey.

Olwethu: Why ain't crying?

Me: I did a lot of crying the past few months. I don't have tears anymore. I have to go.

Olwethu: Have a Safe trip. I love you sisi Thandeka.

Me: I love you too. Tell Andile to call me.

Olwethu: Here is his car.

His car pulled over and came to me. He didn't say anything but he gave me a hug. That's where I started crying. I cried really hard until I couldn't. He let go and wiped my tears.

Andile: He chased you out just like that?

Me: That's your dad for me. I have to go Andile.

Andile: Where will you go?

Me: Back to my flat.

Andile: Your studies?

Me: He paid the whole amount for this year.

Andile: Better. Next year you will apply for NSFAS and you'll get a res. I will pay for your flat this year.

Me: Thanks. I also have the money from my personal account. He doesn't know about it.

Andile: Okay sisi. I will see you next week. Maybe mom will talk to him.

Me: My mother died Andile. I don't have a mother. Bye bhuti wami.

Andile: I will try him than. Don't fall asleep on the road please.

I nodded, I hugged him and hugged Olwethu. I stepped inside my car and I drove off.

I was thinking about where should I go. I took my chances and I drove to Samkelo's crib. I bought chicken gizzards and I drove straight to his mother's house. I parked my car outside and I went through because the gate was opened. I knew his mom was not around because it was a weekend of the end of March. I knocked on the door there was no response. I knocked again and I heard the key being turned. The door was opened by Sanelisiwe who had a towel wrapped around her body. I looked at her without a word until Samkelo appeared on the door wearing his boxers only. He was shocked to see me.

Me: I am sorry to disturb you guys. I will just go.

Sam: Thandeka please.

Me: [shaky voice] No it's cool.

I walked away and he followed me. I walked faster but he get to me and grabbed my hand.

Sam: Please don't go.

Me: My dad chased me out because I am pregnant. He disowned me. I no longer have a father nor a home so please stop wasting my time and leave me alone. [I yanked my arms out

of his grip]

Sam: Please don't leave. Thandeka I love you and our child. Please wait for my mother. I am sorry Thandeka don't go.

I looked at him and he was crying. I ran out of the yard and I stepped inside my car before he could stop me and I drove off. I couldn't hold my tears.

Along the way I was feeling sleepy. I didn't know what to do. I pulled over on the other side of the road. I stepped out of my car and I stretched myself. I took my phone and called Themba. He didn't pick up. I remembered it was a Sunday meaning he was at church. I googled ways that I could keep my eyes open on the road. Google gave me options that I couldn't reach out to at that moment in time. I googled pictures and I saw a picture of Mr Bean with matches sticks on his eyes. I laughed and went back to my car. I searched for a matches box and I took the sticks. I did as it was shown in the picture. I drove my car and I wasn't sleepy anymore. People who take the money on tol gates laughed at me because seriously I was looking funny. I drove the car like that until I was in ballito. I took out the sticks. My phone rang. Themba was calling. I answered through the car speakers.

Themba: Bbe I got your missed call.

Me: I am cool now I wanted to tell you that I am on the road. I am coming back.

Themba: What? Are you guys alright?

Me: Yes I got a plan from Google that made me stay awake.

Themba: Yoh! That's a relief. I was at church. I am sorry I couldn't come and get you.

Me: It's Okay. You will come to my place or?

Themba: Why don't you come and spend the rest of the holidays with me?

Me: Stay the whole week with you?

Themba: Yes please. And why are you coming back so early?

Me: I will tell you when I see you. Right now just speak to me until I make it to my flat.

Themba: Anything for my lady. I was.....

He kept on talking until I made it to my flat safe. We hung up the call and I took my suitcases.

On my door there was a notice stating that I must leave because my dad will no longer pay for my flat. I opened the door and I went inside the flat. I called my landlord. He picked up.

Me: Afternoon Mr Pillay. It's Miss Dhlomo.

MrP: Thandeka? I bet you saw the notice.

Me: Yes. I won't be leaving the flat. I will pay for myself.

MrP: Will you manage?

Me: Yes Sir. I will pay for April tomorrow.

MrP: No problem than Miss you can stay.

Me: Thanks but if my dad ask please say that I left. Please.

MrP: No problem Thandeka. Have a wonderful evening.

Me: Thank you Sir. You too.

MrP: Thank you.

I hung up and I unpacked all my clothes. And I took the rest of my things on my car. I packed them. I hanged my pictures on the wall and put other pictures on the TV stand. I went to my room and I packed a bag because I was going to spend the rest of the week with Themba. I took a shower and I lotioned. I wore pink high waist short and a white loose shirt. I put on black sandals. I took my bag, my phone and keys. I locked my flat, I went to my car. I saw my neighbor Liam. He was white.

Liam: Hey Thandy are you really leaving?

Me: No I am no longer leaving.

Liam: Okay tell me when you're around.

Me: Okay.

Liam: Please give me your number.

Me: Okay. 073....

Liam: Thanks. Bye.

Me: Bye.

I stepped inside my car and I drove straight to Themba's apartment. I parked my car and I called him to come and get me. He came and we hugged each other. He took my bag and we went to his apartment.

Themba: I cooked today. I hope you won't complain.

Me: Maybe I won't don't worry.

He kissed my cheek and he took my bag. He went to his room I sat on the couch. He came back and sat with me.

Themba: So bbe what happened?

Me: My dad... [I told him everything]

Themba: You should've smacked that girl before you leave.

Me: [laughing] No I couldn't do that.

Themba: Your stepmother should've supported you.

Me: And to think that I made her my stepmother.

Themba: She'll know one day bbe. Come let's go and eat.

I stood up and I followed him to his kitchen. He dished up for us, we prayed and ate the food. It was hot and spicy. I loved it that way.

Themba: Sorry about the hot spice. I forgot that I had to accommodate the little one.

Me: She's not picky so there's no problem at all.

Themba: Okay.

We ate and washed the dishes. We ate ice cream and had drinks.

We went to the lounge and sat on one couch. We watched a horror movie. I was really scared some scenes were scary. I kept on hiding on Themba's shoulder. He was laughing. My phone rang from his room and I went to attend it. Andile was calling. I answered.

Andile: And she didn't bother herself about calling her brother back.

Me: I am sorry. I arrived safe. Tomorrow I have to pay for my flat. Dad told them that he won't pay.

Andile: Do you have cash?

Me: Yes. How is everyone?

Andile: I don't know. I am with Bontle. I will go home late.

Me: Okay. Send my love to her.

Andile: Take care of yourself.

Me: I will thanks. I love you bhuti.

Andile: I love you too sisi wami.

I hang up and I went to the door with my phone. Themba was coming towards his room. We met halfway and we looked at each other.

Me: Why are you looking at me?

Themba: Is it a crime?

Me: Yes!

He smiled and touched my face. I smiled back. He slowly moved his face closer to my face and he kissed me. I kissed him back, I wrapped my arms around his neck. We walked to his room. He threw me on top of the bed. I giggled. He got on top of me.

Themba: Your phone?

Me: Argh leave it here. We won't break it, just kiss me now.

He smiled and kissed me. I unbuttoned his shirt and took it off. He took my shirt and my bra. He went down on my neck giving my body a ticklish feeling that made me moan. He took the

condom and we took off the rest of our clothes. He put it and positioned himself in between my legs. He did the whole foreplay process and inserted himself inside me. He started moving and my phone rang. I took it and looked at the screen. It was an unsaved number.

Themba: Don't \_\_\_ answer \_\_\_ your \_\_\_ phone.

Me: I \_\_\_ won't.

I put it on silent mode and I didn't put it down. I held the bed sheets with it on my hand.

Themba was good at what he was doing, he was making me moan all sort of things and I couldn't stop saying that I love him. We did two more rounds with my phone on my hand. We finished. I put it on the bedside table. I rested my head on Themba's chest. He brushed my hair using his hands.

Themba: I love you.

Me: I love you too.

Themba: Let me buy a flat for you.

Me: Huh?

Themba: Does your landlord allow people to buy the flats?

Me: Yes my neighbor owns his flat. He is not renting.

Themba: Your neighbor is a man?

Me:[laughing] Yes.

Themba: Okay. So let me buy that flat for you so that you won't pay rent.

Me: A flat is expensive Themba. Why don't you buy yourself a house?

Themba: I have a house in Capetown. I own this flat and I want you to own yours.

Me: Your money-

Themba: Don't tell me that you want me to show you my Bank account balance because I won't.

Me: [laughing] Why not?

Themba: You will faint if I can show you. And I need not to remind you that I get well paid. I am chemical engineer so money is not a problem. Just let me take care of you while I still can.

Me: No so that when we break up. You will want your things.

Themba: Who said we will break up? Or you want us to break up?

Me: No I don't want that.

Themba: Okay than. Nothing will break us up. You're mine and no one will take you away from me.

I giggled and kissed him.

Themba: So should I buy the flat for you?

Me: Why not let my man take care of me.

Themba: You should've said "us"

Me: Us.

Themba: How about we join piano lessons.

Me: Piano lessons? Where?

Themba: Durban North, just to distress. You've been through a lot bbe and the stress is not good for your baby. You don't want to loose her right?

Me: That's true. What did I do to deserve such a man like you?

Themba: You loved me.

I smiled and kissed him. My phone rang, I broke the kiss and took my phone. It was an unsaved number. I picked up.

Voice: I suppose you're done.

Me: Done? Who are you?

Voice: I don't understand how you fuck another man while you're carrying my child!

Me: Slow down. Who are you? Wait Samkelo?

Sam: You can't even recognize my voice. You don't even have my number.

Me: Woh dude. You rejected my number and you blocked me everywhere. You ran away from me like I am disease. So what do you want?

Sam: I wanted to check if you're fine. I didn't know that I was going to hear all those things I heard.

Me: What did you hear?

Sam: You fucking that guy you were fucking. How could you do that while you're carrying my child?

Me: Samkelo you are unbelievable. Just because you're the father of my child. It doesn't mean you control me or what I do.

Sam: Why are you doing this Thandeka?

Me: Doing what?

Themba: Are you seriously going to talk for hours with him while I am right here?

Me: [looking at him] Bbe I have to solve this.

Themba: Can't you do it some other time.

Sam: Are you going to keep me waiting because of your insecure coloured boy.

Me: Samkelo please leave me alone.

Sam: I can't leave you alone you're the mother of my child damnit! And that coloured boy better not abuse my child because coloureds are full of nothing but violence. Cheat on him like you did to me he'll smack your pretty little face.

Me: And you'll be there to pick up the pieces right?

Sam: I love you but don't make me a fool!

Me: You love me!!

Sam & Themba: [same time] THANDEKA!!!

Me: ARGHH!

I threw my phone on the wall. I stood up and I picked up my clothes on the floor.

Themba: Where are you going?

Me: I need some fresh air Themba.

Themba: [standing up] You think I was going to sit back and watch you talk to your ex for hours.

Me: He heard us having sex, through my phone when he was calling me.

Themba: So who's problem is that? I told you to put your phone aside but you didn't.

I looked at him without a word. I wore my clothes and I stormed out.

I walked on the street just listening to the sound of car hooting, the fresh air and people arguing on the street. For a second I forgot about my 99 problems.

Voice: Taking a long walk to freedom?

Me:[ looking back] Yes hey I seriously need that freedom.

I looked at him. He was a tall strong black Nigerian guy. I look at him, he was pretty huge and not pretty if you ask me.

Voice: [Nigerian accent] My name is Eric.

Me: I am Thandeka. Do you mind buying hot wings for me? I will pay some other time.

Eric: I will if you will give me your number.

Me: No problem.

We laughed and walked to Chicken lickin. He was telling jokes for days. I couldn't help but laugh. We arrived at chicken lickin and he bought 24wings for me. We sat down and I started eating while I listened to him entertaining me with his jokes. It was very fun and I enjoyed every single moment of it.

Me: Can you buy another 24 for me.

Eric: You really like hot wings?

Me: You have no idea.

He laughed and stood up. He went to order another 24 while I finished off the one I had. He came back with another pack. He placed it on the table and I started digging in. It was dark outside.

Me: Thanks. It's just what I needed.

Eric: I am glad to help. So how about you tell me more about yourself.

Voice: Maybe she can do it some other time.

I looked back and Themba was standing behind us. He looked calm. He was wearing black tracksuit his hands were on his pocket.

Me: Themba? What are you doing here?

Themba: I should be asking you that.

Me: I am eating wings as you can see.

Themba: You left my flat with no money.

Me: He bought them for me. Why am I answering all this questions I am on Doctor Phil show or Judge Judy show?

Themba: Thandeka?

I took my wings and stood up.

Me: Bye Eric, thanks for buying this for me.

Eric: My pleasure.

I nodded and I left. Themba followed me. He was walking behind me. We were not talking to each other. We walked in that position until we made it to his flat. I sat on the couch and ate my hot wings. He went to his room without saying anything. He was mad because of Samkelo? Really? I finished eating and I slept on the couch.

I woke up the following morning, I was still sleeping on the couch. I stretched myself and I went to Themba's room. He was not around, the bed was made and the room looked tidy. I called out for his name but there was no response. "He must've left for work without even waking me up" I thought out loud. I went to the bathroom and I took a shower. I brushed my teeth and I lotioned. I wore a long white dress. My tummy was starting to show. I fixed my hair and I went to the kitchen. I made breakfast for myself and I ate. After eating I cleaned up the whole place. I finished, I took my hand bag, my ruined phone and my car keys. I drove to west street. I went to FNB and I paid rent for April on the landlord's account. I went to Edgars and bought a new phone. I drove back to my flat. I arrived and parked my car. I walked to my flat. I unlocked the door and went through. I closed the door and I threw my ass on the couch. I took out my phone and the new phone. I put on a new sim card and I started my phone.

I went to my room and took my sketch pad. I sat on the couch and I started drawing because I was bored. There was a knock on the door. I stood up and check through the door see through thing and it was Liam. I opened the door.

Me: Hey come in.

Liam: Thanks.

He came in, I closed the door and I went to him.

Me: Can I offer you a drink?

Liam: No I am fine Thandy.

Me: Okay [I sat down]

Liam: How are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Liam: Perfect. Look I need some help.

Me: From me?

Liam: Yes from you. My sister is getting married this weekend. The wedding will start on

Friday night and end on Sunday. Here's the card.

Me: [taking it] Okay so?

Liam: Can you please be my date. The thing is I just broke up with my girlfriend and now I no longer have a date.

Me: Yoh where will the wedding take place? [looking at the card]

Liam: Johannesburg in Sandton.

Me: I don't know, since the wedding will be happening on an Easter weekend and my boyfriend will surely want us to go to church.

Liam: Thandeka please. I am desperate here and you're my only hope.

Me: I am pregnant.

Liam: That's not a problem at all. You don't look like you're pregnant so please think about it and let me know. I will send you a SMS so that you will save my number.

Me: Okay I will think about it.

Liam: But please-

My phone rang, I took it and Themba was calling. I answered.

Themba: I was hoping to get ahold of you. You bought a new phone?

Me: Yes I bought a new phone.

Themba: Okay Where are you? I am in my apartment and you're not here. I brought you lunch.

Me: I am in my flat, I will come back later.

Themba: Okay I will leave it here. I will see you later.

Me: Okay thanks.

He hung up and I placed my phone aside.

Me: You were saying?

Liam: I was saying that I would like to know the answer by tomorrow so that you can go with my cousin to buy the outfits for the wedding. I will pay

Me: Okay I will let you know tonight.

Liam: [standing up] Okay thanks. You are pretty by the way.

Me:[smiling] Thanks.

I walked him to the door and he left. I closed the door. I went back to finish up my drawing.

My phone rang and it was an unsaved number. I picked up.

Me: Hello, Thandeka speaking.

Sam: Hi. How are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Sam: I am good. Thandeka look I am sorry about what happened with your dad. I am really sorry.

Me: It's Okay.

Sam: Please do me a favour though.

Me: What?

Sam: Can you stop sleeping with your boyfriend until you give birth?

Me: Seriously? Are you for real?

Sam: I am serious. I just can't erase all those sounds I heard yesterday. You moaning like that.

Me: I was moaning like that because he was doing a very good job. Do you have a problem with that.

Sam: Hell yes I do!!!

Me: Sorry Samkelo. You should've hung up the call so that you won't listen to all those sounds because I answered your call by mistake. I don't even have your number.

Sam: Please save my number.

Me: Okay.

Sam: Thanks. How's my baby?

Me: She's fine.

Sam: Thandeka I love you and I am sorry that I didn't give you a chance to explain what I saw, and I hope that one day you two can be a part of my life. Please tell my little angel that daddy loves her.

Me: I will tell her.

Sam: Thanks. Bye.

Me: Bye.

He hung up and I sighed heavily. I saved his number. I loved Samkelo but I couldn't go back to him and my heart was with Themba. I placed my phone aside and I held my tummy.

"Daddy loves you my baby" I felt like she was moving or it was imagination I didn't know, I smiled. I looked at the time and it was getting late. I stood up and I took my things and left my place.

I drove to Themba's apartment. In no time I was inside his flat. I put my things on the couch and I went to the kitchen. There was a steers takeaway on the counter. I took it and ate the food while I prepared myself for cooking. I took out everything I was going to need and I started cooking. After about half an hour I was done. I washed the dishes I was using. I felt hands being wrapped up around my waist. Themba kissed my cheek.

Themba: Good evening Mrs Smith.

Me:[giggles] Evening Mr Smith.

I turned back and he kissed intensely. We broke the kiss and I looked at him.

Me: I am sorry about what happened yesterday. I shouldn't have disrespected you like that. Please forgive me.

Themba: I forgive you sthandwa senhliziyo yami.

I smiled and kissed him. He picked me up and put me on top of the sink's side. We kissed each other intensely and I broke the kiss.

Me: Go and change your clothes. I will dish up for you just now.

Themba: Okay mam.

He baby kissed me and he left. I set up the table and I dished up the food for us. He came back half naked instead and sat down with me.

Me: And then? Why ain't you wearing your clothes?

Themba: It's hot. Can we pray and eat this looks lovely.

I smiled and gave him my hand. He held my hand and we prayed. We started eating.

Themba: Thank you bbe. I think I should marry you so that you can stay with me full time. I can get used to coming back home to this.

Me:[laughing] Oh okay.

We ate having small talks about his work. After eating he did the dishes and cleaned up the kitchen. We went to take a shower together. We did all the necessities and we went to bed. Themba was tired so he fell asleep immediately. I took my phone and I had a Goodnight text from Liam. I saved his number and I texted him back "I'll be your date on the wedding. But don't call me now. We'll talk tomorrow. Goodnight" I sent it and deleted it. He texted back "Thank you so much. We'll talk tomorrow than" after reading it I deleted it and I sent my brother a goodnight text and he replied to it. I read it and I placed my phone away. I switched off the bed lamp and I kissed Themba's lips and I pulled the covers. He wrapped his hands around my waist and I fell asleep immediately.

Tuesday morning I woke up Themba was not by my side. He was taking a shower. I looked at the time and it was still early but I was hungry. I went to the bathroom and washed my face and I decided to brush my teeth using a toothbrush and toothpaste for a change. I couldn't stand the taste of the toothpaste. I threw up on the toilet.

Themba: [from the shower] Are you alright bbe?

Me: [trying to speak] Ye\_\_ah

After I was done throwing up, I rinsed the toothpaste off my toothbrush and I brushed my teeth with water.

Themba: How did you sleep?

Me: I slept peacefully like a baby and you?

Themba: I slept well.

Me: Okay what do you normally eat for breakfast?

Themba: Cereals with warm milk though.

Me: Who said I was going to make them with cold milk?

Themba:[laughing] My mother likes them with cold milk so I may never know.

I laughed and left the bathroom. I opened the windows and I made the bed. I went to the kitchen and I made cereals for him. I ate ice cream for breakfast. Themba came to the kitchen looking good. He kissed me and he sat down. He ate his cereals.

Themba: What are you going to do today?

Me: I want to buy a few clothes for myself. I will go to my flat and come back later.

Themba: Please talk to your landlord about buying the flat.

Me: Okay I will call him.

Themba: Okay. I will see you later than. Have a good day.

Me: Thanks you too have a good day.

We kissed each other and he left. I quickly ran to his room and I took my phone.

I went to the lounge and called Liam. He picked up immediately.

Liam: Morning.

Me: Morning how are you?

Liam: Good and you?

Me: Fine, so when must I expect your cousin?

Liam: We will come to get you at your boyfriend's place. Please text me the address.

Me: Okay I will do that.

Liam: Okay thanks.

I hung up the call and texted him the address.

I called Andile. He picked up.

Andile: Joy.

Me: Hey buddy how are you?

Andile: I am good and you?

Me: I am fine. How is my dad doing?

Andile: Eish broeh. He's quiet. He doesn't talk that much and worst you took your pictures.

Me: I didn't want him to remember me because he said he doesn't want a reminder of me.

Andile: He asked about the pictures that who took them off the wall. I told him that you took them off. He was sad.

Me: I don't know what to say than.

Andile: He replaced them yesterday. He took the one on his photo album and came back with them framed. He hanged them on the wall and on the TV stand.

Me: I wish I can undo this pregnancy. I really miss dad Andile.

Andile: You'll be fine relax. They've been giving Olwethu lectures about being pregnant and all that. She lives here full time now.

Me: They are replacing me?

Andile: No, but he thinks maybe he can do things right with Olwethu since he failed you.

Me: Mxm. He never failed me. I slept with Samkelo this has nothing to do with him being a bad parent or whatsoever. I hope he'll do things right with Olwethu than. Where is his fiance?

Andile: She's here somewhere around the house. She convinced dad that Olwethu must use

your room.

Me: And dad had no problem with it?

Andile: Yeah.

Me: Okay bhuti. I am going to Johannesburg this weekend on a wedding.

Andile: Who's wedding?

Me: My neighbor Liam asked me to be his date and I said yes. It's his sister's wedding.

Andile: Go sisi and have some fresh air. You've been through so much lately. You really need to distress before we come back to reality. But don't get laid.

Me:[laughing] I promise, I won't. I have to go. I love you.

Andile: I love you too.

I hung up the call. And I had a text from Liam saying they are on their way.

I didn't feel like taking a shower. I just sprayed my body with a body spray and changed my pyjamas into white torn jeans and I wore Themba's blue polo golf T-shirt. I wore my converse sneakers. I took my hand bag and I went to the lounge. I sat down and I browse through my Facebook account. I had a friend request from Samkelo. I accepted him and other friends. Few minutes later Liam sent a text saying he was outside. I took my bag and I locked the flat. I went to them. I greeted them and we drove off to gateway. We walked around the mall. We bought three dresses. I told them I have the shoes so they didn't buy them. We had lunch and they drove me to my flat to put my things there. They than drove me back to Themba's flat. I took a shower and I started cooking after showering. I called my landlord about buying the flat and he had no problem. We were going to meet him the following day. Later Themba came back from work. He kissed me and went to his room to change his clothes while I dished up the food for him. He looked really exhausted. He joined me.

Me: You look like you had a long day.

Themba: You have no idea. I just want to sleep. Tomorrow I have a night shift.

Me: Okay. I spoke to my landlord and he agreed to meet us tomorrow. With his lawyer. We will meet in my flat.

Themba: Okay. That's better. The flat will be on your name not mine.

Me: Thanks again.

Themba: Anything to make you happy. Bbe you will go with me to church right?

Me: Uhm\_\_ No I have to go and do some research about some company located in Durban North and the rest of the weekend I will be typing my research on my laptop.

Themba: School related?

Me: Yes bbe.

Themba: Okay my love, school is also important.

I smiled and continued eating. After eating I did the dishes while he went to take a shower. I watched TV alone because Themba was fast asleep.

Days went by he bought the flat for me. And it was written under my name stating that I am the owner. I spent the rest of the week with Themba. It was great to be with him. Friday morning after he left for work. He was going to come back early because later he was going to church. I also took my things and left. I drove to the saloon and I did a new hairstyle. I did a black and blonde bonding. It was cut short into a boy cut but with a side fringe on the front. I looked cute on it. After that I drove to my flat. I arrived and I took a shower, brushed my teeth and lotion. I wore a white tight dress, it revealed my back nicely showing my smooth skin but it covered the rest of my body. It was above the knee. I wore white stilettos and I put on a red lipstick. There was a knock on the door. I finished up everything and I went to the door. It was Liam, I opened up for him. He was wearing white jeans, white T-shirt and a white blouse with white sneakers. We hugged each other.

Liam: You look nice. I can't believe your boyfriend agreed that you can go with me.

Me: I didn't tell him because he was going to refuse.

Liam: Don't you think maybe he will find out?

Me: No. Let me go and get my bag.

I went to my room and I took my bag. I gave it to Liam. He left with them. I went to my room for my handbag. I looked myself in the mirror and I powdered my face up, I heard Liam talking on my lounge. I went back to my lounge and Themba was sitting on my couch looking at Liam who was also sitting on the couch. I didn't know what to do. I just stood by the door.

Themba: [looking at me] You're going to a wedding for the whole weekend without telling me?

Me: I am sorry bbe I thought-

Themba: I asked you a question that needs a yes or no not further explanation.

Me: Yes.

Themba: Why? Because you told me that you're going to some company and the rest of the weekend you'll be doing your school work. Is this wedding your school work?

Me: No it isn't.

Themba: Then why are you going without telling me?

Me: I needed to get away from everything a little just to distract my mind from all that has happened.

Themba: So that means go without telling me?

Me: No bbe I am sorry.

Themba: You're not going to that wedding do you understand me?

Me: Themba you can't do that.

He stood up and looked at me. His face had turned pink. He was angry but he tried to keep calm.

Themba: Gaan na die troue en ek sal jou so hard smack.

He said that, he took his car keys and the phone on the coffee table and he left slamming the door shut behind him. I looked at Liam.

Me: What did he say?

Liam: [quite frightened] He said "go to that wedding and I will smack you so hard."

I swallowed hard and I sat on my couch. I buried my face on my hands

I sat down on the couch trying to register what I just heard? "He'll smack me so hard?" No guy has ever tried to smack me. Samkelo used to kiss me whenever he was angry. I sighed and looked at Liam.

Me: Why did you tell him the truth?

Liam: What was I supposed to do. The guy wanted answers.

Me: You should've waited for me to come back and I would've spoken to him.

Liam: It's cool than I will go without you.

Me: No! We didn't buy those three dresses for nothing Brah.

Liam: But the guy will smack you dude. It may be a stereotype or prejudice that coloureds are violent but dude they are. And when they are angry it's like they lose their brains.

Me: I need to go out Brah so I will just tell him that I didn't hear what he said and you don't know Afrikaans and I am pregnant for goodness sake so please let's go.

Liam: Okay.

I took my handbag and we left the flat. We were using his car. I sat on the backseat because I was going to sleep. About 7 hours on the road is not fun I was going to sleep. Samkelo's words kept on echoing at the back of my mind "he'll smack you" I tried not to think about it but I was scared. I needed a break though so I was taking my chances. We had a good conversation with Liam after I told myself not to stress about Themba, until I fell asleep. I was woken up by him telling me that we were at the venue. I stepped out of the car and

fixed myself. I took my clutch bag and he held my hand. We walked inside the hotel. The place was packed, a lot of white people were there. It was actually a boring party. I was following Liam around, he was introducing me to different people. We were then instructed to sit down and the event began. I didn't hear a thing because I was quite bored but one good thing I enjoyed was food. After all the speeches the dance floor was opened. And I danced with Liam. The music was great but I was sleepy so I asked Liam to show me the room I was going to use.

Liam: We gonna share a room but separate beds.

Me: What?

Liam: Yes. The thing is this was organised long back so I didn't have a problem because I was taking my girlfriend with me but now that she's not here I asked to swipe a room with my two friends. They took my other room with one bed and I took theirs.

Me: At least it won't be the same bed so let's go.

Liam: Thanks.

We used the alleviator and we went to our room. Our bags were already inside the room.

Liam went back to the party and left me alone. I took a shower and changed into my pyjamas. I went inside the bed covers. I took my phone and I had no missed calls or texts from Themba. I sighed and I said a short prayer. I fell asleep immediately.

The following morning was a Saturday. Liam woke me up. He was looking good and fresh. He was wearing his outfit for the wedding.

Me: What time is it?

Liam: 6:30 am.

Me: And you're already dressed up.

Liam: The wedding will begin at 7:30am

Me: Yoh! White people are always on time.

He laughed. I stood up and I went to the bathroom. I took a shower and I did all the necessities inside the bathroom. I wore a long purple dress with silver decor and silver stilettos. I fixed my hairstyle. I applied a light make up and red lipstick. I took my clutch bag and joined Liam.

Liam: Wow you look awesome.

Me: Thank you.

Liam: Shall we?

Me: Yes sir.

He held my hand and we walked to the venue. The wedding was outside the hotel. It was beautiful. The ceremony began and the bride was beautiful. As the ceremony went on my phone vibrated. I took it out. It was a text from Themba.

Themba: "so you left for the wedding? I was in your flat just to check up on you"

Me: "yes I left. I needed this for myself"

Themba: "I bet the wedding is more important than our relationship?"

Me: "No but bbe please understand I didn't mean to disrespect you again. I am sorry."

Themba: "Please kindly send me the address of that wedding. I need you home not at some wedding I don't know."

Me: "but Themba I can't just up and leave"

Themba: "You will do that before I find you myself"

I didn't respond but I gave Liam my phone and I told him to text the address to him. And he did.

After the wedding ceremony we went to eat at the hotel. After eating we went to another venue for wedding reception not at the hotel. I had to send the new address to Themba. It was late and dark outside. Themba didn't call nor text after sending him the address. Just when the bride and the groom did their first dance as husband and wife. Themba called me. I

walked out from the venue and I answered the call.

Me: Themba.

Themba: Within five minutes you must be outside the venue.

Me: Are really doing this?

Themba: I will see you just now.

I hung up the call and I sighed. I was feeling a bit cold. I texted Liam telling him to come out.

Voice: You must be kidding me? Am I dreaming?

Me: [turning back] Good Lord not you!

Sam: What are you doing here?

Me: I should be asking you that.

Sam: I study around here remember? And I came back yesterday. And you?

Liam: Thandy? Are you feeling cold?

Me: Yes.

Liam:[he took out his blouse] Take this. [I took it]

Sam: And then? Good Lord! Thandeka I must shoot you now. Who is these?

Me: It's Liam my neighbor. We are here for his sister's wedding. Liam these is Samkelo the father of my unborn child.

Liam: And the coloured boy?

Me: He's my boyfriend. It quite complicated.

Liam: Okay. Nice to meet you man.

Sam: Sure Brah. Thanks for pampering my Queen a little. I bet she needed this kind of a break. I hope you did learn a thing or two Thandeka for our own wedding.

Me: Mxm. Our wedding will happen in your dreams Samkelo. Please leave. Uyadika ngoku.

Sam: I won't give up on you. So your coloured boy must hold on to you while he still can because one day I will strike.

Me: Mxm please man. You have your new shiny toy so leave Themba and I alone.

Sam: You belong to me not that coloured boy

Liam: Actually he's right behind you two.

We both turned back. Themba was with Bheki and Brandon. I started feeling a little bit scared.

Themba: Let's go.

Me: My bags are at the hotel.

Themba: Your neighbor will come back with them so please let's go before I do something I will regret.

Sam: If you dare hurt her-

Themba: Hold it right there. Nobody said you must talk. So please mind your own business.

Sam: She's my business.

Themba:[walking close to him] Really?

Brandon: Ethan my nigga cool down. We're not here to cause war. We're here for your girl man.

Themba: You! Keep telling yourself that! Nx! Thandeka let's go.

Liam: Thanks Thandeka for coming here

Me: It's Okay. I had a great time.

He smiled. Themba held my hand and we walked to his car.

Sam: [shouting] You better not lay your hand on her and my child. Or else I will kill you.

Themba: [looking back at him] I will be waiting.

His friends laughed and we continued walking until we reached his car. He opened the front door for me.

Me: Can I sit at the back?

Themba: No.

Me: Okay

I stepped inside and they all did. Themba was driving. He drove off.

Brandon: You were looking lovely Thandeka.

Me: [low tone] Thanks.

Bheki: Themba Brah you made her scared please soften her a little.

Themba didn't say anything but he looked at me than back to the road.

Brandon: Relax he won't smack you Thandeka. He was just kidding.

Me: I wish.

Bheki: Uyigwala unjalo nje. ( You're a coward)

Brandon and Bheki laughed really hard at that. Themba and I didn't laugh. I looked at him but his eyes were on the road. His friends were laughing.

Bheki: Next time you will fly to London without telling your man and we will follow you there and take you back home.

Me: This is not funny yazi.

Brandon: He's trying to help you.

Bheki: You'll be fine relax. Themba is the sweetest amongst us. If you were mine I was going to tie you up on a tree and leave you there for the whole night.

Brandon: [laughing] That's why you're single even now dude.

Bheki: No. The thing is you try to be Mr nice and perfect to these girls but they always do something that will make you show them your beast side.

Themba: You can say that again Bheki.

Brandon: Don't be scared Thandeka nothing will happen to you. Themba won't do anything bad to you.

Me: What if he does?

Brandon: I will come and rescue you.

Themba and Bheki laughed at him. But he didn't.

Me: Themba you will take me to my flat right?

Themba: Why should I?

Me:.....

Brandon: I am sleeping at your place tonight broh.

Themba: We don't need visitors.

Bheki: I will sleep on the couch.

Themba: That won't happen. You two better forget it. I don't want you in my place.

Brandon: Thandeka you don't want us too?

Me: You can sleep over I see no problem with that. They both laughed. Themba looked at me and I looked away.

Bheki: You heard the lady we are sleeping over broh. You can't stop us. Mrs Smith has spoken.

Themba: Sadly that's not her apartment. Her apartment is at Musgrave. She can't rule my own space.

Me: That means I can sleep in my own apartment right because I can't rule yours?

Themba: Brandon how many hours left for us to make it to KZN?

Brandon: About 5hrs.

Themba: Okay. What time will we arrive in Durban?

Brandon: I am maybe.

Themba: Okay sure. I am not taking you to your apartment.

I didn't say anything further. I looked away. I took my phone and logged on Facebook. I browsed through the news feeds nothing was interesting.

I received a call from Thobelani. I picked up.

Me: Thobe?

Thobe: Why didn't you tell me that you're leaving?

Me: It was a last minute thing dude.

Thobe: I am sorry my friend. I am coming back tomorrow I will pass by your place.

Me: Maybe I won't be there since it's Sunday tomorrow. I have to go to church.

Thobe: Come on ditch church please.

Me: I can't Brah. Where is Olwethu?

Thobe: Argh she broke up with me.

Me: Why?

Thobe: She's afraid that she'll get pregnant.

Me:[laughing] Haaa But that will help her otherwise my dad will chase her out too.

Thobe: I just lost a girlfriend and you're laughing.

Me: I am sorry ntwana. I am sending you kisses ke don't cry.

Thobe: Argh I don't want your kisses. Where is your new boy. You're a bad girl you know.

Me: Awu please! Sleep boy.

Thobe: Where is he?

Me: He's here with me.

Thobe: Okay. I have to bounce. Goodnight ntwana.

Me: Goodnight Dawg.

We hung up and I concentrated on my phone. Brandon and Bheki were talking alone.

Themba looked at me.

Themba: Why didn't you give your neighbor his blouse back.

Me: I forgot to give it to him back and besides I was feeling cold.

Themba: Okay.

Brandon: Have you guys had sex together?

Me: What?

Themba: That's none of your business.

Bheki: They haven't dude. Let's leave them out of the game.

Me: What game?

Brandon: No let's leave it like that.

I nodded. I kept on looking at my phone until I fell asleep on the car seat.

I woke up when I felt the cold wind blowing me. I was on Themba's arms. He was walking with me to his apartment. His friends were carrying bags of ice cubes. I looked at him and he also looked at me. I closed my eyes until we made it to his flat. He put me down.

Themba: Go to my room now. And change your clothes, wrap yourself with a towel and come to the guestroom.

Brandon: Are you seriously going to do this man?

Themba: Bbe go.

I nodded and I went to his room. I changed my clothes and wore my gown instead. I walked out of his room. His friends were on the lounge eating and watching a movie. They looked at me then back to the screen. They didn't say anything. I went to the guestroom. Themba was sitting on the edge of the bed. I closed the door and lean on it.

Me: Please don't hit me. I am sorry.

Themba: I am not mad so I won't beat you up. You were there because of the wedding or because of your baby daddy?

Me: I was there because of the wedding Themba. Samkelo happened to be around that place, I didn't know that he was going to be around.

Themba: You still love him right?

Me: I do but I am with you now not him. I love you so much and I want our relationship to work.

Themba: Do you think it will work while you're always going against my word and going behind my back and lying to me!!

Me: No. I am sorry Themba.

He stood up and came towards me. He took off my gown. He locked the door.

Themba: Let me cool off your hot body. Maybe you will stop lying and disrespecting me for no reason after I cooled off this hot blood you have.

He picked me up and walked with me to the bathroom. He put me inside the bathtub. It was full of water and ice cubes. My body felt like I was being hit by an electricity shock. I screamed because the water was ice cold. He washed my face and I screamed even louder. There was a knock on the door. Brandon was actually banging the door.

Brandon: Ethan broeh stop all this madness you're doing to your girlfriend.

Themba didn't reply but he continued washing my body with cold water.

Bheki: Leave them alone Brandon. These girl is mad did she expect kisses from him. She went away with another man. Hhayi man she's acting like a bitch. He must keep her inside that tub until all those ice dissolve.

Brandon: This is madness.

Themba didn't care about what they were saying because he was giving me cold bath. I was shivering and my teeth were making sounds because I was feeling cold.

Themba: I love you Thandeka but I don't want you to do as you please to me. Don't take my love for granted if you want to go back to baby daddy just tell me I will let you go than to keep seeing you playing with my feelings.

He took some ice cubes and moved on my skin. I didn't say anything. After he was satisfied he took a big towel and he left the bathroom. He came back and took me out of the tub. He placed me on top of the bed and dried my body. He made me wear my gown and he picked up. He walked with me to his room. Bheki followed in with a cup of hot chocolate. He gave it to me. I took it and I drank it though it was hard to hold the cup. Themba assisted me. He opened the heat on his air conditioner. I drank the whole cup but I was still feeling cold.

Themba put on socks on my feet and he sat next to me. He looked at me.

Themba: Let me...

He kissed me and I didn't respond but he didn't give up. I gave in and kissed him back. He got on top of me he took off my gown. He took off his clothes and went inside the covers. He kissed my neck while he rubbed my clit making it warm. I gasped and a moan escaped my mouth. He rubbed his penis on the entrance of my vagina and I squirted. He took out a condom and put it on him. He entered my world and started moving, making me moan. His skin felt warm against my cold skin. He blew me up until he was sweating because the whole room was hot and his moves were quite fast. We climaxed and he took out the condom.

Themba: Do\_\_you want\_\_us to\_\_take a\_\_hot shower now?

I shook my head saying no. He went to his wore drop and took out his warm pyjamas. He made me wear them and he went to the bathroom and took a shower. I slept on the bed trying to replay what happened and I didn't feel like crying I was just numb. He came back, he lotioned and he wore warm pyjamas. He took blankets and walked out with them. He came back and joined me inside the bed. He cuddled me until I fell asleep.

I woke up midnight because I was sweating the room was on fire. I shook Themba.

Themba: mmhm

Me: Bbe please turn off the heat now.

Themba: Are you warm enough?

Me: Yes I am.

Themba: Okay.

He stood up and turned it off. He came back and we faced each other. I looked at him and he

did the same. I didn't say anything I just closed my eyes. I felt his lips on my lips. I touched his face and kissed him back. We kissed each other passionately for three longest time. And we broke the kiss. He kissed my forehead.

Themba: I love you.

Me: I love you too.

We cuddled each other and we fell back asleep.

The following morning I was woken up by my phone ringing. Themba was still sleeping. I took it and Samkelo was calling me. I switched off the ringing sound and let it ring in silence because I didn't answer it. I woke up and I went to the bathroom to wash my face and brush my teeth. I wore sleepers and put on my gown. I took my phone and I went to the kitchen. I made breakfast while everyone was still sleeping. I took out the tub of ice cream and ate it while making breakfast.

Brandon: You're an early bird?

Me: Not really, my phone woke me up so I couldn't go back to sleep.

Brandon: How are you feeling?

Me: I am feeling okay and you?

Brandon: I am talking about after what happened yesterday not the feeling in general.

Me: Oh I am good. I don't feel cold or anything. I am fine.

Brandon: That's better.

Bheki: Morning Mrs Smith.

Me: I am not Mrs Smith.

Bheki: But you will be.

Me: How do you know?

Bheki: Because I know a Mrs Smith when I see one and you are the Mrs Smith because I don't see you two breaking up in future. But you just have to stop your craziness otherwise I will tell Themba to buy a coffin and put you there next time.

Brandon and I laughed.

Me: If he wants to loose me through death he can do that.

Bheki: He wouldn't let you die.

Themba: And what's the topic about?

He came to me and kissed me. I kissed him back.

Bheki: Y'all are not fair you know that I am single Themba dude.

We broke the kiss and I looked down.

Brandon: You seriously need a girlfriend.

Bheki: Yeah Yeah can we eat so that we won't be late for church.

Themba: Yeah.

We fixed the table and we ate together. There was a knock on the door. Brandon stood up and attended it. He came back with a beautiful coloured girl.

Girl: Morning everyone.

Us: Morning

Brandon: Thandeka this is my girlfriend, Emma and Emma this thee Thandeka. Ethan's girlfriend.

Emma: Ethan wow, she's beautiful. She's a Mrs Smith right? Not those gold digging hoes you had before?

Themba: She's definitely the Mrs Smith.

Emma: Nice to meet you Thandeka.

Me: Nice to meet you too Emma. You look pretty.

Emma: Thanks dear. At least now I can have a friend since I was the only girl here. These two were girlfriend less. Bheki broh you must try and find someone.

Bheki: Times are really tough broh I will try.

We all laughed at him. I took a plate and dished up for Emma. I gave her the plate.

Emma: Thanks.

Me: So Emma are you Studying or working?

Emma: I am doing my third year in Child and Youth development in DUT.

Me: Really? Do you know a girl named Sanelisiwe in your class?

Emma: Sanelisiwe? Uhm\_\_No we don't have anyone by the name of Sanelisiwe.

Me: Oh okay. Let me show you her picture.

I took out my phone and show her the picture. She looked at her.

Emma: No she's lying. I don't know her. I know all the levels in our field there is no girl who looks like her.

Me: Okay thanks.

We continued eating. After eating we washed the dishes with Emma.

Themba and I went to his room to take a shower together.

Themba: Why would she lie about Studying Child and Youth development?

Me: I think it's the way they wanted to use to take my child. They might have done a good research about this field of study than they decided to prank me with it so that I can believe that she wanted to help me.

Themba: They are bastards! They won't take your child Thandeka.

Me: I am calling off this whole thing. I don't have to pretend now because my dad kicked me out already.

Themba: Yes you have to call it off before you even pay that money they want.

Me: R20 000? I wonder what were they going to do with all that money.

Themba: Maybe they were going to use it to maintain the baby.

Me: Mmm. Thanks for being this supportive and I am sorry about what I did this weekend.

Themba: It's Okay bbe. I am also sorry for what I did to you yesterday.

Me: [laughing] Cooling me off neh?

Themba: Don't laugh I was just angry that's all.

Me: It's cool.

Themba: For you to distress like you wanted to. You and Emma will go to Cape Town this weekend. Just the two of you.

Me: Really? But why not go with you though?

Themba: You will go with me some other time. I just want to give you some freedom away from me and everything that's happening. That's why it's best that you go with Emma. You will sleep in my house.

Me: Wow thanks. That's a big break.

Themba: Anything to make my Queen happy. And that's a nice hairstyle it suit you.

Me: Thanks bbe.

I smiled and kissed him. We finished up everything and we went back to his room. We lotion and wore our clothes proper for church. We cleaned up the bedroom and we went to the others. We all went to Themba's car. He drove us to church. And the service was good. After church Emma and I walked out because the guys were talking to other guys from church. We leaned on the car.

Emma: Ethan told you about the trip to Cape Town

Me: Yes. So what will we be doing?

Emma: Don't worry you have me by your side so you will sit back and let me pamper you.

Me: Okay. I can't wait.

Emma: I'll be back I want to talk to that lady.

I nodded and she left. I took my phone and I had missed calls from Samkelo. I didn't return them.

Voice: I have been watching you inside the church. You're really beautiful.

Me: [looking up] Thanks.

It was a tall yellow bone guy. He was good looking and well dressed.

Guy: My name is Menzi.

Me: I am Thandeka.

Menzi: I would like to get to know you better can I have your numbers?

Me: Sorry I don't give out my number to anyone.

Menzi: Come on we are just church mates and I saw that you're with Ethan.

Me: That's better because you saw that so thanks but I won't give you my number.

Menzi: Okay than. Have a nice day ahead.

Me: Thanks you too.

He smiled and left. I looked at him until he disappeared from my sight. After a few minutes everyone came back and we all stepped inside the car. Brandon was driving. Themba and I were sitting at the backseat with Bheki. Brandon drove to Musgrave center for lunch.

We arrived by Musgrave they suggested we go to Mimos. I didn't have a problem because I ate everything. I saw Thobelani at a distance. He came running towards me.

Me: You guys can go through. I want to talk to my friend.

They nodded and they went through. Thobelani hugged me and spun me around. I laughed because it was so nice and fun. He put me down.

Me: Hey dude you've grown up neh?

Thobe: Yes Brah. You too hey little Samke is growing I can see the bump now.

Me: Yeah. I just wish she can be like this forever.

Thobe: I can't wait to see you with a huge bump Brah. [I laughed] You went to church with them?

Me: Yes. Where is Sanelisiwe?

Thobe: I don't know. We don't hook up anymore because of your baby daddy.

Me: Can't you just say Samkelo?

Thobe:[laughing] But he is the baby daddy.

Me: Whatever dude. I will see you tomorrow.

Thobe: Okay it was nice seeing you.

Me: You too.

We hugged each other and he left.

I went to the others. Emma was talking.

Emma: ... He knows we had it hard broh and we had to hustle our way to the top. Who said living in a children's home is fun. Argh brainless man.

Bheki: But Emma you have to cool down.

Emma: I ain't gonna cool down. I am from the streets broh if it wasn't for Brandon do you think I will be here? You all know exactly the kind of life I have been living. I ain't gonna let no bitch and brainless man take me down No! [She banged the table]

Brandon: Bbe calm down.

I looked at Themba but he didn't look at me. He was looking down. I realized that he was crying.

Emma: [crying] No! Don't tell me to calm down Brandon.

Bheki: Let's take her to the car man.

They both stood up and held her hands. Brandon was brushing her back. I looked at Themba because I was confused.

Themba: [wiping his tears] I am sorry you to saw all that and heard those things.

Me: What was that about?

Themba: Nothing it's just the past. Let's go.

I nodded. He asked for takeaways box and we put the pizza there. We both stood up.

Me: Can you please take me to my place.

Themba: I will later not now.

I didn't say anything. We walked to the car in silence. He opened the front door for me. I stepped in and he did the same. Emma was crying on Brandon's arms. Bheki had his face buried on his hands.

Me: Themba please take me to my place now. It's not even far.

Themba: Thandeka-

Me: Please!

He didn't say anything. He drove to my place and parked his car in front of the gate. I looked at him but he didn't look at me. I placed the pizza on the car seat and I stepped out of the car. He drove off.

I went inside my flat and locked up. I went to the kitchen and took a tub of ice cream. I went to my lounge and watched TV while eating ice cream. I missed my dad a lot. I decided to take my phone and call him. I didn't want to stress myself about Themba and all those things I heard because I didn't know what they were talking about. I dialed dad's number but my number was on reject. I didn't mind I called the house phone. Qiniso answered.

Qini: Dhlomo residents hello.

Me: Hey it's Thandeka.

Qini: Thandeka? How are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Qini: I am good dude.

Me: Can I talk to my dad please.

Qini: He's not around at the moment. They were meeting with the wedding planner but I think they are on their way now.

Me: Okay if he comes back please tell him that I-

Qini: Speak of the devil here he is. Baba the phone

Dad:[on the background] Who is it?

Qini: It's Thandeka your daughter.

Dad: I don't have a daughter by the name of Thandeka. My daughter died so please tell that one that it's wrong number.

Qini: But baba Thandeka is-

Maud: You heard him, he doesn't have a daughter by the name of Thandeka so please drop that call and give us some space.

I hung up the call and I cried. I took the cushion and held it tightly. I cried until I stopped.

My phone rang I took it. Samkelo was calling. I took a deep breath and answered.

Me: Hello.

Sam: Thandeka are you and the baby alright?

Me: Yes I am fine.

Sam: I was worried about you but I am glad that you're fine. Has the social worker contact you?

Me: No and about that I am no longer taking my child to a children's home.

Sam: Hhaybo why? What's wrong?

Me: I have changed my mind.

Sam: You're mad. You'll take that baby and put it on a children's home!

Me: You can't tell me what to do. These is my child.

Sam: And it's my child too and I say you'll put her on that home after you gave birth.

Me: Uyanya!

I dropped the call. "Arghh! Can it September already I need to give birth!" I screamed out loud.

I decided to listen to music instead of watching a movie. I ate my ice cream and tried to calm down. After some time there was a knock on the door. I stood up and attended the door. It was Emma.

Me: Emma. Um please come in.

Emma: Thanks.

Me: Can I offer you something to drink?

Emma: No I am fine.

We sat down and I looked at her. She looked like someone who has been crying a lot.

Me: So how can I help you?

Emma: I just wanted to check up on you. Ethan told us about the pregnancy.

Me: My pregnancy? Oh you didn't know?

Emma: Yes we didn't know. You're lucky you know

Me: Yes I know. Not every guy would've done what he did for me.

Emma: Yah hey. I am sorry about what happened earlier.

Me: What's going on?

Emma: It's not in my place to tell but it's just the past trying to put us down.

Me: I am sorry. How is my Smith?

Emma: He's not so good. Actually that's why I am here. I think you should be with him. He could use someone.

Me: How do you try and be there for someone when you don't know what's eating them up.

Emma: You don't have to know but your presence counts more than you can imagine.

Me: Okay let me go and get my stuff for school tomorrow.

Emma: Okay let me leave my cab is waiting.

Me: He's alone?

Emma: Yes he's alone. And please don't tell him that this was my idea.

Me: Okay thanks Emma.

Emma: It's my pleasure. I really like you and I wish you and Ethan can end up getting married one day

Me: Thanks. I would also like to see you getting married to Brandon.

Emma: That son of the bitch better marry or I will kill him and his new bitch if he try to ditch me.

I laughed and we hugged each other and she left. I went to my room and took my books for the following day. I took a few clothes, I switched off the lights and I left. I stepped inside my car and drove to Themba's place.

I arrived and I went at his flat, it was locked. I knocked and there was no response. I knocked again. I heard footsteps walking towards the door.

Themba: Who is it?

Me: It's Thandeka.

Themba: What do you want?

Me: Please open up.

I heard the key turning and he opened the door. I looked at him and he looked at him with eyes that showed that he was crying. I tried to hug him but he backed away.

Me: Um okay. Are you going to let me in or?

He stepped aside and I went through. He closed the door.

Themba: Why are you here?

Me: I wanted to check up on you?

Themba: Check up on me are you my babysitter?

Me: No please don't do this Themba.

Themba: What? You said you want to go to your place. I let you and now you're back here.

Me: I don't know what you're going through Themba. I didn't know what to do.

Themba: please leave Thandeka.

Me: I am not going anywhere.

Themba: Suit yourself.

He walked to his room and he got inside the bed covers. I placed my bags down and I went to the bathroom. I took a shower and I lotioned. I wore my pyjamas and joined him inside the bed covers.

Me: What is wrong Themba.

Themba: I don't want to talk about it.

Me: You're shutting me out Themba and that hurts. It's hurt big time.

Themba: I wasn't gonna shut you out if you didn't choose your place instead of being here with me.

Me: I am sorry bbe. It was selfish of me.

He didn't say anything for a long time.

Themba: The care worker was supposed to protect her but she failed. They all failed her. She begged me to help her out of that home. She lived in the street. I used to give her my little food that we were given and I'll starve just for her to eat something. I didn't have it easy but life for her was the worst. My parents don't even know if I am alive or not. But they are still alive. I haven't seen them for years. If it wasn't for Brandon and Bheki, Emma and I wouldn't be where we are today. I love you and I didn't want to see you end up on the street. I might be a little insecure at times it just that I never heard it easy and I can be over protective sometimes that's because I care. Now the past is haunting us in a way. I can't tell you everything but I just want you to know that I love you and I care about your child. And as long as I live I will be here for the two of you. To support and love you.

Me: I am sorry to hear that but what made you help her. Or what created that bond.

Themba: She was older than me by the way. She was my sister's friend and for some reason we were placed on the same home though she was old I had to play big brother to her because the gardener used to sexually abuse her and make me watch the whole thing. He knew our parents and he had this anger towards them that he ended up taking it out on us. We had to hustle hard to make it to the top. Bheki and Brandon had stable homes. It was not easy but we are here now.

Me: The past haunting you as you say. It's not something that will get you killed right?

Themba: Anything is expected bbe but we're stronger than anything. If there's something good I learnt on that home. Is God and that he listens so I trust in him more than anything in this world.

Me:[crying] You won't die Themba. You can't die. Maybe something else will happen.

Themba: Hey hey come close. [He held me tight] I won't die. No one will die. God got us.

He got our backs and I trust him. You must focus on your baby and your studies. I'll focus on all this thing and I promise nothing bad will happen to us. I love you.

Me: I love you too. [He kissed my forehead]

Themba: Tomorrow we have our first piano lessons.

Me: I forgot about that. I can't wait. I bet my baby will love it.

Themba: She will. She has the best mother in the world and of course the cute step daddy.

Me: Welele cute wena?

Themba: Are you denying that? [Ticking me]

Me: No! No! I am not.

Themba: Good now kiss your cute Smith.

I smiled and kissed him. We broke the kiss and he held me tight. We talked, talked and talked until we fell asleep.

The following morning I woke up, Themba was not inside the bed. I heard him talking on the lounge. I suppose he was talking to someone on the phone. I went to the bedroom door and listened to his conversation.

Themba: "... We were desperate and you know that\_\_ Come on do you think we wanted to make a living that way? We were kids\_\_ They want revenge damnit\_\_ I can't do that. I have two important people in my life. That's my girlfriend and her unborn baby\_\_ Yes her. I love her deeply and I don't know what I would be if I were to loose her over this whole thing\_\_[laughing] Believe me I'll put a ring on it but that's not where I am\_\_ You owe us that much so help us get them off our back\_\_ No nobody must be killed\_\_ Yes\_\_ sure Dawg will keep in touch"

I quickly ran back to bed and I pretended that I was sleeping. I heard him coming inside the room. He kissed my forehead and shook me slightly. I opened my eyes and smiled at him.

Themba: Wake up bbe. It's morning already.

Me: I hate mornings.

He smiled and kissed me. I giggled in between the kisses and we broke the kiss. We took a shower together, brushed our teeth, lotion and wore our clothes. We had breakfast together.

Themba: I am driving you to school today.

Me: You'll fetch me or?

Themba: If you're done you can go to your flat. I will come and get you for our piano lessons.

Me: Okay munchie.

We finished and I washed our dishes. We took our bags and left. He drove me to school. We arrived by Ml Sultan. We kissed each other.

Themba: I love you.

Me: I love you too. Have a productive day.

Themba: Thanks bbe same to you.

I smiled and stepped out of the car. I rushed to my first class.

After my last class I went to meet up with my brother and his friends. They were at Bachelos. I went there and I spotted him. He stood up and we shared a hug. I followed him and I sat down. It was Edward and Mondli.

Me: Gentlemen.

Them: Hey.

Mondli: I heard that ustukile Thandeka.

Me:[laughing] Who told you that?

Mondli: Just romours.

Me: From Patrick I guess.

Andile: No come on.

Mondli's phone rang. He stood up and attended it.

Edward: How are you than Thandeka?

Me: I am fine and you?

Edward: I am good. It's nice to see you.

Me: Yeah. Can I eat Andile.

Mondli: Please wait for my girlfriend.

Me: Argh Brah she will join us. I am starving.

They laughed and they let me eat while they waited for Mondli's girlfriend. After a few minutes he stood up and left us. I was busy eating because I was desperately hungry.

Mondli: Bbe these are my friends.

Me: She better be good look- [I looked up] Lizeka??

Lizzy: Thandeka?

Mondli: You two know each other?

Me: Yes we went to the same high school.

Lizzy: It's nice to see you.

Me: Yeah. You too

Mondli: That's nice.

They sat down and they started eating. Andile and Edward were asking Lizyeka questions. I didn't pay much attention. I didn't expect to see her after everything that had happened. My phone rang and I took it. It was Themba calling. I answered.

Me: Smith.

Themba: Mrs Smith where are you. I am done with everything.

Me: I am at Barcelos with my brother and his friends. You will find me there waiting.

Themba: [chuckle] Okay mam I am on my way. Ndyakthanda MaDhlomo.

Me: [giggles] Ndyakthanda nami Smith.

We hung up. I smiled and placed my phone aside.

Andile: You're really going to be in a relationship with this guy?

Me: I am not going to be in a relationship with him. I am in a relationship with him.

Mondli: Who is he?

Andile: It's some old coloured guy. [Lizzy giggled]

Me: He's not old.

Edward: How old is he?

Me: He's 23yrs old.

Mondli: And how old are you?

Andile: She's 19yrs old.

Mondli: He's the baby daddy?

Andile: Samkelo is the baby daddy.

Lizzy: You're carrying Samkelo's child?

Mondli: Is there a problem Bbe?

Lizzy: Um No. I am just surprised.

Mondli: I bet this guy loves you. Dating you while you're carrying another man's child.

Andile: He's just taking advantage of her situation

Me: What situation? The fact that I am pregnant?

Lizzy: He is up to no good seriously. No guy on his right mind can date a pregnant woman. It's better if the baby is already there but if you are still pregnant. No man.

Edward: If I love her I would.

Lizzy: That's because you're white.

Edward: But he's coloured right Thandeka?

Me: Yes. Can we stop discussing my boyfriend. He loves me and I love him. Whether he's up to no good. I don't care.

Edward: That's the spirit. I would definitely marry you if I can get the chance.

We all laughed at him. Themba came to us.

Themba: Molweni.

Them: Molo.

Themba: Thandeka??

Me: Um guys I have to go. Thanks for the food Andile.

Andile: Okay. I have been meaning to talk to you about something. Let me walk you out.

Themba: I will wait for you in the car.

Me: Okay.

He left, I said my goodbyes to Lizzy and the guys. Andile and I walked out.

Andile: When were you planning to tell me that you're no longer taking your baby to the home?

Me: I am sorry about that I was going to tell you.

Andile: Just place her there. She'll be fine and you'll focus on your studies.

Me: No I will stay with her in my flat.

Andile: But next year you're going to stay at res.

Me: Themba bought the flat for me so I won't stay at res.

Andile: Wow and you didn't tell me.

Me: You don't like the guy so telling you was the last thing on my mind. And I thought you didn't like the idea of me taking my child to a home.

Andile: [looking down] Uhm. Yeah but it's good idea for you and the child.

Me: You're with them right?

Andile: What are you talking about?

Me: You know exactly what I am talking about. You can't even look me in the eye Andile.

How could you side with Samkelo?

Andile: It's the best thing to do. His mother will look after the baby for you.

Me: Wow! Wow! Andile Dhlomo? My brother? I can't believe this.

Andile: I was trying to help you. We all want what is best for you and right now a baby is not one of those things but your education. I was also against the whole plan until dad kicked you out.

Me: [wiping my tears] You know what please leave me alone.

He tried to hold my hand but I yanked it out of his hand. I ran to Themba's car and I stepped in.

Themba: Are you alright?

Me: Can we please focus on the piano thing for now. Please.

Themba: Okay.

He drove off.

I couldn't believe it. I was just puzzled, even if he wanted to help me but he was supposed to tell me. I was so heartbroken and I couldn't stop crying. Themba was worried about me but I told him not to worry. We arrived in Durban North and we went to do our piano lessons. I had difficult time but it was fun and for a few hours I forgot about my problems and focused on something else. After the lessons we went back to the car.

Themba: So how was it?

Me: It was fun and so stress relieving. Thanks.

Themba: I am glad you liked it.

Me: I think you must buy the piano.

Themba: I can buy it but it will be on the house in Cape Town. We can use it when we're there.

Me: That's nice.

Themba: I was thinking that June I am going to take the leave at work and we will spend the June holidays in Cape Town.

Me: Just the two of us?

Themba: Yes bbe.

Me: That's nice I have no problem at all.

Themba: Good.

We drove to my place and we went inside the flat.

We cooked together. Themba was looking at me through out the whole cooking session.

Me: Okay. My brother knew about Samkelo's plan of taking the baby. He was also part of it. He thought it was a good idea.

Themba: Are you serious?

Me:[crying] I don't know how can he do this to me. I trusted him. I thought he got my back as my big brother but he was trying to help Samkelo.

Themba:[holding me] It's called tough love bbe. He wanted the baby to be safe I guess. Maybe he didn't trust the home to look after your child in best way. Just forgive him. He's your brother after all. He was just looking out for his little sister.

Me: He was supposed to tell me Themba.

Themba: You were not going to listen to him Thandeka. I bet he knows that. Look Andile is the only family that you have right now and whatever that happens between the two of you. It must not ruin the relationship you have with him. He loves you and he cares about you. Just forgive him okay Me: I will try.

Themba: Okay good now kiss me.

I smiled and kissed him. We broke the kiss and he kissed my forehead.

Themba: I have to go now.

Me: You are not spending the night here?

Themba: No my love. Not today. Tomorrow maybe.

Me: My car is in your place.

Themba: I will call a cab and you will use my car.

Me: Mmm okay. I will see you tomorrow.

Themba: Yes. I love you.

Me: I love you too.

He kissed me once again and he called a cab. We both went to the street and we waited for the cab. After some time it came. We hugged each other, he gave me the car keys and he left. I went back to my flat. Liam came by and dropped my things and he left. I took a shower and went to bed naked. My brother called. I answered.

Me: Andile.

Andile: I am really sorry sisi wami please forgive me.

Me: You chose Sam over your sister?

Andile: It's not like that Joy. I am sorry Okay. I will let you do whatever you want with the baby please forgive me mntasekhaya.

Me: It's Okay. Please don't that again. Scheming with Samkelo behind my back I don't like it.

Andile: I promise. I won't.

Me: Okay. Goodnight.

Andile: I love you goodnight.

Me: I love you too.

I hung up. I took my books and studied because I had a test week. While I was still studying I received a goodnight text from Themba. I replied and continued with studying.

+

+

TWO MONTHS LATER. Emma and I went to Cape Town for the weekend. It was so fun and stress relieving. We were staying at Themba's double storey house. It was pretty huge and beautiful. But it wasn't fully furnished. After the weekend away I had to study my ass off. I had less time for Themba because he was also fixing his problems. My relationship with Andile was good. Emma and I were good friends. She was a nice person but she was more ghetto. And I liked that side of her because I wasn't familiar with it. Themba and I spent the June holidays on his house in Cape Town. It was so lovely just to spend quality time together. Our relationship was going strong and I tried by all means to control myself and stay out of trouble after all I didn't want to find myself taking an ice cold bath again. Samkelo was still mad at me because I didn't want to place the baby on a home. I didn't tell him that I knew his plans. I kept my distance from Sanelisiwe. I never tried to contact my dad again. I didn't want stress I tried and accept that I am dead to him though he wasn't dead to me. Themba never told me the whole truth about his past and I didn't push him.

It was July I was seven months pregnant. I was expecting a baby girl and Andile was happy that his guess was true. I didn't have a big big bump it was just normal. Themba put me on pregnant women support group in Durban North. They were teaching us a lot of things and sometimes Themba used to go with me. We were still taking piano lessons and I was good at it. I had no stress about anything because life was pretty good. The bad side about I decided to let it be and accept what God gave me. It was the 16th of July. Themba woke me up in the morning and he sang for me.

Themba: "Happy birthday to you... Happy birthday dear Mrs Smith... Happy birthday to you"

I smiled and kissed him. I broke the kiss, I looked at him and kissed him again. I broke it.

Me: Thank you.

Themba: Now stand up and take a shower. I am taking you out.

I smiled and stand up. I went to the bathroom and took a shower. I did all the necessities.

Themba gave me the outfit to wear. I wore brown jeans with a cream white shirt and a brown coat. Brown ankle boots stilettos. I had no weave on so I combed my hair and put on maroon lipstick. We finished and he drove to my flat.

Me: You said you're taking me out.

Themba: I am but there's something we need to take here first.

I nodded and we went through my flat. Everybody on it screamed "surprise" and they all sang "Happy birthday" I just smiled. But I was surprised to see some faces there. Themba's friends were there, Thobelani, Andile, Sanelisiwe, Samkelo, Edward, Mondli, Liam and Lizeka.

Me: Thank you so much. Themba told me that we were going out I didn't know that you're all here.

Emma: We had to be here for you Mrs Smith.

The others laughed and they all came to me. They gave me a hug one by one. Samkelo was unsure about it but I looked at him and he hugged me.

Sam: You look pretty.

Me: Thanks. And thanks for coming I suppose.

Sam: It's Okay. Happy birthday.

Me: Thanks.

He walked away and we went to sit down. There was a table set for everyone. And it was decorated. The food was looking good. We all settled down and Andile prayed. It was a self-service.

Emma: Ethan dish up for the birthday girl bro.

He laughed and dished up for me. He gave me the plate I smiled and kissed his cheek. We all ate.

Emma: So baby daddy where are you studying?

Sam:[clears throat] Um wits.

Emma: What are you studying?

Sam: Bcom Accounting.

Emma: You gonna be rich hey. Are you happy that you're going to be a father in two months?

Sam: Yeah I guess.

Emma: You guess?

Sane: Stop putting my boyfriend on the spotlight.

Emma: Shut up you bi- you woman. I am not talking to you.

Themba: I think you must drop this Emma.

Me: No actually I would also like to hear his response. [I looked at him]

Sam: I am not really part of the pregnancy so I don't know whether I am happy or not.

Emma: And who's fault is that?

Sam: If Thandeka didn't cheat on me with Edward-

Emma: Dude? You're still there? Come on bro you can do better than that.

Brandon: Bbe that's enough now.

Bheki: Yah Emmz we know that you care about Thandeka but you can't force the guy to get involved if he doesn't see the need.

Sam: I didn't say I don't want to be involved.

Me: And I don't want you involved either.

Andile: Thandeka??

Me: No Andile. I am tired of all this crap. Samkelo wanted to take my child away from me. Who does that?

Sam: You can't keep me away from my child.

Me: I can and I will. She'll be better off without you

Lizzy: Thandeka, this is-

Me: I didn't need your opinion. All of you please leave now!

Them: What?

Me: Yeah leave you've ruined my day Samkelo. And I hate you for what you were going to do to me and my baby.

Sam: I wasn't going-

Me: Save it. I don't need you. We both don't need you.

Sam: [standing up] Nothing you can do or say will keep me away from my child. If that means fight for her in court it's fine. I will be ready to take you on but you won't deny me the right of being a father to my child. You want her to grow up knowing this excuse of a man as a father than dream on Thandeka! Nxx!

He left after saying those words. I stood up and went to my room. I locked up and threw myself on top of my bed...

After some time of being alone, there was no noise around my flat. I thought about what Samkelo said. I didn't want to deny him his child but I was angry because he was going to do it to me. He was gonna deny me the right to be a mother to my own daughter. I wanted him to feel the pain he was going to make me feel. After a lot of thinking I stood up and I went to the lounge. I took a bowl full of grilled chicken pieces on the table and I went to sit next to Themba. His friends and Andile were sitting on my lounge.

Me: Why are you all here? I thought I said you should leave.

Emma: You know I wasn't going to do that.

Me: Smith who invited Samkelo and his girlfriend?

Themba: Your brother did.

Me: I knew it.

Andile: He wanted to come Thandeka so I told him to come. I didn't invite the girlfriend.

Me: He came all the way from Johannesburg just to ruin my day. Nx!

Andile: But you can't deny the guy a chance to be part of his daughter's life.

Me: My friend Emma please answer my brother. I am sure that you will give him the right answer.

Emma: [smiling] She must give him the taste of his own medicine.

Me: Thank you. He was going to take my baby away from me right? I was going to live knowing that my baby died or knowing that she went missing while Samkelo was going to see her whenever he wanted to. Do you think that's fair.

Andile: But revenge doesn't help.

Emma: But revenge is sweet isn't?

Me: It's sweet indeed.

Themba: Baby you have to let go of the past.

Me: No. Not yet maybe later. Ngeke ngdlale uSamkelo Mina.

Brandon: The baby deserve to know her dad.

Me: She will when I feel like it.

Bheki: I was going to say let him be part of the baby but that boy is disrespectful. How can he say Themba is an excuse for a man. Even if you deny him the baby forever I don't care and I won't blame you Thandeka.

Themba: He was just angry.

Emma: Ethan you're too soft. You're too soft bro! Argh. That boy disrespected you. And you're defending him. No man!

Me: And he come here telling me that he'll take me to court. It's fine than he must take me on. Nx!

Themba: You have to calm down Thandeka. Don't let this whole thing upset you. Remember what you learn in those classes. Just breath in and out.

I was angry, Themba held me and I took a deep breath in and I breathed out. He let go and I started eating the chicken.

Emma: Sorry for ruining your day chomie if I kept my mouth shut it was going to be a great day.

Me: No it's cool. But it can still be a good day if you all can leave now so that I can spend time with my boyfriend.

They all laughed and stood up.

Andile: I will see you tomorrow maybe.

Me: Okay bye Bhuti wami.

He kissed my cheek and I giggled.

They left. I laid my head on Themba's chest.

Me: Let's open this gifts.

Themba: Okay.

He stood up and took the gifts. I opened them. Emma bought me celtone and she wrote a card saying "to remove those stretch marks after birth. So that you can be sexy for Ethan. Lol HBD" I showed Themba the note and he laughed really hard.

Themba: She's crazy but she's telling the truth hey

Me: Really?

Themba: Come on bbe don't you want to be sexy for me.

Me: I want to my Smith. But there is a three months period so this celtone better work.

We laughed and opened other gifts. Brandon bought a silver bracelet with diamonds. Bheki bought diamonds knob earrings. My brother bought black sissyboy stilettos. Thobe bought a brown redbat leather jacket. Lizzy bought earrings. Sanelisiwe bought a necklace. Samkelo's box had a note written in bold." I AM SORRY FOR EVERYTHING. I LOVE YOU. HBD." I read it and placed it aside. I looked at Themba.

Me: Smith where is your gift.

Themba: I didn't buy you a gift this year. I will buy it next year.

Me: Oh okay.

There was a knock on the door. I stood up and I went to attend it. It was a delivery guy.

Me: Hi.

DG: Hey mam. I am looking for Thandeka Dhlomo.

Me: That's me.

DG: This is for you mem.

Me: Oh thank you.

I took the box and signed. I went back to the couch and I opened the box. It was an iPhone. I read the note "Happy Birthday, my baby. I love you" I felt tears forming and I let them out.

Themba took the note and read it.

Themba: It's from your father?

Me: Yeah.

Themba: That's nice bbe. He's trying.

Me: Yeah hey. And I am great full. So why didn't you buy a gift for me?

Themba:[brushing his head] I didn't know what to buy bbe I am sorry okay. I will buy it next year.

I nodded, I was just disappointed. I knew he wasn't lying that he didn't buy a gift for me. My phone rang while I was taking out my new phone out of the box. I took it and looked at the caller id. It was unsaved number. I answered.

Me: Thandeka speaking hello.

Man: Thandeka Dhlomo?

Me: Yes.

Man: It's Samkelo's father speaking.

Me: Oh. [I didn't know what to say]

Him: Samkelo told me about the baby.

Me: Uhm Okay.

Him: I would like to see you this weekend in my house.

Me: If I may ask Sir where do you live?

Him: Cape Town. I will deposit the money for you to buy a plane ticket.

Me: If I may ask. Why do you want to see me?

Him: I want us to talk about my granddaughter. You can't shut Samkelo out of the child's life.

Me: Oh.

Him: We must pay damages for the child.

Me: So that he can own the child?

Him: He has every right to own his child.

Me: Oh.

Him: But that's not the only thing we will discuss.

Me: I am listening Sir.

Him: He wants to marry you so I will pay lobola for him. He will pay me back.

Me: WHAT?

Him: My son wants to marry you.

Me: I heard that he wants to marry me. The thing is I don't want to marry him.

Him: Samkelo loves you and he wants to be there for you and the baby.

Me: I am sorry Sir but I can't come to your house.

I hung up the call and put it on top of the table. I sighed heavily. Themba was looking at me.

Themba: What's going on?

Me: Why didn't you buy me a birthday gift?

Themba: Eyi Thandeka man! I am asking you what's going on.

Me: That was Samkelo's father. He wants me to come to his house this weekend. He lives in Cape Town. They want to pay damages for Samke and Samkelo wants to marry me.

Themba: Oh that's nice. So are you going?

Me: I am not going to Cape Town. For what? I don't want to marry Samkelo. I love you and my life is here with you.

Themba: I love you Thandeka.

Me: I love you too Themba.

He kissed me and I kissed him back. We had the birthday sex on my bedroom. After that we took a shower together. And went back to my room to lotion.

Me: I still don't understand that why you didn't buy a birthday gift for me.

Themba: I didn't know what to buy Thandeka.

Me: You didn't know what to buy? There are plenty of gifts to buy. Even a box of chocolates would've been fine. You didn't have to buy Ferrero Roché or any expensive brand but anything would've been nice coming from you.

Themba: I am sorry okay. I will go and buy something later.

Me: No brah it's cool. There's no need for you to buy anything now. Just leave it like that.

Themba: Come on Thandeka. I will get you something.

Me: Even your friends bought nice gifts for me but you didn't. Mxm. Please leave after wearing your clothes.

Themba: Because of a birthday gift?

Me: Yes because of a birthday gift.

Themba: You can't be serious.

Me: Well I am dead serious.

He nodded. He wore his clothes while I wore my gown. He took his keys, phone and he left. I went to the kitchen and cleaned up. I put the food on the containers and I went to my lounge. I changed my phone and put the sim card on the new phone. I switched it on and I called the landline number of my father's house. Olwethu picked up.

Me: Hey.

Olwethu: Hey. Happy birthday.

Me: Thanks. Please tell my dad that I said thank you.

Olwethu: How did you see that the gift was from him?

Me: I know. Nobody could've said my baby to me besides him.

Olwethu: Oh okay. He didn't want you to know that it came from him. But I will tell him anyway.

Me: Uhm. Okay if he didn't want me to know that, then I guess don't tell him that I called.

Olwethu: No I will tell him. I miss you around here.

Me: If you miss someone you tell them or call them. You never call but now you say you miss me?

Olwethu: I am sorry about that. It's just that they took my phone away so I didn't know your number that's why I never called.

Me: Okay look I have to go.

Olwethu: Okay enjoy the rest of your day.

Me: Thanks you too.

I hung up the call. I decided to call Samkelo. He picked up.

Sam: Hello.

Me: Who do you think you're to me? You went to your father and told him that you want to pay damages for my child and you want to marry me?

Sam: Point of correction it's our child. I love you Thandeka and I don't know what must I do to show you that.

Me: You know what to do?

Sam: What? Tell me I'll do it.

Me: Just back off Brah. Buzz off!

I hung up the call and I tried to keep calm. I went to my room and I drank my medication for my stress level. It calmed me down, I then went back to the lounge and I invited Liam over for dinner. He was going to bring his new girlfriend. I decided to go and take a nap.

Around 7pm I woke up and went to the bathroom. I washed my face and I went to the kitchen to warm up the food. I placed it on my table. I took my phone and called Themba. He picked up.

Themba: Thandeka.

Me: I wanted to ask about this table and chairs. Who is the owner?

Themba: They will come tomorrow and fetch it.

Me: Okay thanks.

I hung up the call. After a few minutes they came over and we settled down. His girlfriend was pretty. We had dinner together and it was fun.

Liam: I got you a birthday gift.

Me: Really. Thanks hey.

I took the box and I walked them out of the door. We hugged each other and they left. I went to my bedroom. I was tired so I couldn't wash the dishes. I threw myself on top of the bed and I fell asleep immediately.

The following morning was a Friday. Monday we were going back to school. I woke up and went to the bathroom. I washed my face and I wore my gown putting my phone in my gown pocket. I started making breakfast for myself. While making breakfast there was a knock on the door. I went to the door and attended it. I opened the door but no one was on the door. I looked down and there was a goodies basket. I took it and I closed the door behind me. I went to the kitchen with it. I took the card and read it "Good morning my angel. I am sorry about not getting you a gift. I love you Mrs Smith" I smiled and put the card away. I look at the basket. There were a lot of yummy stuff, fruits and the large box of Ferrero Rocher chocolates. I smiled to myself. There was a spare key in a small box. I took my phone and called him. He picked up when I was about to hang up.

Me: Good morning.

Themba: Morning bbe how are you?

Me: I am okay and you?

Themba: I am still sad about what happened yesterday.

Me: What? The party?

Themba: No the birthday gift.

Me: Oh. It's okay. I wanted to say have a good day I love you.

Themba: Uhm. Mmm okay. You too have a good day I love you too.

Me: Sharp.

Themba: Uhm wait bbe?

Me: Yeah?

Themba: Did- uhm never mind. I will see you later.

Me: Okay.

I hung up and placed my phone on top of the counter. I knew he wanted to ask about the gifts. I was gonna thank him later. I finished with making breakfast and I ate it. After breakfast I washed the dishes and I cleaned up my place. The owner of table and chairs came. They took them and left. I took a bath, brushed my teeth, lotion and I wore my gown with panties and bra only underneath. I took the box of chocolates and I ate them while listening to music. My baby started moving and kicking. I giggled and brushed my tummy. "Uyakthanda ukudla wena nkawu" I said out loud. After eating half of the chocolate I fell asleep on the couch. I was woken up by a soft knock on the door. I stretched myself, yawned and stood up. I looked at the person on the door and it was Themba. I opened the door. He had roses on his hands. I smiled and gave him a hug.

Themba: Good evening.

Me: evening Smith how are you?

Themba: I am good and you?

Me: I am fine, come in.

Themba:[giving me flowers] One rose is for you and the rest is for the little Princess.

Me: Thanks. She will be happy hey. How was your day?

I went to the kitchen and put the flowers on the water, I went back to the lounge and I sat next

to him.

Themba: Pretty hectic. I know you were sleeping the whole day.

Me: The chocolates that you bought made me sleep the whole day. Thank you.

Themba: I thought they didn't deliver them you know.

Me: Just because I didn't say thank you in the morning?

Themba: Yes.

Me: Well I am saying it now.

He smiled and kissed me. His hands travelled underneath my gown and he touched my breasts. I giggled in between the kiss. He broke it and looked at me.

Themba: Bbe stand up please.

Me: Why?

Themba: Please.

I giggled and stood up. He looked at me and smiled. I smiled back.

Me: And then.

Themba: Take off your gown please. There's something I want to see.

I smiled and took off my gown. I was left with my bra and panties only. He smiled and held my hand making me sit down again. He kissed my tummy and I smiled. He kissed me again, I held his head and kissed him back. I unbuttoned his T-shirt with one hand. He went back on my neck, I closed my eyes and sighed as I felt at ease. He unhooked my bra. I took off the rest of his clothes.

Themba: Bbe stand up and kneel down here.

He spotted the spot and I stood up. He assisted me with kneeling down. He positioned me by putting my hands on the couch and he separated my legs by kneeling down in between them coming at my back. He kissed my neck and played with my breasts. I started moaning as he tried to insert himself inside me. He held my waist pulling me closer to him and started moving. Hitting my gspot in a way that made my head spin and I couldn't help but moan. He went on and on moving in circular motion, hitting every corner making each every moment of it special and accompanied by moans of pleasure until we climaxed. We sat on the floor and leaned against the couch resting our heads on it. We were both breathing heavily, he held my hand and I looked at him, giving him an "I am exhausted" look. He smiled at me. I smiled like a white person encountering a black person. He laughed at that.

Themba: You look tired.

Me: Duh! You\_\_ made me\_\_ aah\_\_yoh!

Themba: [laughing] Come we will take a shower and I will cook for you.

Me: There's plenty of food in the fridge. People didn't eat yesterday. And I don't trust my legs. I don't think I have the power to stand right now.

Themba: Let me take you to bed then. I hope I won't fall. Picking up two people at the same time. I laughed and he carried me. And put me in my bed. I looked at him.

Me: Bbe there was a key in a box.

Themba: It's yours. You don't have a key to my flat so I am giving you a key. I am not saying move in with me.

Me: [laughing] Uyaphapha yazi. But thank you.

He smiled revealing his dimples and he kissed me. He left the room and I fell asleep immediately.

I woke up the following morning. It was a Saturday. Themba was still sleeping. I took a shower and did all the necessities. I wore my white leggings and basketball T-shirt. I went to the kitchen and warmed up the food. I sat on the table and ate alone.

Themba: When you eat the food, you eat alone.

Me:[smiling] But when I eat?

He laughed and kissed me instead.

Me: You love walking around naked?

Themba: I am half naked. I am trying to turn you on by the way.

Me: [laughing] Sorry but it's not working.

Themba: Just give it time. It will work. We're going nowhere today. We will stay here. So give it time.

I smiled and he kissed me. He broke the kiss and sat down. He started eating too. He was wearing celvin Klien underwear only. I looked at him as he stood up and went to the fridge. I heard him laugh a little. I quickly removed my eyes from his behind.

Themba: Do you want anything to drink?

Me: [clears throat] No thanks.

Themba: okay.

He came back to the table, he took his plate and walked to the lounge with it. I looked at him, he stopped walking and I quickly focused on my food

Themba: Bbe?

Me: [looking up]. Huh?

Themba: You don't have to stare at me like that. You're making me scared. Like you want to rape me badly.

Me: [laughing] Just go away Smith please. There's nothing interesting to rape in you.

He laughed and walked away. I finished up and cleaned up the kitchen. Themba finished and we cleaned the rest of the flat together. We have already taken our bath so we just took the tub of ice cream and we went to sit on the lounge. We were watching a movie.

Themba: I think we should contact an agency and start looking for a nanny.

Me: Oh Eish but she will stay here with me.

Themba: No problem. She will have a cot in my flat too and a few things. Just in case you have exams. She will sleep in my place. Then the nanny can work overnight.

Me: You're the best you know?

Themba: Yes I know. [I laughed] bbe?

Me: Yeah?

Themba: You mean I haven't turn you on. I saw you looking at me

Me:[laughing] No you haven't.

Themba: So you mean I have to be butt naked right now.

Me: [smiling] That's a very good idea.

He laughed and stood up. I smiled as he was about to take off his underwear there was a knock on the door. He stopped.

Me: Lets ignore that please carry on.

Themba: You're dirty Thandeka go and attend the door.

Me: Go and put your clothes on.

Themba: No I won't.

Me: What if it's girls.

Themba:I am yours alone bbe.

I laughed and went to the door. I opened it.

Me: Huh? And then??

Them: Can we come in??

Me: Wait a little while.

I closed the door and locked it. I went to Themba.

Me: Smith we have visitors.

Themba: Visitors bbe?

Me: Yes, Samkelo, my brother and Sam's parents.

Themba: Argh oh.

Me: Please go and wear your clothes.

Themba: Do I really need to be here?

Me: Hello?? Yes you do.

Themba: But bbe why?

Me: Come on. I want them to see what a fine ass man that I am going to marry one day.

Themba:[laughing] Damn! I love you woman.

Me: I love you too.

He stood up and kiss me. I laughed in between the kisses because we were keeping people waiting outside my door. We broke the kiss.

Themba: Come and help me wear my clothes. Let's just keep them waiting for coming unannounced.

I laughed and I held his hand. We walked to my bedroom and I assisted him with wearing his clothes. He had clothes in my wore drop since I also had mine on his apartment.

Themba: Bayajwayela laba yazi.

Me: Big time. They disturbed us. I was going to see you strip for me.

He laughed really hard. I looked at him.

Me: Bbe people are waiting outside.

Themba: Okay I am sorry Mrs Smith.

He finished and we walked back to the lounge. He turned the TV on and sat on the couch. I went to the door and open for them.

Stepmom: Cha uyalindisana Ntombazane. (You can keep a person waiting)

Me: Sorry please come in. [They did] Sure skhokho Andile: [hugging me] Unjani Brah.

Me: I am fine wena?

Andile: I am top thokozile.

I laughed and followed him. They all sat down. I joined them. I didn't offer them something to drink because I wanted them to see that ngiyancintshana. (I don't give) meaning ngingaba inkinga kaMakoti.

Me: So how can I help you.

Sam: Before we start can your boyfriend excuse us. [Themba stood up. I held his hand]

Me: Umfice la so akayi ndawo. [He's going nowhere] Smith please sit down.

Themba: But bbe-

Me: For me please.

He nodded and sat down. I looked at them.

Nduna {sam's dad}: I guess you know why we're here.

Me: No Sir I don't know.

Sam's mom: Why didn't you tell me that you're pregnant?

Me: I don't have your phone number. I lost it. When I arrive in your house. You were not around and I couldn't stay because Samkelo was with his new ex girlfriend.

Stepmother: New ex girlfriend?

Me: Yebo. [Yes]

Sam's mom: Samkelo who is that?

Sam: Sanelisiwe mama.

Sam's mom: The one I know way back?

Sam: Yes.

Sam's mom: Argh you're dumb Samkelo man!

Nduna: Don't call my son dumb Thuli.

Sam's mom: He moved on to his ex after making a girl pregnant what do you call that? Clever? Smart?

Sam: Thandeka also moved on with these coloured guy.

Sam's mom: Is that the way you must call him? "These coloured guy" where are your

manners YOU BLACK BOY?? [I wanted to laugh]

Sam: I am sorry mom.

Sam's mom: You're saying it to the wrong person.

Sam: [looking at Themba] I am sorry man [he nodded qha]

Nduna: We have to talk about the baby and the well-being of the baby.

Me: What's there to talk about if I may ask?

Stepmother: You're rude you know.

I didn't answer her because the answer that I had in my mind was going to give her a heart attack.

Nduna: The child deserves to have a better home with both parents.

Me: What are you trying to say?

Nduna: All I am trying to say is you two must get married and look after your daughter. She is your responsibility.

Me: We don't have to get married to look after my daughter-

Sam: Our daughter.

Me: Yeah whatever. I can look after my child. And I am still 19yrs that I can get married. I don't have a family and I don't want to marry your son.

Stepmother: Can I have some water before you continue.

I smiled and stood up. I went to the kitchen and poured pure water in a jug not even juice but water. I went back to the lounge and gave it to her.

Her: Thanks. [I sat down]

Nduna: Your brother can take the lobola money and we can go to your mother's family.

Me: Not a bad idea but I don't want to get married to Samkelo. Maybe before I was going to be excited but now no I don't want to marry him.

Stepmother: Why?

Me: I am in love with Themba not Samkelo. Samkelo may be the father of my child but that doesn't mean that I should marry him.

Sam's mom: Ndunakazi that was a crazy idea from the first place. We should be talking about the baby not about them getting married. They are no longer dating for goodness sake.

Nduna: I won't force you to marry him but you can't keep the child away from him.

Me: He can see her if he wants to. But he must not think about taking her away from me forever because I will cut your throat I tell you. I can't lose my dad because of these baby and at the end of the day have you to steal her away from me.

Sam's mom: I will make sure that he doesn't do that. But I would like to help with the child since you're studying.

I looked at Themba.

Themba: Whatever you want I will support you.

Me: Okay. Uhm. That's very nice of you mama but I would like to raise her myself. She can come and visit you but I will stay with her here full time. We will hire a nanny for her.

Nduna: Who will pay for that nanny?

Me: You don't have to worry yourself about that.

Nduna: We must pay damages for her.

Me: No. Maybe you can when my dad comes around but if he doesn't don't bother yourself.

Nduna: You will use your surname on her?

Me: No. Her father's surname.

Nduna: That's better.

Me: Yes. So if that was all. You can leave now. Thanks.

Samkelo's mother laughed and stood up. She came to me and opened her arms. Themba assisted me and I stood up. We hugged each other and she kissed my cheek.

Her: We will keep in touch than baby.

Me: Thanks.

She nodded and smiled. Andile hugged me too. They all stood up. I walked them to the door. Samkelo's stepmother whispered to her husband "I am glad that she won't be marrying your son. She didn't even offer us an Oros squash" I laughed a little. Samkelo's dad looked at her. They all left. I closed the door behind me. I went back to the couch.

Themba:[laughing] Why didn't you offer them a drink and cakes or something.

Me: They were not here for that nje bbe. But I did that on purpose.

Themba:[laughing] Yoh! Thanks bbe for standing up for us like that. It really meant everything to me

Me: You mean everything to me.

Themba:[smiling] If I were to say marry me, would you say yes?

Me: To you I will say yes even now.

Themba:[kissing me] I love you.

Me: I love you too Smith.

AUGUST. I was eight months pregnant. I wasn't that fat and my tummy looked like I was still 7 months but my baby was just fine. Themba and I bought baby's stuff for Samke. Samkelo's parents [biological mom and dad] sent money in my account and I bought the cot for her. Themba assisted me with changing my room just to accommodate Samke's things. I also used my money that I had to buy a few things. Themba also changed his guestroom on his apartment to accommodate Samke's things. He bought those things using his money because I couldn't afford to buy things in double. Everything in my life was good though I missed my dad but life hey. Andile stole the wedding DVD for me and I watched it. They were really beautiful and I was happy to see that my dad was happy. My studies were going pretty good.

It was the 31st of August on a Saturday morning. I was sleeping until a knock disturbed my beauty sleep. I was so damn angry that I didn't even wear my gown. I was wearing Themba's big T-shirt and black panties only. I walked to the door with 180speed. I opened the door without checking that who was on the door. It was Samkelo, he was shocked to see me. I didn't know why but the look on his eyes said it all.

Me: Uhm Samkelo?

Sam:[clears throat] Um- Eh..

Me: Oh please dude. It's not like this is your first time seeing me naked. Why are you waking me up so early Samkelo?

Sam: I am sorry Thandeka but I thought we can go together to see a doctor today.

Me: I didn't make an appointment.

Sam: I made it for us.

Me: Samkelo you don't have the right timing. You always come at the wrong hour dude.

Sam: Please Thandeka.

Me: Come in.

He came in and sat down on the couch.

Me: When is that appointment?

Sam: 12oclock.

Me: Okay. Please make breakfast for me while I take a shower. You can count yourself in if you want to.

Sam: Okay I will.

I went to my room and took my phone. I called Themba. He didn't pick up. I tried again but he didn't pick up. I put my phone away and I went to the bathroom to take a shower, brushed my teeth and lotion. I wore a long maternity pink dress and black sandals. I tried calling Themba again but he didn't pick up. I was sad. I called Emma she didn't pick up too. I gave

up and joined baby daddy on the kitchen. He looked at me and smiled. I looked down and I pulled a chair. I sat down.

Me: Thanks.

Sam: My pleasure mama ka Alondwe.

Me: [smiling] That's her name?

Sam: Yes.

Me: It's nice hey.

He smiled. We ate in silence. We finished and he offered to wash the dishes. I went to my room and took my handbag. We left. Samkelo had a car, his dad bought it for him. Why? He wanted to make things easier for his son when he wants to see his daughter. We drove to the Doctor. We stood up when it was our chance to see the Doctor. The Doctor did all the procedure and she gave us the scan picture of our daughter.

Doc: You have to take it easy Thandeka. You can give birth anytime.

Sam: The baby is fine right?

Doc: Yes she's fine.

Sam: Thanks Doctor.

She nodded and I stood up. I cleaned myself up and we left the Doctor.

Sam: Your boyfriend said I must drive you to his place.

Me: He knew that you were going with me?

Sam: No but he called when you were cleaning up yourself.

Me: Okay. Aah [I held my tummy]

Sam: Thandeka are you alright?

Me: Um yes just drive.

Sam: Are you sure?

Me: Yes.

I was feeling some pains but they were not strong. I tried to keep calm. He drove to the mall first and bought a few things for the baby. I wasn't saying anything, he was picking everything himself. We went back to the car and he drove straight to Themba's place. The pains had stopped. I directed him but he drove like somebody who knew the place. And I was quite surprised. We arrived and he parked the car and stepped out with the plastic bags. I took other plastic bags and we took an elevator to Themba's room. I took out my key and opened the door. "Surprise" everybody inside Themba's flat chanted. I smiled and it was a baby shower. There was a banner written BABY SAMKE. The decoration was in Pink and white. Themba came to me and gave me a hug because I had tears of joy. I cried inside Themba's arms. He brushed my back and everybody was like "aaaa so sweet". I backed away because I mistakenly peed on myself. I looked down. Themba laughed.

Themba: Are you happy that much, you even peed on yourself bbe hhaybo. [Everyone laughed]

Me:[hitting his chest] It's not funny Themba.

Themba: Come let me change you bbe.

I placed the plastic bags down and I held his hand tightly as the pain I felt before was stronger.

Themba: Bbe are you alright?

Me: Yes.. Uhm. Let's go. No aaa!

Themba: Thandeka.

Andile: Samkelo call the ambulance.

Emma: Maybe that was her water breaking.

Me: [trying to breathe] But it's still early\_\_\_I am eight months. I peed on myself it wasn't waters. No I want to sit down please.

Themba: No no remember those classes. You must breath in and out.

I tried that but the pain was too much. I screamed.

Themba: We must take her to the hospital.

Sam: The ambulance is coming.

Themba: The ambulance will take forever Brah.

Sam: You want to drive with them? What if you cause an accident and kill my baby?

Themba: I won't kill my own girlfriend and her child damnit!

Sam: But you can kill my daughter?

Everybody was looking at them, listening to their argument while I was feeling pain.

Andile: Argh! My sister is in pain all this stupid behavior of yours won't help right now.

He grabbed my hand and walked out with me. I held his hand tight and breathed in and out.

He opened the door for me on his car. I stepped in. He drove like a mad man until we arrived at the hospital. It didn't take too long because Addington Hospital was not far. They attended

me while my brother was still doing some paper work. I was taken to the labor ward and I

changed my clothes. I was told to walk around because the baby was not near. I walked

around. I didn't sleep that night because of the contractions until I gave birth early in the

morning on the 1st of September. I gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. Every necessities were done and I fell asleep immediately because I was tired.

The following morning I was woken up by people who were talking. I opened my eyes and I

saw. Samkelo who had a baby on his arms, Andile, Emma, Brandon, Thobelani, Bheki and

Themba who was sitting on the chair holding my hand. He smiled when he saw me.

Themba: Hey mommy

Me: [smiling] Hey my baby. You look so grown up. Are you sure that I just gave birth to you?

Themba:[mimicking a baby's voice] Yes mommy.

Everyone laughed and he stood up. He kissed me.

Emma: Okay that's enough old baby.

We broke the kiss and laughed.

Me: Can I hold her?

Sam: Okay.

He gave me the baby and I held her in my arms. I smiled at her.

Me: Hello Owami.

She stretched out her tiny arms and I smiled.

Me: Mommy loves you Owami.

Emma: That's a beautiful name.

Themba: Yeah.

Me: Beautiful like me. [They laughed]

Andile: But her first name is Samkeliswa

Me: Duh? Andile.

Sam: it's nice Brah. [They shoulder hugged] Samkelo. Samkeliswa. Yah hey.

Me: Mxm niyaphapha.

Emma: Decide please.

Me: Okay. I will put this names on her birth certificate.

Them: Yeah.

Me: Samkeliswa, Owami, Alondwe Ndunakazi.

Brandon: They are nice.

Themba: I like Alondwe. [I laughed]

Emma: Who named her that one?

Me: Her daddy.

Emma: Mmm it's unlike him. It's a nice name hey.

We all laughed at that.

We spent two more days in the hospital. On Monday Samkelo left. It was a Tuesday morning I was going back to my flat. Emma was fetching me and Owami. She was using my car. I woke up in the morning and got ready. When I was done with everything I waited for her. She came with Thobelani.

Me: Morning guys.

Them: Morning

Emma: Let's get going.

I took my file, Thobelani took my bags and Emma took Owami. I went to the reception desk and did all the necessary paperwork. We went to my car. I sat at the back with my baby. She was asleep. She was so pretty. I kissed her slightly opened pink little lips. Wavele wahlina. I smiled. "You have attitude hey" I said out loud.

Emma: What is she doing?

Me: I kissed her lips wavele wahlina. [They laughed]

Thobe: Like mother like daughter.

Me: Really? Angihlini mina nje.

Emma: Let's just say you never notice yourself doing it.

I just laughed at that and I looked at my daughter thinking about all the things I went through because of her. Leaving my father's house and all the madness I have done.

Thobe: Don't cry skhokho.

Me:[wiping my tears] Argh I didn't realize that I am crying.

Thobe: She's adorable hey.

Me: Yes.

I smiled and we talked about general things. We made it to my flat. They assisted me transport my bags inside my flat. I went to my room and placed her inside her cot. I watched her sleeping and I just fell in love. "One good thing that came out of loving your father baby is you. Otherwise the rest is not right because I fixed his crazy ass but he left me for his new ex girlfriend. Imagine nje Owami. I love you" I said out loud looking at her.

Emma: Do you miss baby daddy?

Me: [looking at her] No I don't miss him. You know I was worried that maybe I loved Themba because I was pregnant but I still feel the same about him and I am happy with him.

Emma: Yah hey. Ethan is really a good guy. But he wasn't like this before. You're lucky that you found him like this. Though we all have a shady past but he made the best out of it.

Me: I guess good guys are made hey.

Emma: You can say that. We are all the product of our past experiences. And it's those past experiences that makes us the people that we are in our presence. For others they become bad and others good. Ethan was lucky enough to allow those bad experiences to make him the good guy that he is today. Otherwise if you found him in those bad times Brah. Maybe you were not going to survive.

Me: mmm I understand now.

Emma: If you look at me. I grew up in suburbs with rich parents but I ended up on the streets Brah. From suburbs little girl to a ghetto chick.

Me: But you have a good heart.

Emma: That doesn't take shit.

Me:[laughing] That's true.

Emma: Your friend is making some food. Let's go and eat.

I nodded and we went to the kitchen. We assisted Thobelani and we settled down and eat.

Thobe: So skhokho when are you going back to school?

Me: I will stay with her for a week. I am almost done with everything because the exam is just around the corner.

Thobe: Okay than if you need anything from your classmates just tell me I will ask them.

Me: Okay Dawg thanks.

Emma: How do you guys do it?

Us: What?

Emma: Like you're a boy and a girl but you're friends. I have never trusted such friendship.

Me: We do it like you do it with Themba.

Emma: Ethan is more like my brother. We grew up together. We hustled together. We are not friends but he's friends with the guys.

Thobe: Than I guess we were really meant to be friends.

Me: Good ones.

Emma: You mean you don't even have a little crush on her?

Thobe: Seriously I don't. From the first place I just wanted to be her friend nothing more.

Emma: Mmm I wish I can have a male friend too.

We laughed at her. After eating they left. I went to sleep because my baby was asleep.

The weeks went by I was still looking after Owami. The nanny came during the day to look after her the time I went back to school. She was a grown woman. I didn't have time to see Themba but we used to talk on the phone. My baby was a crying freak and I didn't sleep at night. She used to sleep during the day and I will make that time for me to study. And at night she would wail for hours. I even thought that maybe those hot and spicy food I ate had a contribution to her behavior. I went back to school and continued with my studies. I covered the things that I missed. Baby Owami was three weeks old and she was adorable.

It was Saturday morning. I had prepared everything for us. We were going to spend the weekend with Themba. I took the baby's bag and I took Owami. We went to my car. I buckled her on her carrier but putting her on her car seat because she was still young. I stepped inside the car and we drove to Themba's apartment. We arrived and he came down to get us.

Themba: Bbe.

Me: My Smith [we kissed each other]

Themba: Let me take baby Alondwe.

He took the baby and I took the bags. We went to his flat. I opened the door for him and he went through. He sat on the couch with Owami. I sat down with them.

Themba: You have lost some weight are you going to the gym?

Me: No it's the baby that made me loose weight.

Themba: But you're still beautiful.

I smiled and he came closer to my face. We kissed each other briefly. We broke the kiss.

Me: I love you.

Themba: I love you. [Looking at Owami] Hello baby Alondwe.

Me: You like calling her Alondwe, Why?

Themba: It's her name and I like it.

Me: Oh.

Themba: You don't want me to call her like that?

Me: I didn't say that.

Themba: So what are you saying exactly? You want me to call her Owami?

Me: Maybe.

Themba: Akayena Owami nje. Why should I call her Owami? [she's not mine]

Me: Oh I am sorry Themba.

Themba: Take her.

I took the baby from him and he stood up. I looked at him as he went his room. He slammed the door shut. Owami got a fright and she started crying. I gave her the mouth nipple and I took my bags. I stood up and I walked out of the door. I closed the door. I went back to my car, I buckled her on her carrier. I stepped in my car and I drove back to my flat with tears in my eyes. I didn't expect that kind of response from him though the baby isn't his. I continued driving, I wiped my tears

I arrived in my flat. Owami was asleep. I took her and her bags. I walked inside my flat. I opened the door and went to my room. I buckled her on her cot. I walked out and went to

close the door. I threw myself on my couch. I was really sad. I didn't want my baby to come between me and Themba but I wasn't going to force him into anything. If he didn't want us anymore I wasn't going to place a gun on his head and force him to want us. My thoughts were disturbed by my ringing phone. I took it, Emma was calling. I answered.

Me: Emmz.

Emma: Hey we are at Ethan's place I thought you said you're going to spend the weekend with him.

Me: Uhm I drove back to my flat.

Emma: What happened because even Ethan doesn't look fine?

Me: Argh it's nothing much Brah. Look I will call you later I have to attend this young lady here.

Emma: Okay bye.

Me: Bye.

I hung up the call. I placed my phone aside and I cried. I cried until I couldn't. I fell asleep on the couch. There was a knock on the door. I quickly woke up and I attended the door. I opened, Samkelo's mother was on the door. I smiled faintly and she hugged me.

Sam's mom: I am sorry to come unannounced but I was just around than I thought I could come and see my granddaughter.

Me: It's Okay. Come in.

Her: Are you alright? You sound so down.

Me: Argh yah I am fine. Maybe it's a little flue.

Her: Okay where is Alondwe?

Me: Uhm.. She's sleeping.

Her: Okay. I bought this things for her.

Me: Thanks.

I took the plastic bags and I packed the food on the cupboard. She went to my bedroom and I made a quick snack for her. She came back with Owami on her hands. She was awake. I placed the food and the drink on a tray. I went to her and placed it on the coffee table.

Her: Thanks. She is so adorable.

Me: Yes but when she cries that fades.

We laughed. I took the baby and I went to my room with her. I changed her diaper because she was wet. She started crying. I took her bottle and gave it to her. She sucked the milk out of it. I looked at her and smiled.

Samkelo's mother came inside my room with my phone. She handed it over to me.

Her: It's her daddy. [I took it and she left]

Me: Hello.

Sam: Hey how are you?

Me: I am good and you?

Sam: I am fine. How is Alondwe doing?

Me: She's doing fine. Though she keeps me up all night.

Sam: I am sorry for that. Can I come next weekend I just want to spend time with her?

Me: Oh Okay no problem.

Sam: Okay thanks I will see you two next weekend than.

Me: Okay bye.

Sam: Bye please kiss her for me.

Me: Will certainly do.

Sam: Thanks.

Me: Okay.

I hung up, I kissed her "that's from your daddy" I said out loud. and I went to the lounge. I gave Owami over to her grandmother. I left them and I changed my clothes and I wore

Themba's T-shirt only. I fell asleep immediately.  
I woke up later when Owami's granny was leaving. She came to my room and woke me up.  
Her: I am leaving now. It's getting late.  
Me: Okay thanks. Where is Owami?  
Her: She's with your boyfriend on the lounge.  
Me: Okay. When did he arrive?  
Her: Just a few minutes ago.  
I nodded and stepped out of bed. I hugged her.  
Me: Let me walk you out.  
Her: You won't wear any clothes?  
Me: I won't go out.  
Her: But still.  
Me: He's used to it so there's no problem.  
She laughed and I walked her out. She kissed Owami who was on Themba's arms. And I walked her out. I stood by the door and I waved goodbye.  
I closed the door behind me and I went to sit on the couch with Themba and Owami.  
Themba: She loves food.  
Me:[smiling] Yeah hey.  
Themba: I am sorry about what happened earlier. It's just that I can't help but think that maybe you will go back to her father maybe.  
Me: I won't do that to you Smith I love you and I am serious about that.  
Themba: And I love you too. I don't want to lose you. You're a part of me now. Living without you will be very hard.  
Me: You won't leave without me and unless if I die ke but I am here to stay. Samkelo is Samkeliswa's dad not my boyfriend or husband.  
Themba: [smiling] Okay. I am glad to hear that. Samke is lucky hey. She has two fathers.  
Me: Yeah. It's okay bbe you can have Alondwe. I was also just being dramatic. If you like that name than it's fine by me. After all it's her name.  
He smiled and kissed me...

Me: [we broke the kiss] You will sleep here with us today?  
Themba: Yes Mrs Smith I will sleep here.  
Me: Okay that's nice at least I will have some muscular arms wrapped around me tonight.  
He laughed and I took Owami from him. I went to bath her while Themba cooked dinner for us. I bathed Owami and I put her on warm clothes. I wrapped her with her blankets. I put her on her cot. I went to the kitchen leaving her behind. I washed her bottles.  
Themba: You left Alondwe alone?  
Me: Yes.  
Themba: Bbe she will cry.  
Me: Relax. I will take her when she cries. I want to make formula for her. And she must not get used to being on someone's hands.  
Themba: She has a mother so she must.  
Me:[laughing] I am not a full time mother Smith.  
Themba:[raising his hands up] Baby Alondwe I tried to defend you but your mother is a tough cookie to crack.  
I splashed water on his face. He splashed it back on my face. I laughed.  
Me: You will make my floor wet and you will fall.  
Themba: I won't fall.  
I laughed and we kissed each other. We broke the kiss when Owami started crying.  
Themba: I will take her.

Me: Okay thanks.

He left and I continued making formula for her. I placed her bottle inside ice cold water just to make it cool off. Themba came back with Owami. She was wailing. I took her and placed her on my shoulder. I walked around with her trying to calm her down. She wailed even louder that broke my heart.

Themba: Let me take her. I will go outside with her.

Me: Are you sure?

Themba: Yes.

He took her and walked out with her. I sighed and I cleaned up the kitchen. I dished up the food that Themba prepared and I walked out of the flat. I looked around for them but I couldn't find them.

Themba: We're over here.

He shouted. They were outside the premises. They were on the street. Owami wasn't crying anymore. Themba was standing with the security guard. I went to them.

Me: Sawubona baba.

Secu: Yebo ntombi ninjani?

Me: Siyaphila ninjani Nina?

Secu: Sikhona. Your daughter is beautiful.

Me: Thank you. Won't she catch the flu here?

Themba: It's not windy so she'll be fine.

Me: Okay.

We chilled with security guard until Owami was asleep. We said our goodnight to him and we went back to my flat. Themba placed the baby on her cot and we went to eat. We watched a few movies, took a shower together and we went to bed.

In the morning we were woken up by a loud bang on the door. I quickly stood up and wore my gown. I rushed to the door and opened. I was quite irritated. Andile was on the door. He looked like he was crying all night. He threw himself in my arms and cried. I was confused because I have never seen my brother like that. I held him tight and I cried too though I didn't know what was happening. We let go and we walked to the lounge. We sat down and I held his hand.

Me: What's wrong bhuti?

Andile: [his voice was covered with pain] It's Bontle sisi. Can you please come with me to the hospital.

Me: Okay. What happened to her.

Andile: She's sick.

Me: Let me go and talk to-

Themba:[from my back] It's Okay you can go. I will call Emma and we will look after Alondwe.

Andile: Thanks Brah.

Themba: Sho.

He walked to the kitchen. I stood up and I went to my room. I changed my pyjamas and wore black jeans, white vest and sneakers. I went to the bathroom I washed my face and brushed my teeth. I fixed up my hair. I took my phone, I kissed my angel and I went to Themba.

Me: Ngiyabonga Sthandwa senhliziyo yami.

He smiled and kissed me. We broke the kiss and we left off to the hospital with Andile.

He drove to City hospital. As soon as we got there we went to her ward and she was sleeping peacefully with a lot of pipes on her.

Doc: Are you family?

Andile: Uhm yes. These is her sister and I am her boyfriend. [I pinched him]

Doc: Okay where are your parents?

Andile: They live at Empangeni. We are here because of studying. Doctor what's wrong with her?

Doc: [sighed] She has the illness called Cerebral Amyloid Angiopathy.

Us: What??

Andile: What is that Doctor?

Doc: It's a neurological condition that makes a protein called amyloid to build up on the walls of nervous system blood vessels. It can cause bleeding into your brain and produce symptoms like headache, drowsiness and change speech.

Andile: So that's why she was always talking about things that never made sense. [Sighs] so Doctor is there a cure for this?

Doc: There's no cure for this illness but we were going to give her something that can keep her stabilized but there are side effects.

Me: You say we were, what's stopping you?

Doc: The medication can harm the babies.

Us: Babies?

Doc: Uhm. Yes. She's eight weeks pregnant and it's twins. So if we give her the medication we must get permission from the father of the babies and from her family. Because it can harm the babies.

Me: They are yours?

Andile: [with tears] Yes. She told me a week ago that she missed her period. We were planning on going to see the Doctor than this happened.

Doc: What must we do. We need to act soon.

Andile: We will let you know. I will call her parents.

He nodded and left. Andile couldn't stop crying and it broke my heart to see him like that. I was praying that they get their miracle.

We stood up and walked out of the ward. Andile called her parents and he called dad. They were going to come the following day.

Me: Let's go, we will come back later.

Andile: Yeah. I need to shower.

Me: They'll be fine Bhuti.

Andile: I pray. I can't imagine my life without her. 30th of October was going to be her birthday. I was going to propose [he cried]

I hugged him. And he cried. We let go and he wiped his tears. We stepped inside the car, he drove straight to my flat. We arrived.

Me: Please keep me updated.

Andile: I will do that. Thanks sisi.

I nodded and I stepped out of the car. I walked inside my flat. Themba's crew was in my flat.

Me: Hey guys.

Them: Hey.

Themba: Bbe are you alright?

Me: Yeah. Is Owami sleeping?

Themba: Yes.

Emma: Come and sit down. [I did]

Bheki: Mrs Smith you are not okay.

Me: My brother's girlfriend has incurable disease. She's carrying twins and the medication that they want to give her can harm the baby.

Themba: What disease is that?

Me: Argh I don't know Amyloid what what.

Themba: Cerebral Amyloid Angiopathy?

Me: Yes that.

Themba: Yoh!

Emma: It's bad Ethan?

Themba: Honestly very bad. The Doctors won't say it as it is but chances of survival for are slim. The medication they going to give her can crash her seriously. The side effects are bad.

Me: [I cried harder] She can't die Smith No!

Emma: Ethan!!!

Themba: [holding me tight] I am so sorry bbe. Let's just hope God will heal her but your brother must expect the worst. But don't tell him just pray Mam'uSmith okay? [I nodded]

Bheki: You'll be fine.

Brandon: Yah just go and sleep.

I nodded and I stood up. I took off my clothes and I threw myself on top of my bed. I fell asleep immediately.

I woke up late Owami was crying. Themba was calming her down. I stood up.

Themba: She is hungry. I just gave her the formula I think it wasn't enough.

Me: I will make another bottle. [I walked to the door]

Themba: You realize that you're naked.

Me: Your friends are still here?

Themba: Yes.

I took my gown and wore it. They were sitting on the lounge. Emma was not around.

Me: Where is Emma?

Brandon: She left. She had something urgent to attend to.

I nodded and I went to the kitchen. I made the formula for the baby. I put the bottle on the ice cold water. I went back to my room and took the baby. Themba went back to his friends. I gave her the mouth nipple and rocked her in my arms. She kept on crying that I ended up crying too. Themba walked in and gave me the bottle.

Themba: It's warm now. Just give her the milk.

Me: [wiping my tears and sniffing] Thanks.

Themba: Don't cry Thandeka.

I nodded and gave Owami her bottle. She sucked it and I looked at her. I smiled through my tears. "Uyeyisa wena ufuze leli khanda elingu baba wakho. You made me cry man!" I said out loud. She looked at me. I wiped her tears. She sucked the bottle until she fell asleep. I put her on her cot. I kissed her, "I love you" I said. I walked to the door but I couldn't continue with opening the door because I wanted to listen to the conversation that was going on between Themba and his friends.

Bheki: "She's a good girl but face reality Themba these is not your baby"

Brandon: "Bheki is right broe. What if she leaves you for her baby daddy?"

Bheki: "I suggest you walk away while it's still early."

Themba: "But I love her broe"

Brandon: "We know that and we know that she loves you but we are trying to protect you from being broken. We know you can be fragile sometimes"

Themba: "If I leave her I will break her heart"

Bheki: "she'll understand"

I walked away from the door. I went inside the bathroom. I cried. I didn't want to loose Themba but if he felt like I was a burden to him I had no choice but to let him go if he wanted go. There was a knock on the bathroom door.

Themba: Bbe what are you doing?

Me: [wiping my tears] Uhm I was just urinating.

Themba: Will you be okay?

Me: You're leaving? [I felt a big lump forming in my throat]

Themba: Yes but if you want me to-

Me: No it's cool Brah you can go.

Themba: Hhaybo Thandeka.

Me: Yini? [What?]

Themba: What's wrong now? Is everything alright?

Me: I am fine goodnight.

Themba: Goodnight. I lov-

Me: Please lock the door on your way out and push the key under the door.

Themba: Uhm. Oh okay.

I heard him walking away. I stood up when I heard that there was no one around. I went to the kitchen and I made something to eat. I ate and I went to my bed and I cried myself to sleep that night.

I woke up the following day was a Monday. I prepared myself for school. The nanny came while I was eating. I rinsed my bowl and I went to my room. I took my things and I left. Andile sent me a text that he was going to the hospital. Bontle's parents were already at the hospital. I drove straight to the hospital..

I arrived at the hospital and I saw Bontle's parents and my father. Bontle's parents were talking to Andile and dad. They were not shouting but they were not nice either. I stood behind them.

Bontle's mom:.... Your son made my daughter pregnant. Were you trying to destroy her future?

Andile: No that's not what I was trying to do.

Dad: He was going to take care of his kids himself if they were to live. Next year he's graduating.

Bontle's dad: I guess your kids are the best at making babies because your daughter is young but she has a baby.

Dad: Please don't insult my kids like that.

They clicked their tongues and left. I took a few steps close to Andile and dad.

Me: Sanibona.

Them: Yebo.

Me: How are you dad?

Dad:.....

Me: Oh How are you Andile's father?

Dad: I am fine and you?

I ignored him because I wanted to cry so bad.

Me: Andile?

Andile quickly stood up and gave me a tight hug. He let go and we sat down.

Me: Is there any progress?

Andile: No but they will go on with giving her that medication probably tomorrow. That means my babies won't survive.

Me: I am sorry bhuti.

Dad: You must go and rest Andile sitting here won't do any difference.

Andile: Yah. Thanks for coming dad.

Dad: It's Okay son. Let me go and find that Doctor.

Andile: Okay.

He stood up and looked at me but he didn't say anything. I also didn't say anything. He left. Andile and I stood up. We hugged each other and he left. I followed after him. I just drove straight to my flat. I couldn't stop thinking about my father, how he has no forgiving heart. It was painful but I wasn't going to force him to forgive me. Angikwazi ukuncenga. I arrived in my flat, the nanny was with Owami. I greeted her and I went to my room. I took my phone, I had no missed call or messages from Themba. I placed my phone aside, I took off my clothes, got inside the bed and I fell asleep.

I woke up later. It was dark outside. The nanny was leaving. Her name was Thobile.

Thobi: She's sleeping now and I have made her two bottles.

Me: Okay sisi thanks.

Thobi: There are two guys who are here to see you.

Me: Okay I am coming. Goodnight.

Thobi: Goodnight.

I stood up and I went to the bathroom. I washed my face and I brushed my teeth. I put on my gown and I went to the lounge. It was Brandon and Bheki. I sat down.

Me: Hi.

Them: Hey.

Me: How can I help you?

Bheki: We're here to talk to you.

Me: About?

Brandon: About you and Ethan.

Me: I am listening.

Bheki: We know that you love him but you come with a huge burden to him. A baby that is not his.

Brandon: And he's paying for the nanny, that money could be doing other things for him.

Me: I didn't ask him to pay for the nanny. He offered to pay for the nanny.

Bheki: And you thought that a good idea after he bought you a flat for you. Which makes me curious that do you really love him or are you after his money?

Me: What do you want from me?

Brandon: We've been friends with Ethan since we were young we don't want to see him getting hurt by you when you decide to go back to baby daddy. Because you will.

Me: I don't have to explain myself to you.

Bheki: We have seen bitches who claim to love him but only to find that they just want his money. And you! You're just one of them. You want him to look after your daughter with his money since you have nothing. No money and no family.

Me: You know what please leave. You want me to leave your friend? Fine I will leave him so please leave now.

Brandon: Good. Stay away from him.

Bheki: Bye.

They both stood up and left. I sat on the couch and I cried my lungs out. I was so hurt because I was seen like a gold digger. The last thing that I was. I decided to start cooking. I stood up and cooked a quick snack. I ate. I took Owami's bottles and I went to my room. I took a shower, brushed my teeth and lotion. I got inside my covers butt naked. I fell asleep in between my sorrows.

I was woken up by someone shaking me. I opened my eyes but the person was not in front of me. I felt a hand touching my waist. I got a fright and looked at my back. It was Themba.

Me: How did you get in here?

Themba: Ain't you Happy to see me?

Me: I asked you a question Thembaletu.

Themba: Your door wasn't locked. I woke you up because your brother was calling.

He gave me my phone and I took it. I called him back. He answered immediately.

Andile: [crying] They are gone. Thandeka they are all gone. My family is dead.

I didn't know what happened next everything went blank.

I woke up after I don't how long. All I could hear was just beeping sounds of machines. I opened my eyes and looked around. My brother was beside me. His hands were holding my hand.

Me: Andi\_\_le?

Andile: Thandeka you are awake? I thought I was going to loose you too.

Me: What happened?

Andile: [his voice had pain] Bontle and my kids died.

Me: [crying] The three of them Andile?

Andile: Yeah.

Me: I am sorry Andile. I am really sorry.

Andile: It's not your fault.

Me: Why am I here?

Andile: You had a panic attack and you passed out. Your body couldn't register the shock.  
[The Doctor came to us]

Doc: I see my patient is awake.

Andile: How is she doing Doctor?

Doc: Thandeka you are under a lot of stress and I am afraid that if you don't do something about it you will suffer from depression.

Andile: What can she do to minimize the level of stress?

Doc: She can go to the gym and work out. Surround yourself with people who love you. Eat healthy and avoid things that brings stress in your life. Think positive.

Me: How can I do that? Think positive? My father disowned me, I was told to stay away from the only man that I love with my everything. He's also having doubt about our relationship, I just lost my loving sister in-law and her kids. How can I thi-

The machine beeped even louder. Then the lights went blank.

I woke up the second time. It was in the morning. I didn't know of which day. There were people around me. Themba, his friends and Emma. Thobelani was also there.

Me: Where is my brother? my baby? Thobe.

Thobe: Your brother had to go and help Bontle's parents.

Me: Owami?

Thobe: Her grandmother took her.

Me: For how long have I been here?

Emma: You were admitted Tuesday. Today is Thursday.

Themba: [holding] Thandeka you have to stop stressing yourself. You have a daughter to think about. She still needs you.

I looked at him and I nodded. I thought he was going to say "I still need you too" but he didn't. Clearly he didn't need me. And that hurt me so bad. I felt tears streaming down my cheeks.

Emma: You still have your brother and me of course.

Thobe: Don't cry Thandeka.

Me: [sniffing] Can I be alone please. Thanks for coming Y'all.

Emma: Are you sure? [I nodded] Please don't do something stupid. God got you okay?

I nodded. I looked at Themba he was busy on his phone his one hand was still holding my hand. The others left but he didn't leave.

Me: Themba sorry I said I want to be alone. Please leave.

Themba: [he stopped typing] I am sorry I didn't hear that. I am trying to fix some crisis at work.

Me: Why don't you go there and fix it personally not on the phone?

Themba: Are you sure you'll be fine alone?

Me: Yes I am sure.

Themba: Okay let me leave than.

He stood up and left. I closed my eyes and prayed. I finished. I took my phone, it was inside my bag. I called Andile.

He picked up when I was about to hung up.

Andile: Sisi you're awake?

Me: Yes. When is the funeral?

Andile: This weekend.

Me: Okay I will call Samkelo's mother. I will sleep on her house. I don't think she will mind because my daughter is there too.

Andile: But you're still in the hospital Thandeka. You have to take it easy.

Me: No. I want to be there. And I am fine. I have you and my daughter to think about. My friends too.

Andile: Okay. I love you sisi.

Me: I love you too bhuti.

I hung up the call.

I called Samkelo's mother and she had no problem at all. I called the nurse to call the Doctor for me. I convinced him that I am fine. He discharged me. I was given medication. I took my bags and my file. I went to the reception area and I left the hospital. I took a taxi straight to my flat. I arrived, I made something to eat for myself and I packed a few things for myself. I took a shower. Did all the necessities and I wore blue jeans dress and a white elbow coat. I wore white sandals. I combed my hair. I took my USB drive and my bags. I left, I drove straight to DUT. I printed my CV and my final assignments. I met up with Thobelani by Steve Biko campus.

Thobe: Are you sure that you'll be fine?

Me: Yes skhokho. Look here is my CV. Please go to steers by Musgrave. Give it to a girl named Nokuthula Khuzwayo.

Thobe: Please write that down.

He gave me a pen and a paper. I wrote the name and the number. I gave it to him.

Thobe: Okay I will go today after my last class.

Me: Thank you. Bye.

We hugged each other. I drove to Ml Sultan and I submitted my assignments with the Doctor's note because the due date had passed. After submitting I drove straight to Empangeni...

I arrived kwa Samkelo around 17:00 something. I took my bags and I knocked on the door. I was told to come in. I opened the door and went inside the house. Samkelo, his mother and his sisters were on the lounge. Samkelo had Owami on his arms.

Sam's mom: Nangu ke umama wengane Melokuhle. [Here's the mother of the child]

They both stood up and ran towards me. I hugged them both.

Melo: Sawubona mama ka Alondwe.

Me: Hi Melokuhle how are you?

Melo: I am fine and you. [We sat on the couch]

Me: I am fine. Simthande are you fine?

Simtha: Yes. Sisi. Alondwe is your daughter?

Me: Yes she's my daughter.

Melo: You're her mother and Bhuti Samkelo is her father?

Me: Yes and you are her aunts. [They smiled]

Melo: But you are not old. Why did God give you two the baby?

Sam: You-

Melo: I am not talking to you bhuti.

Me: [laughing] He saw that we will love baby Alondwe like adults.

Them: Oh.

Me: Ninjani mama?

Her: I am fine dear. I am sorry about Bontle. It's really sad.

Me: Yeah hey. But let's hope God has a plan.

Her: Yes baby he always does.

Sam: Can you please take her Thandeka. My arms are tired now. [I looked at him]

Me: She's your daughter so don't complain. I am always with her. Now is your turn. Haa usile bo!

His mother laughed really hard that she had tears.

Sam: Mama you're laughing?

Sam's mom: I am just surprised that you're tired. I pay for your gym monthly payment but you're tired because you held your daughter for a few minutes.

Sam: She's heavy.

Me: More than those things you lift?

Sam's mom: Hold that baby wena. Come Thandeka let me show you the room you will use.

Sam: Hawu they won't sleep with me?

Me: Don't push me Samkelo ngoba ngizowela phezu kwakho kabi. [Because I will fall on top of you bad]

Sam: Fall on top of me and we will have Samkelo junior this time around.

Sam's mom: Samkelo!

Sam:[smiling] I am just trying to make her see what can happen if she choose to fall on top of me.

Sam's mom: So you fell on him the last time and boom there was Alondwe.

Samkelo and I laughed at her.

Her: No don't laugh Thandeka I am serious here.

Me: No I didn't.

Her: What happened pho?

Sam: Mama??

Her: I am just asking.

Me: I mistakenly stumbled and fell on him.

Her: [laughing] come let's go please.

I laughed and followed her. She showed me the room and I placed my bags down. I went to the bathroom and bathed. I lotion and wore my pyjamas. I put on my gown.

I went back to the lounge. Melokuhle gave me food. I ate and washed my plate. I went to the bedroom and I took my medication. I went back to the lounge.

Me: I will sleep now. I am kind of tired.

Sam's mom: Okay dear. We will bring her when she's asleep.

Me: Thank you.

I went back to the room and I fell asleep immediately. I was tired as hell. I woke up later when Samkelo was buckling Owami inside the bed covers.

Sam: I am sorry to wake you up.

Me: It's cool. Where are her bottles.

Sam: I placed them on your bedside table.

Me: Okay thanks.

Sam: [sitting down] I heard that you were in the hospital. I am sorry about that. But you're fine now right? [I sat up straight]

Me: Yes I am fine. Thanks.

Sam:[ holding my hand] I am sorry Thandeka. I know that you're in this position because of me. I wish I could turn back time I would've listened to you. But I still hope that one day you will come to me. I still love you and I will forever and always love you.

Me: I know that you love me. But we can't turn back time. We just have to be there for our daughter though we are no longer in a relationship

Sam: Yeah. You're right. Goodnight Mama ka Alondwe.

Me:[smiling] Goodnight baba Ka Owami.

He smiled, he baby kissed me and kissed my forehead. He kissed his daughter and he left. I pulled the covers and fell asleep.

I was woken up by my phone ringing. I took it and answered without checking the caller ID.

Me:[sleepy voice] Whoever you're I am sleeping.

Themba: I am sorry to wake you up. I went to check up on you on the hospital. But you were not there.

Me: I left the hospital for the funeral

Themba: And you didn't think about telling me.

Me: You don't need me nje wena.

Themba: Wo said that?

Me: Why did you talk about my daughter needing me but you didn't count yourself in?

Themba: Hawu. I am sorry sthandwa sami. It's not like that serious. I am sorry.

Me: I know you having doubts about our relationship Themba because of my child. I don't know what you want me to do because I told you that I won't leave you for Samkelo. You want me to do a documentary film about that?

Themba: No Thandeka. I don't have doubts.

Me: You're lying. You're lying Themba. I heard you talking to your friends.

Themba: Uhm...

Me: Yeah. "If I leave her I will break her heart" meaning you've been considering to leave me vele angithi?

Themba: I am sorry bbe. I love you there's no Smith without you.

Me:[crying] I won't break your heart intentionally Smith I love you with my all but you don't trust my love. Samkelo is the father of my child I love him yes but I am in love with you. I want to spend the rest of my life with you. If you want to leave me I will understand but don't pull a cold face on me.

Themba: I am so sorry Sthandwa senhliziyo yami. I am really sorry. I won't give up on us and I love you nothing will change that. I was just scared I am sorry. I will come to the funeral on Saturday.

Me: Okay and you have to know that I am sleeping at Samkelo's crib since I couldn't go home. You know my situation.

Themba: Is Samkelo there?

Me: Yes but I am sleeping on a guest room with my daughter not with him.

Themba: Okay. I trust you. I will see you Saturday. Goodnight Mrs Smith. I love you.

Me: Goodnight. I love you too my Smith.

Themba: Kiss me through the phone.

Me:[giggles] Mncwaa.

He laughed and made the sounds back. We hung up the call. And I fell asleep with a smile on my face just for once in between my sorrows one thing was right.

Saturday I woke up and prepared myself for the funeral. I wore a formal black and white dress. I wore a black coat, black pumps since I was going with baby Owami. I tied up my hair. I took Owami's bag and my bag. I buckled Owami on her carrier. We were going with Samkelo and his mother. His sisters went to their father's place. I was driving with my daughter. Samkelo was driving with his mother. We drove straight to church. Before I went through the church. Themba called.

Me: Smith.

Themba: I am inside the Church but you're not here.

Me: I am right outside. Where are sitting?

Themba: I am at the back, you will see a very cute coloured, that's me.  
I laughed and hung up the call. I took my daughter and her bag. I walked inside church. I saw Themba and his friends. Brandon and Bheki looked at each other than back to me. I looked away. I went to them and I sat next to Themba.

Themba: Let me take my stepdaughter.

I gave him the baby and I concentrated on the service. People spoke good things about Bontle. I saw my brother, he was in front with Bontle's family. He was very broken. My dad kept on brushing his back. I cried because it was painful. Emma held me close to her and I cried inside her arms. The church service was over and we had to go to the graveyard. Everyone drove their cars. I was driving with my daughter and Themba. We arrived at the graveyard. I took Owami and I walked with her to the graveyard. Themba followed us. There was no place to sit down so I had to stand on my feet with her. Olwethu came to me.

Olwethu: Hey. Let me take her. I will sit down with her.

Me: No it's fine I will just stand.

Themba: Just let me take her like I did earlier.

Me: Thanks for your offer Olwethu.

She nodded and left.

Themba: [whispering] She is the one who replaced your position?

Me: Yes.

Themba: Mmm.

We concentrated on the service. Bontle's body was finally buried, the babies were not mention because they were still growing inside but they died.

We walked out of the graveyard.

Themba: When are you going back to Durban?

Me: Tomorrow.

Themba: I didn't come down with my car here.

Me: You are riding with your friends?

Themba: Yes I thought-

Maud: [at our back] Sawubona Thandeka can I talk to you?

Me: Why?

Maud: Please.

Me: Please buckle Owami inside the car. And stay with her Smith.

Themba: Okay mam.

I gave him my car keys. He walked away.

Maud and I stepped aside.

Maud: I see you found yourself another man?

Me: Is that why you called me here?

Maud: No. How could you embarrass your father like this. Come to this funeral with your daughter.

Me: The last time I checked I didn't have a father.

Maud: I wasn't going to cope with you as my stepdaughter. You're so disrespectful.

Me: I promoted you gogo Maud. I made you so I can break you anytime if I feel like it.

Maud: [laughing] You made me? I made myself dear.

Me: If I liked Nomsa. You wouldn't have gotten a chance to be Mrs Dhlomo. I made you Mrs Dhlomo. Remember that little date you went to with my dad. It was all a set up. I used you to get rid of Nomsa. At first I was happy but now I wish Nomsa didn't leave.

Maud: You did a good job. At least my daug- my sister's daughter will make a perfect daughter.

Me: Enjoy the seat while you can because your days are so numbered gogo Maud.

I left her and I walked straight to my car.

I saw Olwethu at a distance. She was carrying Maud's things. I went to her quickly while Maud was talking to some old lady. I grabbed her by arm and looked her straight in the eye.

Me: Mind telling me your real mother?

Olwethu: My what? [Shocked]

Me: Your r-e-a-l mother dear and don't you dare play smart with me!  
She swallowed hard....

Olwethu: My\_\_My mother died.

Me: [laughing] May her old soul rest in peace. So dear how does it feel to be Fakendeka?

Olwethu: What is that?

Me: [I looked at her up and down] Your mother sure did try to make you my copy. You'll never be me.

Maud: [from our back] Leave the poor child alone.

Me: Mama ka Olwethu chill. You don't have to be dramatic.

Maud: [shaky voice] Leave us alone.

Me: Mother and daughter hey. You surely made it to the top.

Dad: [joining in] My wife can we please go.

Me: Oh let me leave you family. My daughter needs me. [I attempted to walk away but I turned back] Oh and [they all looked me] Baba ka Andile watch your back. Have a good evening family bye.

I gave them the white person encountering a black person kind of smile and I left.

I went to my car. Themba's friend were with him outside my car. Emma had my daughter on her arms.

Me: Can I take her?

Emma: Yeah sure. [I took my daughter]

Themba: Bbe her grandmother said I must tell you that you will meet her at the house. She won't go kwa Bontle.

Me: Okay I am not going there either.

Emma: Your brother?

Me: He knows that I can't go there so yah.

Bheki: We should go now.

Me: Uhm. Oh thanks you guys for coming.

Them: It's cool.

Me: Smith are you driving with me?

Themba: Are you going back to Durban now?

Me: Yes bbe. I have a new mission that I have to work on.

Themba: I hope that's working on your exams.

I laughed and I buckled Owami on her carrier. I hugged Emma and they left. Themba took the driver's seat. I sat at the back with my daughter.

We drove to Samkelo's place while listening to slow jam. I was slowly drifting off until we arrived. I stepped out of the car with my daughter. Themba stayed behind. I went through. I didn't knock. They were sitting on the lounge.

Sam's mom: Look who's back. Granny's little angel

Me:[giving her the baby] Mama thank you for letting me stay in your house. But I have to go now.

Her: It's late now. You can't drive alone with the baby.

Me: Themba will be driving don't worry.

Her: Okay.

I nodded and I stood up. I went to the room I was using. I took all my things and other things that belonged to Owami. I went back to them on the lounge. Samkelo took Owami, I said my

farewell to his mom and Samkelo walked me out.

Sam: I will call you some other time if I want to spend time with her.

Me: Okay no problem.

I opened the door and he buckled her on her carrier. I put the bags on the back seat.

Sam: Have a safe journey than. Take care of my daughter.

Me: Thanks. She's my daughter too so chill.

He smiled and he hugged me. He kissed my cheek and he left.

I stepped inside the car. At the backseat with my daughter.

Themba: So tell me about your new mission Mrs Smith.

Me: I need a private investigator bbe.

Themba: What for?

Me: I need some background information on my father's wife. I think I might have a way to pay back for myself after she replaced me with her daughter.

Themba: The girl is her daughter?

Me: Yes she mistakenly told me that.

Themba: Mmm. I will definitely find a P.I for you bbe. These woman must start getting uncomfortable.

Me: Yea because I am about to make her seat hot and I will make sure that no woman must ever take the title of Mrs Dhlomo after her. My mother was the only Mrs Dhlomo and she'll forever be.

Themba: Mmm mmm. Like you'll forever be Mrs Smith?

Me:[laughing] Forever be bbe.

We laughed. And my mind travelled way back when I was scheming up with Olwethu on finding a way to hide that we were no longer virgins. I thought about the day she struggled to walk after having sex with Thobelani, something about that made my mind think about a lot of things. I took my phone and called Thobelani. He picked up immediately.

Thobe: My friend.

Me: Skhokho. Do you remember fucking Olwethu so hard that day that she even struggled to walk?

Thobe: [laughing] Yes I remember. Why?

Me: That walk got me wondering about, what size do you posses? [ Themba looked at me]

Thobe: Hahaha Do you want to see it? Or you want to test it maybe?

Me: No I don't want it for myself. Smith's size is enough for me [Themba laughed] But I want to ask you a question.

Thobe: [laughing] Okay.

Me: Why did you fuck her that hard that you even crippled her legs a little and made her walk funny like a inexperienced clown?

Thobe:[laughing] Uyeyisa Brah. But she had a hard cookie to crack.

Me: Are you telling me what I think you're telling me?

Thobe: Yes. She was still a virgin. I am not talking about a QO vagina my friend. I am talking about a pure virgin. Why do you think it was hard for me to let her go? I was her first.

Me: WOW!! MAUD! MAUD! thanks.

I did a small evil laugh and I hung up the call..

We arrived in Durban at night. We went to Themba's place. Themba made something to eat while I bathed Owami and I put on her warm sleep wear. I gave her the formula, she fell asleep and I went to buckle her cot in her room. I went to the kitchen and we ate with Themba.

Themba: So what are you going to do?

Me: I will torture them for a little just to make them sweat. While I gather all the information

I need.

Themba: You will threaten them with information?

Me: For now yes bbe.

Themba: They will loose weight bbe.

I laughed and I stood up with my plate. I took his and I washed them. I cleaned the mess he did and we went to his bedroom. We took a shower together. And did all the necessities. We prayed together and we got inside the bed covers. Themba played with my hair. I was slowly drifting off.

Me: Themba Smith goodnight I am tired.

Themba: Goodnight bbe.

We kissed each other and we both took a plane to dreamland.

The following day was a Sunday. We woke up and prepared ourselves for church. We drove to church and the church service was good. After church Themba went to his friends and I went to the car with Owami. My phone rang and I picked up.

Me: Miss Khuzwayo.

Noku: Hey Thandeka. Please come tomorrow morning at 9am. You will meet up with the manager to discuss a few things before you start working since you're still studying.

Me: Wow! Dude Thank you so much Nokuthula I owe you that much.

Noku: It's Okay dear. Kiss your little one for me.

Me: I will, have a wonderful evening.

Noku: Thanks you too.

We hung up the call. I called Olwethu. She picked up almost immediately.

Olwethu: What do you want?

Me: Oh is that the new way of greeting people.

Olwethu: Thandeka please don't tell your father.

Me: Tell me baby does mother dearest knows that you're no longer a virgin. A boy named Thobelani took your virginity.

Olwethu: Uhm.. Aah..

Me: Yes Olwethu you played me for a fool. You played your cards right neh. Let's see if this time around if you'll do the same.

Olwethu: Please don't tell my mother about my virginity she will kill me.

Me:[Laughing] Enjoy being Fakendeka while you still can my love. Have a wonderful evening.

I hung up the call as I saw Themba getting inside the car. He drove straight to my flat because I had to make time for my books as the exams were approaching us. We arrived in my flat. He assisted me with transporting my things. He called a cab for himself because he was driving my car.

Themba: Please don't let your mission make you forget about your studies okay?

Me: Yes.

Themba: Good study and make me and your brother proud. Here is the number of the P. I. You won't pay anything because he owes me a favor.

Me: Thank you bbe.

I kissed him and he left. I called my brother. He picked up.

Andile: Joy.

Me: Patrick how are you?

Andile: I am fine. Thanks. I saw you yesterday and your boyfriend.

Me: Yeah I am sorry I left early.

Andile: No problem. I am on my way back. I will see you tomorrow?

Me: Yes. I love you.

Andile: I love you too.

I hung up and called the P.I. he told me to email him the details and the pictures. I gave him every little piece to help on his investigation. I then started studying because Owami was asleep.

Monday I went to steers and met up with the manager. I was going to work night shifts during the week and day shifts on Saturday. Sunday I wasn't working. I was going to pay overtime myself for the nanny. So it was a Friday after my last class. I was meeting up with my P. I guy at Musgrave center.

P.I: From my findings. Maud Zulu was living at Umlazi. She has two daughters according to her neighbor. Charity and Olwethu. She moved from Durban to Richards bay because she got a job in your father's house of course.

Me: Mmm.. Charity too is her daughter.

P. I: Her husband died. She has a lot of debts. And your father is her ticket to remove all the debts.

Me: Can you please visit the Empangeni side and find out what she's been up? I can pay if you have-

P.I: You don't have to pay. Themba must've told you that I will do anything you need. I will dig enough information that will help you get rid of her. She knows your late mother?

Me: Yes. She started working for us when mom got sick. She was loving and caring but now she's something else.

P.I: I will go tomorrow to Empangeni. Maybe next Wednesday I will come back with a better information.

Me: [shaking hands] Thank you so much.

P.I: My pleasure.

I paid the bill then we went our separate ways.

After the meeting with the P. I, I drove back to my flat. I was going to prepare myself for work. I arrived in my flat Andile was there playing with Owami.

Me: Hey bhuti.

Andile: Hey. This little girl is growing up fast hey.

Me: Yes. She is. And she's heavy now. Sis Thobile said I must start feeding her porridge. Imagine how she will be?

Andile: She'll be fat.

Me: My baby won't fat. She'll be curvey like her mother.

Andile laughed. I went to my room and I changed. I wore my uniform. I took my bag and I went to the lounge.

Me: Where is sisi Thobile?

Andile: I told her to leave because you'll come back.

Me: Andile brah! Are you mad. I am going to work Mina nje manje.

Andile: Work? You're working for steers?

Me: Yes and I need to go now.

Andile: I don't like that. It's not like you're desperate for money. I don't like it.

Me: Yeah that what happens when you don't have a father. You better call her and tell her to come back I am leaving bye.

I quickly walked out of the door. Leaving him behind. I drove straight to work.

I arrived at work and I checked in. I started working. As I was working I saw Emma and Brandon.

They were coming inside steers. They didn't see me because they were looking at each other. I

quickly hide under the counter. I was praying and hoping that they could order takeaways and indeed they ordered takeaways. I didn't want them to see me because I haven't told Themba about my job but I was going to though he wasn't going to like it.

Noku: Stand up they are gone.

Me: Hweeeh! Thanks.

Noku: Why are you hiding?

Me: They are my boyfriend's friends.

Other girl: Your boyfriend is friends with coloureds

Me: He is coloured.

Other girl: I will never in my life date a coloured guy. Rian was evil. He was abusive. I killed him and buried him at the back of our house.

Me: You're lying!

Other girl: I am serious. He was my boyfriend of 7 years. I was tired of him beating me up. I bought a gun and I killed him.

Me: The police?

Other girl: You know they can be useless. He was reported missing. But I knew that I killed his flat ass. [We laughed though it wasn't funny]

Noku: Yoh! Here's your customer Thandeka.

I attended my customer and we continued talking and working until our shift ended.

I was super tired. I drove straight to my flat in a very slow speed. I arrived and I dragged my feet to my flat. I opened the door, the TV was on and I turn on the light. I got a fright of my life when I saw Themba sitting on my couch watching TV.

Me: Uhm...Themba?

Themba: Where were you?

Me: Bbe I- how did you get in here?

Themba: Thobile opened up for me. And you were not here. You come back wearing steers uniform. What's going on?

Me: I \_\_\_ I work there.

Themba: And you didn't bother to tell me because?

Me: Themba I don't want to depend on you and my brother. That's why I started working.

Themba: [standing up] Do you think I want you to depend on me? Do you think so?

Me: I don't know.

Themba: I don't want you to depend on me, that's why I want you to study and pass. How can you manage the baby, work and school work. Do you think all this things will pass?

Me: I can do it.

Themba: How? Because uThobile told me that you hardly spent time with your daughter. She's more like a full time nanny because every night you go to work. You like keeping secrets hey?

Me: Come on Themba it's not like you don't have secrets. You have your own secret past.

Themba: Oh so you're keeping things away from me because I never told you about my past? Is that what you're to say Thandeka?

Me: No.

Themba: So what are you trying to say exactly?

I didn't answer him. I just looked down.

Themba: I guess there's no answer for that one. Your brother and I had no problem with taking care of you. Samkelo's parents buy things for Alondwe. Two things you should be focusing on is your daughter and your studies. Because it's not like you're poor or desperate for money. Two things must happen. It's either your daughter and studies or studies and work. Or Work and your daughter. You have to choose one combination or I will choose for you because you struggle to think straight. He then took his car keys and left me puzzled. I slowly dragged my feet to my room. Because Themba seriously ungiphoxe ngahamba kancane. My daughter was sleeping. Thobile was not around. I took out my phone and switched it on. I had two voice messages.

1st" Hey Thandeka it's Samkelo month end I will come and spend time with Alondwe since I didn't that weekend. Kiss her for me. Goodnight"

2nd" Monday I am coming back. Some people just make my job very easy. I think you gonna like this. Goodnight "

I put my phone on my charge. I took a shower and I went to bed naked. I fell asleep immediately.

The following morning was a Sunday. I woke up and took a bath. I brushed my teeth and I went back to my room to lotion my body. I wore a short blue dress and my slippers. I took my phone, Owami's bottles and I went to the kitchen. I washed the bottles and prepared formula for her. I took my phone and called Nokuthula. She picked up on third ring.

Noku: You're late for work.

Me: Please report me sick. And I need a favor.

Noku: I am listening.

Me: Please find someone who will take my position. I won't be coming back to work.

Noku: Your boyfriend found out that you're working?

Me: Yes and he wasn't happy about it. I will see you around. Thanks for helping me.

Noku: Okay dear bye.

I hung up the call and I made breakfast for myself. Owami woke up and I went to her. I bathed her and put her on clean clothes. I gave her formula. We chilled on my room for the rest of the day. Just the two of us until she fell asleep. I took blankets and I wrapped her nicely. I took my sketching board and the pad. My other drawing tools and I drew her up as she was peacefully sleeping. I finished drawing her up and I put away everything.

I went to cook dinner for myself. While I was busy cooking there was a knock on the door. I went to the door and opened. Themba and his friends were at the door.

Me: Hey guys. Come in.

They all came in. Emma hugged me. They sat on the lounge and I went to my room. I took off the dress I was wearing because it was short. I wore navy jeans and a white shirt. I went to the kitchen and I got them drinks and cakes. I went to them.

Me: So what is the special occasion.

I sat down on the single couch. Emma looked at me. I looked at her with "what's going on" look.

Emma: Why don't you sit next to Ethan today?

Me: Hawu Emma.

Emma: No I was just asking because you always do that every time, we're here.

Themba: Emma please.

Emma: Okay.

Brandon: By the way we're here to apologize to you Thandeka.

Me: Apologize?

Bheki: Yeah. The other day when we visit you and told you to leave Ethan.

Me: Oh.

Themba looked at me and I looked away.

Emma: They were just talking crap. If Ethan wants to take care of Alondwe. It's non of their business and it his money not theirs.

Me: I suppose they were looking out for their friend. I mean you can't blame them maybe I do look like a gold digger.

Emma: Stop defending them Thandeka. And stop working your ass off like a dog. You have a brother and a good guy here let them take care of you please Brah. I don't want you to die because of depression. I love you and I have found a friend in you. Clearly Brandon was also trying to push you away from me.

Brandon: No bbe it's not like that. Thandeka I am sorry just that it's kind of hard to believe that Ethan has found the good girl because he has never had a good girlfriend where else He's been a good guy.

Me: I get you. Look no grudges hey I forgive you.

Them: Thanks. [They looked at Themba but he was just quiet]

Me: Let me go and check my pot.

I stood up and I went to the kitchen. I checked up on my pots.

Themba:[from my back] Are you Okay?

Me:[turning back] Yes I am fine and you?

Themba: I am fine. Why didn't you tell me about Brandon and Bheki?

Me: I didn't want to cause a conflict between you and your friends.

Themba: Oh.

Me: I left the job. I asked for some girl to find someone who will replace me.

Themba:[coming close] That's nice. Now you have to focus on your daughter and your studies.

Me: Yeah. [We kissed each other]

Themba: Bheki is having a celebration month end. He got a promotion. Please be my date.

Me: Uhm.. Samkelo is coming to spend time with Owami month end

Themba: So? He will be here for his child not you. Or maybe he's will come for both of you?

Me: Uhm. No but I can't leave him alone with the baby.

Themba: why not? Thobile will be here with them.

Me: I-

Themba: You want to spend time with your family? Me: Themba! No!

Themba: So what is it than. Tell me. If Samkelo wants to spend time with his daughter that doesn't mean you must be there too. In fact whenever he wants his daughter he must spend time with her with the presence of her nanny not necessarily you!

Me: Stop shouting at me! I can hear you loud and clear!

Themba: But you're also shouting right now. You know what just go and spend time with him and your daughter. I will find another date to go with.

He walked away. I followed him. He didn't sit on the lounge but he exited my flat. I followed him.

Me: Themba! What's wrong with you??

He didn't respond. I ran after him and I grabbed his arm with force. He turned back and looked at me. I looked at him too.

Me: Can we please talk like grown ups about this.

Themba: There's nothing to talk about because you've already made up your mind right?

Me: No. I will tell Thobile to be there with them.

Themba: I am sorry for shouting at you.

I grabbed him by his shirt and I kissed him. We kissed for a long time. We broke the kiss when a car that was passing by hooted on us. We stopped and looked at it. We looked at each other and laughed. We hugged each other and we went back to my flat. They stayed a little longer and they all left later.

Monday afternoon after my last lecture. I met up with my P. I in my flat.

P.I: Do you remember the lady who wrote your names the time you were going to the reed dance?

Me: Yes.

P.I: She is Maud's sister. Apparently they set you up. They knew that if they say don't go to the reed dance. You will go to sleep at your boyfriend's house because your friend didn't live around. So definitely the whole night was going to get you pregnant. Maud wants your father's money and getting rid of you was just her plan. When your mom died she tried to seduce your dad but he was still hurt. But the set up date worked on her favour. And your father has rewrote his will. With your stepmother's influence he made her the sole beneficiary of his estate.

Me: You're trying to tell me that even Andile is not on the will?

P.I: No. I think that's because Andile will be working next year. So because Maud is a sudden beneficiary she knows that she can't kill your father because once the police learns about the will if your father can be killed. She'll be the number one suspect especially that

you're also not part of the family anymore. So to pay off her debts she will slowly milk his money and by the time your father wakes up. He will be bankrupt and Maud her daughters will be long gone.

Me: How will she do all that. I mean she's uneducated.

P.I: Well the big puzzle you don't know about her is that she was a qualified Doctor. She treated one of her patients illegal, and many more of her patients, they started dying and the matter was investigated and she was caught that she was doing the illegal diagnosis while selling other prescriptions to thugs. She did about two years in prison and she was out in parole. Here's her records. Her husband was just a policeman with no money, So to pay off her debts your father is her ticket.

Me:

Me: My dad must know this.

P.I: You know I am great. [He laughed] I set up the meeting with your father tomorrow. He'll be around Durban. They are planning on starting a family business. I will pretend to be a potential investor. So you'll come and mistakenly bump into him. Then you can break the news.

Me: Great! So I will wait for your text?

P.I: Yes. You will wait for my text. We're meeting at Nandos. Berea Center.

Me: Okay thanks.

P.I: Let me leave than sisi.

Me: Thanks serious.

P.I: My pleasure.

I walked him out. I went back to my left. Thobile left and I look after my daughter. Later I bathed her and I fed her purity porridge. She was really enjoying it. I gave her the formula. And I made her burp. We went to my bed. I put her down and I started studying. My phone rang. Samkelo was calling. I picked up.

Sam: Mama ka Alondwe.

Me: How are you tata ka Alondwe?

Sam: I am fine and you?

Me: I can't complain.

Sam: How is my daughter doing?

Me: She's doing fine. I have started feeding her because the formula alone is not enough for her.

Sam: Yoh! Thandeka you'll make my daughter a feti boom boom [I laughed really hard]

Me: Really Samkelo? That word pho? Feti boom boom. You're crazy Brah.

Sam: What can I say. You don't want her to be curvey like you.

Me: Argh she's curvey already. And she's beautiful like her mother.

Sam: And daddy?

Me: Argh she has your feet qha. The rest is mommy.

Sam:[laughing] You're jealous. My friends thinks she looks like me.

Me: They are not loyal friends than. [Alondwe started crying] can you hear her crying?

Sam: Yes. She's jealous. She wants me to talk to her not you. Put the phone on her ear.

I picked Owami and held her in my arms. I put the phone on her ear. I couldn't hear what Samkelo was saying to her but her eyes were wondering around. It was like she wanted to ask that where is that person who is talking. I took the phone away from her ear.

Me: I hope you're not talking crap to my baby girl.

Sam: No. I wasn't [she started crying again] Haha she needs my voice. I have a sweet voice I know that.

Me: No. Your voice is bad Brah.

Sam: [laughing] Mama ka Alondwe give my daughter the phone please. She's crying.

Me: Please talk until she sleep.

Sam: Okay.

I made her lie on my chest on her tummy. I put the phone on her ear and she stopped crying. Samkelo went on and on. I don't know for how long until Owami fell asleep. I took the phone away from her ear.

Me: She's sleeping now. Thanks.

Sam: Daddy's touch.

Me: What were you saying to her exactly.

Sam: I was reading Cinderella story for her.

Me: Duh! You bought her books?

Sam: Yes fairytale stories.

Me: That's sweet. Though she's young for that. Let me put her to bed than. Goodnight.

Sam: Whatever! Goodnight.

We hung up the call and I put her to bed. I went to take a shower. I wore my pyjamas and I continued with studies til late. I fell asleep.

The following morning I was woken up by Themba he was calling me. I picked up.

Themba: Good morning sunshine.

Me: Morning bbe. How are you?

Themba: I am good my love and you?

Me: I am fine. Your P.I is doing wonders for me. I am meeting up with dad today. I just hope he will listen to me.

Themba: He must listen to you. Just make him listen bbe. Good luck with that.

Me: Thank you sthandwa sami.

Themba: Today I am spending time with you. Thobile will look after Alondwe. That's if you're not busy.

Me: No bby I will come.

Themba: Okay. I will see you later then. Have a nice day. I love you.

Me: You too have a good day. I love you too.

We hung up the call. I stepped out of my bed. I fixed the bed and I went to shower. I did the daily routine and I wore a pitch knee dress and brown sandals. I tied up my hair. I put my books together and I went to the kitchen. I cooked porridge for Owami. I made breakfast and ate. Thobile came I took my things and I left for school. During lunch time I was with Thobelani and Emma. I went back to my classes. When I got the text from the P.I I drove straight to Berea.

I saw my dad coming out. I pretended like I didn't see him. I looked at my phone and I purposely bumped into him. His papers fell on the floor. I assisted him.

Me: I am sorry Sir. I didn't see you.

Dad: It's Okay.

We got up and I held his papers. He looked at me.

Dad: Please give me my papers young lady I want to go.

Me: I've been trying to call you. I have something to tell you. It's important.

Dad: I don't have all day. Just talk.

Me: Maud is dangerous dad. She's after your money she doesn't love you. I did my own research about her. Olwethu and-

Dad: Anything you're going to say about Maud I won't believe it. She's been nothing but good to me. You chose your fate and it made you a mother at 19. Leave my family alone. I made it clear that I don't want you anywhere near my family. You're a shame to me.

He snatched his papers on my hands and he left. I ran to my car. And I cried my lungs out. I sat there til it was late.

I drove straight to Themba's flat. I was so hurt. I knew he wasn't going to believe me but I didn't think he was going to tell me that I am a shame to him. I arrived by Themba's flat. It was dark outside. I didn't knock. I took out my key and opened up. Themba had a romantic dinner thing set for us. He came to me and hugged me.

Themba: I was worried about you.

Me: [crying] He hates me Smith. My dad hates me.

Themba: Shhh don't cry. He will come around one day. He's still hurting.

We let go and he held my hand. I smiled faintly.

Me: Let's just mess up that dinner please.

Themba: After you mam.

He pulled a chair for me and I sat down. We prayed and he served me. We ate, talking about our future plans. I forgot about my dad for a second. We had a wonderful time. We had dessert. We washed the dishes. And we took a shower together. We went to bed. We cuddled each other.

Themba: So what are you going to do about your dad? Don't you think you must tell your brother than he can talk to him.

Me: No I won't. I don't want to help my father anymore. I will let his old bitch be. I will let them milk all the money he has. I want them to make him bankrupt. He chose them over me so he must enjoy his family.

Themba: But bbe you made Maud to be his wife.

Me: Yes because I was trying to protect him. Nomsa was young Smith. She was going to leave him for a younger guy vele. I didn't want him to get broken. Maud made this move because I was no longer her husband's daughter. Though she had a plan but with me around she wasn't going to get a chance. And even if so I was trying to fix it by opening up his eyes but he shut me out. I am a shame to him right? I will keep my distance and I will let them make him bankrupt.

Themba: This is your father.

Me: He was. Just like I was her daughter. This is my revenge on him.

Themba: But bbe this is wrong. Revenge doesn't solve anything.

Me: But revenge is sweet.

I smiled a little. I looked at him, he shook his head. I moved closer to his face and I kissed him...

In the morning Themba woke me up with breakfast in bed.

Themba: Morning Mrs Smith.

Me: Morning Mr Smith.

Themba: Breakfast is served for my special lady.

Me: Thank you you're my hero.

I kissed him, we broke the kiss and he made me sit up straight. I ate breakfast together with him. After breakfast we took the shower together. I kissed him inside the shower.

Me: You need the sexual healing?

Themba: I would love to but three months remember?

Me: Yes I know and that should be more than special. It must be just the two of us.

Themba: Alondwe?

Me: She has a grandmother.

Themba: so January we will have a week away before we come back to face the real world.

Me: Yes bbe. I was thinking Port Elizabeth.

Themba: How about Sandton?

Me: It's perfect.

Themba: Will you object if I say Los Angeles?

Me: [kissing him] We're not going away for a honeymoon just a small vacation.

Themba: Meaning for our honeymoon it's Los Angeles?

Me: That's if we do get married.

Themba: Believe me bbe we will.

I giggled and kissed him. I gave him the sexual healing in an oral way. He did the same to me. We finished showering and we brushed our teeth, lotion and wore our clothes. I took his clothes with me for dry cleaning. We walked out of his flat.

Themba:[holding my waist] Have a lovely day Mrs Smith. I love you.

Me: You too my love have a great day. I love you too. We kissed each other and we drove our separate ways. I first dropped his clothes off and I drove straight to school.

During my lunch break I was eating inside my car. I got a call from Samkelo.

Me: Samkelo?

Sam: [shouting] Where were you last night. I called your phone but it was off. I called the nanny and she told me that you were not home with Alondwe?

Me: Can you please stop shouting at me. I am not a child for goodness sake!

Sam: Just answer me damnit!

Me: Hheyi wena Samkelo. Ungazongihlanyela Mina. I don't report to you. Now you want to know my whereabouts?

Sam: If you're not with my daughter Thandeka I must be worried!

Me: She was with her nanny. She wasn't alone. I have a boyfriend too remember?

Sam: You're sleeping with him already.

Me: What does that supposed to mean?

Sam: It's just a simple and straightforward question. Just answer it.

Me: You know what I slept with him within one week after we had started dating each other. I had sex with him until I gave birth to your daughter. Are you happy now?

Sam: I am disgust actually. I hope my daughter don't turn out to be a twisted bitch just like you.

Me: Fuck you asshole!! Nxx!

I hung up the call. I put my phone inside my phone. I buried my face on my steering. I sighed heavily and I tried to calm down.

My phone rang. It was Samkelo's mother. I knew that he told her what I said to him. I sighed and answered.

Me: Hello?

Sam's mom: What is it that I hear about you leaving my son's daughter just to spend the night with your boyfriend?

Me: It's not like I left Owami alone. She was with her nanny. I also needed time to myself.

Her: By sleeping with another man. It's only been a month and three weeks since you gave birth and you're already having sex with someone else.

Me: With all due respect mama ka Samkelo I am not sleeping with Themba. And it's seriously feels uncomfortable to discuss this with you.

Her: I told you that I will look after Alondwe and you refused. And now you're abandoning her.

Me: Hebanaa! Usufuna ngize ngikweyise ke manje ukuze uzozwa ukuthi she wasn't alone. Please stop making all this look like I don't care about my child because I do and I don't need you or anyone else to raise her. I will do it myself. I am her mother. So please Mah I respect you but stop using my love life to judge me as a mother to my child. Thanks.

I hung up the call. And I clicked my tongue. My phone beeped. Andile wanted to know my whereabouts. I texted him back

After a few minutes he was at my car's door. I opened the passenger side for him and he stepped in. He looked at me.

Me: Please not you too. Don't lecture me about going to Themba yesterday.

Andile: [laughing] Argh No. I won't. The Doctor said you should avoid stress and surround yourself with people who loves you. So I won't say you were wrong. You must keep your life balanced right?

Me: Oh\_\_okay. I hope you're not on the mission to take my child away again because the last time I checked you didn't like Themba.

Andile: I was wrong about him. He's a good guy and he really cares about you. So you must tell him that whenever he's ready we can discuss Lobola. [I laughed]

Me: I have something to show you.

Andile: What?

I took the file that the P.I gave me and I handed it over to him. I told him everything that he said and about me telling dad and what he said to me. My brother was pretty mad about it.

Andile: Dad is insane Thandeka.

Me: That's why I won't give him this information. I will let them make him bankrupt.

Andile: For the fact that he removed us his own children from his will and made his ex jailbird wife a sole beneficiary! You must let him be sisi wami. Let them take away all his money. He's weak and twisted!

Me: You know what I have a better idea. Please call Qiniso now.

Andile: Why?

Me: Just do it.

He nodded and called him. He picked up. Andile placed him on loudspeaker.

Qini: Sho mjita

Me: Actually it's Thandeka.

Qini: Thandeka? How are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Qini: I am fine. I miss having you around here.

Me: Argh soon enough you'll be a husband.

Qini: Yeah hey and about that I have been meaning to send you an invitation card but I don't know your postal address.

Me: I was starting to wonder if you've forgotten me just like that. There's no problem just text me address, time and venue. Oh and of course the colour of the day.

Qini: Will certainly do.

Me: If I may ask will your fiance's mom and dad be there at the wedding?

Qini: Of course. They will come.

Me: Okay. I can't wait to meet them personally. I will be waiting for the SMS than. Thanks.

Qini: Okay thanks bye.

Me: Bye.

I hung up the call and gave Andile his phone.

Andile: And then?

Me: This wedding will be my chance expose Maud and save Qiniso from Charity.

Andile: And dad? He'll get away from this easily.

Me: When is the wedding?

Andile: December.

Me: That time will be enough for them to take his money but You know what? I want to change the game. We need an I.T. He will be able to hack one of our father's account. The one with large sum of money. We will take that money and save it for him. But we need someone who is very smart. Who will make sure that we don't get caught before time. Maud will take the rest of the money that we will leave. On the wedding day I will come and object. I will stop the wedding by exposing Maud and her secret kids. So you Andile must be closed to Qiniso about his wedding day. By recommending our I. T guy to him. He will be handling

music for the wedding. Then we will put this information about Maud on the USB drive and the I.T guy will display them on the display screen for everyone to see the documents when I speak. What do you say?

He kissed my cheek.

Andile: You were supposed to be working with missionaries in USA. It's perfect. I will find the guy. For the job. Surely dad will have a heart attack. But he won't die because we will have a back up money for him.

Me: Yeah and after that you two can be a good family.

Andile: Without you?

Me: I signed a contract remember? I am no longer his daughter and I have come to terms of accepting that. There are words he said to me that he can never erase in my head. I am better off without a father than to have him as my father.

Andile: Than why are you still doing this? Saving him?

Me: That's because I care and I love him. But I don't need him..

Two months later. Samkelo came and visit his daughter regularly. Thobile was always the one who go with him wherever he wanted to be with her. Me and him, we were not talking actually because he was rude towards me and he thought he owns my life. I told him that he must talk to Thobile whenever he wants to know something about his daughter. I wrote my exams successful and beginning of December I got my results stating that I passed my first year. I got NSFAS, I was covered for the following year. Our IT guy managed to hack our Father's account. It was an account with half a million rands. We opened another account and saved the money for him and the money was accumulating interest. Qiniso agreed to let our IT guy handle everything on the music industry. Everything was ready for the big day.

The month I waited for final came. It was December and my daughter was 3months old. She was going to spend the rest of December holidays with her grandmother and her dad. I was going to spend my December holidays with Themba. The wedding day finally came. Themba was my plus one of course. Friday we checked in a hotel because we didn't want to be late.

Saturday morning we woke up and prepared ourselves. My brother paid for my outfit and Smith paid for my weave and nails. I wore a tight black and gold dress. It was above the knee. I put on black stilettos. I fixed my weave, put on a light make up and red lipstick.

Themba was wearing a tuxedo. He was looking cute as ever. The time finally came and we drove straight to the venue. We arrived and we walked in like everyone else.

Themba: This is gonna be a good show bbe. They have display screens almost everywhere.

Me: I wanted everyone to see.

Themba: You persuaded that?

Me: You know I am genius right.

He smiled and kissed my cheek. Andile came in with Olwethu. She was her date for the day. Maud and dad were looking more than the word beautiful itself. They all sat in the front.

Themba looked at me. I looked at him and smiled. The ceremony began. Wasn't it lovely?

Oh trust me dear it was until that part came where the pastor asks for someone who wants to stop the wedding. I was at the back so I quickly stood up and shouted.

Me: I Object Pastor!

Everyone turned back and looked at me. They were very shock. I smiled at them like I was their God. I walked out of my chair and I walked down the aisle. I wanted to see the Dhlomo family correctly. If this fees must fall term existed back than. I was going to shout "Maud must fall" but too bad it didn't.

Me: Please turn the music off.

Dad: Thandeka!

Me: Actually Sir you gonna have to listen to me because I am here to help Qiniso and you.

Maud: Just go.

Me: Hey not so fast Doctor Zulu. [She shut up] Qiniso I care about you and I would like to see you getting married to a woman that loves you and the woman who can be honest with.

Charity: I love him and who invited you?

Me: Your fiancée dear

I reached out for the controller and the IT guy gave me one. I displayed the family photos of Maud, her daughters and her husband.

Me: Now the woman you're getting married to lied to you about her identity. She's actually the biological daughter of the new Mrs Dhlomo.

People: Huh?

Qini: What?

Me: And Olwethu as you see in the picture that they were a very happy family until their mother, your wife baba ka Andile illegally treated her patients [I displayed the record] and she sold prescription drugs to thugs. She was arrested. By the way that's not all mkhulu ka Alondwe, because we have computer genius people around this world we've managed to prove that your wife has made you bankrupt. [I displayed the bank balance] She covered all her debts with your money.

Dad: Maud?

Maud: I can explain Dhlomo.

Me: Wait you thought they are your family? You removed even your own son in your will and you made this woman a sole beneficiary? You know what I am glad that you removed me in your life while it was still early. Qiniso I am sorry for ruining your wedding.

Qiniso: Thank you Thandeka. The wedding is off.

Charity: [crying] No! No! I love you! Don't do this.

Qiniso: Leave me alone!

He walked away and he came to me. He gave me a tight hug. He tried to kiss me. "No! My boyfriend is here" I whispered. "I don't care" he replied. He held my head and kissed me. I raised my hands on the air. But truly speaking his lips tasted good. He broke the kiss. "Thanks. I will always love you" he kissed my cheek and ran away. Wangishiya ngiswele umgodi wokucasha.

Me: I am sorry for ruining the wedding.

Andile had organised the police. They came in and went straight to Maud. She was crying and my dad was still . Maud was arrested and they left with her.

Me: Good day everyone. You can eat! [I walked away]

Andile: Thandeka! Call the ambulance.

I looked back and dad was on the floor. Themba stood up immediately. They took him with Andile. They put him at the back of his car. Andile drove straight to the hospital. Themba came to me. I was just puzzled. What if I killed him.

Themba: he'll be fine.

Me: [clears throat] Thanks.

Themba:[holding my hand] I didn't know kissing your ex was part of the plan too?

Me: I am sorry. I told him not too but he just did anyway.

Themba: Let's go to the hospital.

Me: You're not mad?

Themba: No bbe I am not.

Me: Okay.

We drove straight to the hospital just laughing about what happened. We made it to the hospital. We were shown his room and we both went to him. Andile was talking to him. He was awake but he had pipes on him.

Dad: Thandeka?

Me: I am sorry for ruining the wedding. [I took out the envelope] Here's your money. We managed to save half a million of your money so that you can still maintain yourself even though they have taken every other cent.

Dad: I don't know how to repay you. Thank you mntanami.

Me: It's no big deal.

I gave him the envelope and he took it.

Me: Andile dude I will see you on graduation day?

Andile: You're not staying for the holidays?

Me: No let me go.

Andile: I will call you. Thanks Themba brah for your help. [I walked to the door]

Themba: It's Okay.

Dad: Thandeka I-

Me: It's Okay. Don't say anything. Bye.

We walked out. Themba held my hand. I cried. He pulled me closer to him and he gave me a hug.

Themba: Why don't you go back and fix things with him.

Me: No. If I didn't do all this. He wasn't going to take me back. So I don't want him to do that because I saved some of his money. I was just doing damage control because I set him up with Maud.

Themba: I love you and I want to kiss you right now but you've been kissing your ex.

Me: I want to kiss you too yazi. Your lips look more than good today. Let me rush to the bathroom.

He laughed and I ran to the bathroom. I laughed and washed my mouth. I wiped my lips and I went back to him. He was outside the hospital. I taped his shoulder. He turned back and smiled. He held my waist and kissed me

Themba closed at work for holidays and flew to Cape Town. We were going spend the rest of the holidays in Cape Town. My father went back to his house and he was living with Qiniso and Andile. Olwethu and Charity went to Mlazi. It was a Christmas day. Themba's friends were around Themba's house. We were going to spend Christmas together. We woke up and prepared everything for Christmas. While Emma and I were cooking my phone rang. It was Andile. I picked up.

Andile: Merry Christmas mama ka sdudla.

Me: Sdudla who is sdudla?

Andile: I will send you the pictures of her. She's fat Brah.

Me: When last did you see her.

Andile: Samkelo didn't tell you?

Me: Tell me what Andile?

Andile: Hawu. Samkeliswa is spending Christmas with us. Dad asked for her to her grandmother. He's spending time with her.

Me: Oh. They didn't tell me. How long has she been there?

Andile: It's been a week. She'll go back to them after Christmas.

Me: Oh. Who is sleeping with her?

Andile: She sleeps with dad but she have a temporary nanny.

Me: Okay that's nice. I will wait for the pictures ke. And Merry Christmas to you too.

Andile: Are you mad?

Me: Uhm. No but I am just surprised.

Andile: Okay let me send the pictures now.

Me: Okay.

We hung up the call. I put my phone inside my pocket. Emma looked at me.

Emma: And what's up with the long face now?

Me: I am just surprised that my dad is spending time with my daughter.

Emma: That's nice.

Me: I guess. I just don't know why Samkelo didn't tell me about it because I called him last week.

Emma: Maybe he forgot.

Me: Yeah maybe.

We prepared everything and we went to church together. After church we went back to the house for Christmas lunch. We exchanged gifts and we sat down and ate. My mind was still thinking about my father Spending time with my daughter?

Themba: Bbe are you alright.

Me: Ummm. Yeah bbe I am fine.

Themba: You've been quiet all day.

Emma: Her father is spending time with Alondwe.

Brandon: That's nice.

Bheki: I think it's time you forgive your father dude

Themba: Yah. You can't be angry forever.

Me: I will Smith but only if you will try and reconcile with your parents too.

Bheki: Good luck with convincing him to do that.

Themba: Bbe this different.

Me: Different how? They abandoned you that's the same thing my dad did.

Themba: You had support system. I didn't.

Me: Does it make it any better?

Brandon: She has a point Ethan. You know that you want to marry her some day. You will need your parents blessings.

Themba: No we don't need them.

Bheki: Come on both of you. You need to put your pride aside. Go and reconcile with your parents because we won't be your groomsmen Brah.

Emma: And I won't be your bridesmaid.

Me: Who said we're getting married konje?

Themba: You don't want us to get married?

Me: Duh? You didn't propose.

Themba: I will.

Me: Then we'll cross that bridge when we get to it.

Emma: I can't wait for that day.

Brandon: But parents situation first. The Bible says forgive. Jesus said so. Who are you to go against Jesus?

Themba: We will try.

Me: Really bbe you will reconcile with your parents?

Themba: If you will do the same.

Me: I will do that Smith.

Themba: I love you.

Me: I love you too.

We kissed each other for the longest time until Bheki and Brandon stood up and separate us. We laughed.

Brandon: That's enough now guys.

Me: Bheki should be complaining because he's single.

Emma: Yes bbe. Please come and kiss me too.

We all laughed at Bheki and continued with our lunch.

&

&

Andile sent the pictures of Alondwe. My baby was fat and I didn't like it. She looked she had obesity. But her grandmother ensured me that she was fine. Themba and I decided to focus on reconciling with our parents after January. So we were ready for our week away before going back to school and work. We were in Port Elizabeth.

Me: So where are we going?

Themba: I rented a beach house.

Me: A beach house. We have beach houses here?

Themba: Wee have you been living under a rock?

Me: Whatever!

He laughed. We took a cab to the beach house. It was beautiful and I just loved the sea breeze. We placed our bags on the main bedroom.

Themba: We going somewhere so please change. Just wear a bikini.

Me: Is it safe to swim at night?

Themba: No. Bbe we're not going to swim.

I giggled and we changed. I wore my red bikini and Themba wore white shorts only. He carried me out of the house. He walked with me down to the beach. There was a romantic dinner table set for the two of us. He put me down and he pulled the chair for me. I sat down and he did the same.

Me: This is lovely.

Themba: For my lady of course.

I smiled and we prayed. We started eating and the food was delicious. After eating we had drinks. Themba had the blankets with him and he put it down on the soil. He held my hand and we laid on our backs on the blanket. We looked at the sky. It was so beautiful and peaceful.

Me: But God did give us a beautiful nature.

Themba: Very beautiful.

I looked at him and he kissed me. I kissed him back. The kiss got heated up and he ended up being on top of me. He took off my bikini top. I broke the kiss.

Me: Bbe what if someone sees us.

Themba: This is the best quiet place. And nobody will see us I promise.

Me: I don't want to be pregnant again so.

Themba: I got it covered.

Me: Yoh! Brah.

Themba: It been four months actually.

Me: Kiss me before you turn me off please.

He laughed and kissed me. We made love and every moment of it made the bond between us even more stronger. We used protection for your information .. We laid back on the same position.

Me: That was a epic.

Themba: Very. Next time we must visit the forest.

Me: Don't tell tell me that we'll have sex on the trees.

Themba: [laughing] Maybe. Let's go back inside the house.

We put our things together. And we left. We came back and get the rest. We went to sleep.

The whole week we were together doing everything you can possible think about. Good things though . But we played every moment of it safe. After the week away. We went back to reality. I took my daughter from her grandmother. And she was really fat and heavy. I was never going to make her spend a month with her again. Who wants a FAT and heavy child Hhaybo. I registered for my second year and my second year in DUT began in February.

February Alondwe was 6 months. She was able sit. My baby loved food and I was worried because she was already fat. I struggled to walk around the mall with her because she was heavy. I always had to go with Themba because he was able to carry her. He loved her like that and he liked her chubby cheeks. Whenever he played with them Alondwe used to laugh non stop. It was a Saturday Themba and I were just chilling on the carpet with Alondwe. Everyone was calling her Alondwe the name also grew within me.

Themba: When are you going to see your father?

Me: I will go to him during Easter holidays.

Themba: That's a great idea. Can I ask you a favor?

Me: Yes.

Themba: Please come with me to see my parents after you have seen your father.

Me: Are you sure?

Themba: Yes I will need your support.

Me: It's Okay bbe. I will go with you.

Themba: Thank you. I saw your drawings. Let's go and frame them.

Me: Now?

Themba: Yes.

I smiled and nodded. Themba picked up Alondwe we didn't change our clothes because we were clean. We took the drawings. It was a drawing of me, Alondwe and Themba. But it was on separate papers. We drove to photo first and they framed them for us. We paid and we took them the same day. Themba drove to his flat.

Me: And than? Ain't we going to my flat?

Themba: We will bbe relax.

I nodded and looked at Alondwe she was eating cheese curls. She was messy and ugly.

Me: Look at you now umubi.

She looked at me and smiled. I smiled back.

Themba: Tell her that the saying goes "like my like daughter"

Me: But I am not ugly.

He laughed and Alondwe laughed too like she could hear what we were talking about. We arrived at his place and he took out the drawings. I took Alondwe.

Me: Themba? This is day robbery. [We walked to his flat]

Themba: It was my idea so I am taking them.

Me: They are my drawings. [I opened the door]

Themba: You will draw another one.

We walked inside, I put Alondwe down. He hanged the drawings on the wall. Alondwe's drawing in the middle and ours on the sides. They looked beautiful.

Me: They were going to look much better in my wall. Your wall is ugly.

Themba: My wall has the vibe and yours is just plain white.

Me: I will come back for my drawings. Please drive us back home.

Themba: I will put an alarm on them. And You're home here.

Me: I don't want to be here and look at those stolen drawings. You're thief.

Themba: Mxm suit yourself I am not driving you home.

Me: Mxm I will drive myself.

I took his car keys and he picked up Alondwe before I could take her.

Themba: Go alone ngoba uyahlanya manje.

Me: Mxm. Salani!

I slammed the door shut behind me. I wasn't worried about leaving Alondwe with him because Alondwe was used to him. Themba would babysit her sometimes.

I drove straight to my flat. I called Thobelani because I felt like going out that night. He picked up immediately.

Me: Do you mind going out with me?

Thobe: I really need that. Please come to my res and pick me up.

He hung up the call. Okay? That was wired. I placed my phone aside and I changed my clothes. I wore black and brown tight pants, black and brown crop top. I wore black stilettos. I tied up my weave and I put on pink lipstick. I took my hand bag and I drove straight to Thobelani's res. I buzzed him and he came to my car. I left Themba's car behind. He had the key to my flat if he wanted to come and get his car.

Me: What's wrong with you?

Thobe: I saw Olwethu today.

Me: What? Really where?

Thobe: She's at the same res with me duh!

Me: Really? That's nice if she's studying.

Thobe: Yes special after that saga with her mother being in jail.

Me: She'll be fine. Do you still love her?

Thobe: Of course I love her. I just wish we can get back together.

Me: surely my dad had her head stuck on her books on her matric days. You will if it meant to happen.

Thobe: Well your dad did help because she will have a future even if her mother is in jail.

Me: Yeah. So where are we going?

Thobe: How about going to a club. I feel like turning up.

Me: Ufuna ngihlanjululwe ngamanzi anamaqhwa vele?[you want me to get a cold water cleansing]

Thobe:[laughing] No but he won't find out this time.

Me: He better not find out about this or else I am going to kick your flat ass off.

We laughed and I drove to Florida. Far away from South Beach. We found a club but it had a lot of white people. We went to the counter. I bought a fruit cocktail. Thobelani bought vodka. We looked at people dancing. There was a white girl who was dancing very good and she was beautiful.

Me: Thobe do you see that white chick. She's beautiful hey.

Thobe: Hhaybo Brah. Are you lesbian now?

Me: What? No! Don't be silly!

Thobe: You better be straight or Themba uzokubhabhadisa ngomlilo njengo sathane ngiyakutshela.

Me: Mxm.

We continued drinking. But I couldn't keep my eyes off the white woman. She was so beautiful. My phone rang. I took it out and my dad was calling.

I quickly ran outside and answered the phone.

Me: Thandeka hello?

Dad: Thandeka mntanami. It's your- it's

Me: I know it's my father. How are you?

Dad: I am fine health wise and you?

Me: I am alright too.

Dad: I was hoping if I could see you. This Easter holidays. Please visit me with my granddaughter.

Me: Okay we will come.

Dad: Thanks my baby. I love you Thandeka.

Me: Uhm. I love you too dad.

Dad: Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight.

We hung up the call. As I was putting it back on my pocket. Themba called. I answered.

Themba: You better give me a valid reason to why my car is in Florida.

Me: Your car?

I took out the car keys and boom. It wasn't my car keys. "Hhaybo kanti amehlo ami anjani"

Themba: Don't ask me about your eyes. What are you doing in Florida?

Me: How did you know I am in Florida because I made sure that I ran away fully from you so that you won't give me an ice cold bath again.

Themba: My car has a tracker damnit! And this time I will give you the boiled water bath.

Nxx!

He hung up the call. "Chineke! This man!" I said putting my hands in my head.

I rushed back to Thobelani. He was half drunk. I shook him roughly.

Me: Ntwana we have to leave now.

Thobe: Let's go in the morning.

Me: Hheyi you didn't tell me that I am driving Themba's car dude.

Thobe: What? Let's go or else you'll get ice cold baptism.

Me: Argh wena!

White girl: Do you need any help.

Me:[smiling] Uhm no. We're fine. I saw you on the dance floor. You're pretty good.

Thobe: Sisi indoda yakhe iColoured izokubhaxa kanzima so you better start running.

White girl: What did he say?

Me: Argh. He said you look beautiful.

Girl:[smiling] Thanks. You look beautiful by the way. Do you mind giving me your number.

Maybe we can go out for drinks sometimes.

Me: Okay. 073....

Girl: The name?

Me: Thandeka yours?

Girl: I am Hope. Do you have English names.

Me: I am Trinity that's my second name. The third is Joy.

Hope: I will go with Trinity I like it. Why they named you like that?

Me: I am the last born. Mom had three kids but the second born died. I am Trinity but I don't like them both. Thobelani Let's go. I will wait for your call. [She nodded and left]

Thobe: You will die young Thandeka!

I didn't answer him. I pulled him out of the club. We stepped inside the car.

Thobe: Can I crash at your place. I can't go back to res because I am drunk.

Me: Okay. I will drop you off.

I drove straight to my flat and I assisted him get inside. I locked and pushed the key under the door. I drove straight to Themba's place.

I arrived and unlocked the door. He was on the lounge watching TV. I sat next to him. I placed his car keys on top of the coffee table. I played with my nails. He didn't say anything.

Me: I am sorry for taking your car. I didn't realize that I was taking it.

Themba: Mmmhmm.

Me: Is Alondwe sleeping? [He nodded] I am sorry nje.

Themba: You're sorry "nje"? Kwahle bo! You're sorry for taking my car? You're not sorry leaving me here alone?

Me: But you said I must leave ngoba ngiyahlanya.

Themba: Awuhlanyi vele? [You're not crazy?]

Me: Uyangidakelwa yazi wena!

Themba: Please leave now!

Me: Huh?

Themba: Get out of my apartment now!

I stood up and I walked to Alondwe's room.

Themba: Go alone, leave Alondwe. You left her here so please go alone. And don't use my car.

Me: Should I walk?

Themba: I don't know.

Me: Mxm. Uyabheda wena.

I quickly walked inside Alondwe's room and I locked it. I took off my clothes. I kissed my baby and I slept on the double bed.

I was woken up by my phone. Samkelo was calling. I answered.

Me: Sam.

Sam: Are you fine?

Me: Yes and you?

Sam. I am good. I wanted to ask if I could take Alondwe for Easter holidays. My father wants to spend time with her.

Me: Eish. I can't. My father asked me to come with her during Easter holidays. Maybe she can visit him ngo June.

Sam: Eish okay. I will tell him.

Me: Okay. Let me go back to sleep.

Sam: Sure. Sleep tight.

Me: Thanks you too.

I went back to sleep.

The following morning I woke up when Themba was banging the door. I quickly got off the bed and I opened the door.

Themba: It's church day.

He walked away after saying that. I went to the bathroom and fixed the water for Alondwe. I woke her up and bathed her. She was crying because I woke her up while she was still sleeping. I moisturized her body and I put her on comfortable clothes. I took her to Themba's room. He was wearing his clothes. I put her on top of the bed.

Me: Please watch her I will make her something to eat.

Themba: Just go and take a shower. I will feed her

Me: Okay thanks.

He continued dressing up. Alondwe was no longer crying she was just sucking up her thumbs. I went to the bathroom, I took my toothbrush and toothpaste put it together and I brushed my teeth. I couldn't finish brushing my teeth, the toothpaste had bad test. I quickly opened the toilet and I threw up.

Themba:[knocking] Thandeka are you alright?

Me: Yes. I might have drank something bad yesterday.

Themba: Oh.

I heard him walking away. I flushed the toilet and I closed the seat led and sat on top of it. I buried my face in my hands. "This is so so not happening, Really God? Mxm andiyi nakuleyo cawa mna nxx!" I thought out loud.

Themba: [knocking] Thandeka are you going to take that shower? Or not?

Me: Hamba wedwa. Angiyi Mina lapho. [Go alone. I am not going]

Themba: Okay sure.

He walked away. I took a shower and cried my lungs out....

I finished taking a shower. I stepped out of the shower. I dried my body. And I went back to Themba's room. I lotion and wore a simple dress. Alondwe was not around the house.

Themba might have taken her to church with him. I took some cash and I took a taxi to workshop. I went to clicks and I bought five pregnancy tests. I was confused because Themba

and I always used protection. But the toothpaste only tasted bad to me when I was pregnant. I tried to calm down. I paid, I walked to Smith street and I took the taxi straight to Musgrave. I went to my flat and I knocked. Thobelani came to the door and opened the door. I went through without talking to him. I went straight to the bathroom and I took all five tests. They all came back positive. I cried hard.

Thobelani came inside and he saw the tests. He held me close to him.

Me: This can't be happening. My dad- My father

Thobe: Eish it's going to be hard.

Me: I can't do this Thobe.

Thobe: What do you mean?

Me: I am going to have an abortion. I can't keep this child.

Thobe: What if Themba finds out about it.

Me: How? Are you going to tell him?

Thobe: No but killing an innocent soul.

Me: We used protection Thobelani. How can I be pregnant?

Thobe: Me too. I used protection with Mama kaZenande but boom she was pregnant. We even did the paternity test and it stated that the child was mine. This fuckin rubber breaks sometimes.

Me: My daughter is 6months Brah.

Thobe: 5 months actually.

Me: Argh. Not to me. My point is I can't mother a second child.

Thobe: But your boyfriend is supportive. He will support you don't kill the child.

Me: I don't care. Ungijwayela kabi vele uThemba.

I stood up and I went to my room. I took my phone and I sent a text to Themba. I told him to bring my daughter to me after church. I searched for a near by abortion clinics and I found one. I was going to go to it the following day. Thobelani took a shower while I went to prepare something to eat for myself. I went to the lounge, I sat down and ate.

Thobelani came and sat next to me.

Thobe: Thandeka I beg you please don't do the abortion.

Me: I won't do it. I will take the abortion pill. I will go and buy it tomorrow at the clinic.

Thobe: Still Thandeka. You're doing the same thing. Please think about it. I have to go.

Me: Can you please stay so that you can take Alondwe from Themba xa ebuya. Please.

Thobe: If you want to kill his child you have to act normal around him and get rid of those pregnancy tests.

Me: You have a point. Please go out with them.

I stood up and I took them. I took the boxes and the slip. I gave it to Thobelani. He left with them. I sighed and I rested my head on my lap. I couldn't risk losing my father again because of the baby hell No! My mind had a lot of things that I didn't even hear Themba coming inside. I saw him sitting next to me. I was crying. He wiped my tears away and I looked at me. I raised my head.

Themba: Why are you crying?

Me: I was just thinking about life and everything. My dad and all that.

Themba:[holding me] You'll be fine. Everything will be alright. Your dad will come around.

Me: He called yesterday and told me to come home with Alondwe for Easter holidays.

Themba: You see? That's good. Just focus on the positive side now.

I nodded. He kissed my forehead and he brushed my back. I was slowly drifting off and within minutes I was off....

I woke up the following morning was a Monday and Themba's arms were wrapped around my waist. I slowly stepped out of the bed but he woke up.

Themba: We will take the shower together.

Me: Uhm. Okay.

He held my hand and we walked to the bathroom. I didn't want to shower with him because he was going to see that something was wrong with me if I don't use the toothpaste. I went straight to the shower.

Themba: You won't brush your teeth first?

Me: No. I will afterwards.

Themba: Okay let me join you than.

Me: No you can start by brushing your teeth.

Themba: No I want to do it with you.

I faked a smile as he stepped inside the shower and he kissed me. I kissed him back. I broke the kiss after a while.

Me: We're going to be late.

Themba: Just two minutes bbe.

Me: We have no condoms here.

Themba: I will pull out.

Me: Yeah Samkelo said the same thing.

Themba: Oh.

I didn't say anything. I washed my body and I finished first and I stepped out of the shower. I quickly brushed my teeth with water. Themba came out when I was using Listerine. I spit it out and I walked out of the room. I lotion and wore my casual clothes. I fixed the bed and opened the windows. I left Themba and I went to the kitchen and prepared breakfast. I cooked Alondwe's porridge. Themba joined in and we ate in silence. We finished, I washed the dishes and he stood.

Themba: Please spend the night with me tonight.

Me: Alondwe?

Themba: I just want it to be the two of us. I will ask her nanny to look after her. I will pay her for overtime.

Me: Okay I will come.

He kissed my forehead

Themba: I love you

Me: I love you too. [ He kissed me once more and he left.]

Thobile came and I took my things.

Me: I will see you two tomorrow

Thobile: Okay no problem bye.

I nodded and I left. I drove to school and I attended my first class which I didn't even hear anything from the lecturer because I was stressed. After my last class. I drove straight to the abortion cleaning. I bought the pill. And I put it inside the pocket of my hoodie. I drove straight to Themba's place. Thobelani called me. I answered.

Me: Ntwana yami.

Thobe: How did it go?

Me: I got the pill. I will drink it just now.

Thobe: I hope you won't regret your decision. Bye.

He hung up the call and I looked at the screen in disbelief. I placed my phone aside. I concentrated on the road.

I arrived at Themba's flat and I made something to eat first. I ate, I went to the bedroom and took off the hoodie. I took the pill and then I went to the sink. I poured water on the glass and I tried to open the box.

Themba: [from the lounge] Thandeka?

I quickly opened the drawer and put the pills inside the drawer.

Me: Over here!

Themba: [coming towards me] I know your smell. How was your day?

Me: [hugging each other] Argh a boring long day. I was just missing you.

Themba: Mmm really?

He asked and kissed me. He held my waist with the other hand. We kissed for the long time. We broke the kiss and he kissed my forehead.

Themba: Let me treat you today because you had a boring day. Go and put my bag in my bedroom. I will start cooking for you.

I thought about the pills on the drawer that had knives and spoons. I looked around and I saw the knife. I took the knife and chopping board. I gave it to him.

Me: You better start working your magic.

I winked at him, I took his bag and kissed him once more. I left and went to his room and I put the bag aside. I quickly rushed back to the kitchen. Themba wasn't chopping. He looked at me.

Themba: I was looking for the knife that I normally use for chopping vegetables and I found this.

Me: Uhm-

Themba: What is this Thandeka Dhlomo??

Me:

Chapter: 3

I lost the correct words to say. My throat went dry. I looked at him and he looked as calm as fuck and I was so confused. All my tricks and lies decided to visit another side of my body which I don't know. He looked at me and he came close to me. I stood still.

Themba: I am talking to you Thandeka!

Me: Bbe\_\_ I can\_\_ explain.

Themba: I need a simple answer. My question says what is this?

Me:[swallowing hard] It's an abortion pill.

Themba: How come there is an abortion pill in my apartment?

Me: My friend Primrose gave me money today. She asked me to buy them for her. I was going to give her tomorrow.

He looked at the box and looked back at me.

Themba: So why the box looks like you were trying to open it or it's someone else?

Me: Uhm\_\_ Ayi I don't know about that.

Themba: Mmm [he looked back at the sink] So Primrose was going to take this pill inside my apartment. Since there is a glass of water which you were standing next to when I get in here.

Mind explaining that?

Me: No. I was going to drink water not her.

Themba: Come here.

He gave me his hand. I walked closer to him slowly. I held his hand. He walked with me to his room. He led me to the bathroom. He locked it and put the key on his pocket. He let go of my hand. He took my toothbrush and toothpaste. I wanted to disappear. He knew from my last pregnancy that I wasn't using toothpaste because it made me threw up.

Me: Are you going to brush your teeth using my toothbrush?

He gave me a dead stare, his breath started changing. He pasted the toothpaste on the toothbrush. He gave it to me. I looked at him.

Themba: Brush your teeth.

Me: Why?

Themba: Don't ask questions just brush your teeth now.

Me: Is it my breath or? Because if it's my breath I can use Listerine.

Themba: Thandeka! Brush your fuckin teeth now! Damnit!

I took the toothbrush and I walked close to the sink. I opened the tap and I made the toothbrush wet. My stomach turned as I looked at the toothpaste. I looked at it for a long time.

Themba: I am waiting.

I said a little prayer in my heart and I brushed my teeth. I couldn't continue I opened the toilet seat and I threw up. Themba was looking at me, he was disgusted. I finished and I went to the sink. I rinsed my mouth. He took my toothbrush.

Themba: Do it again. You're not done.

I looked at him in disbelief. He gave me the toothbrush. I took it and I started crying.

Me: Please don't do this to me Themba please. Ngiyakucela bandla Smith.

Themba: I just want you to brush your teeth qha. There's nothing wrong with that. I brushed my teeth again, I had no choice. I threw up again. I finished and rinsed my mouth.

Themba: Should I add another toothpaste?

Me: Usuyangihlanyela phela wena manje! [You're being mad right now]

Themba: Ngizokusakaza ngempama [I will slap you hard.]

I froze as I heard him say those words.

Themba: You will brush the truth out of your mouth. So continue. Brush your teeth.

Me: \_\_\_\_\_ [I didn't do it]

Themba: You don't understand the language? Ek het getê jou tande borsel [I said brush your teeth!]

Me: [crying] I am pregnant Themba.

Themba: laat my klaar wat jy begin [let me finish what you started]

He opened the door. I didn't know what he was saying. He picked me up and walked with me to his bedroom window. He opened it. I cried hard. He strangled me, the upper part of my body was outside the window.

Themba: Give me one good reason to why I must not drop you off?

Me:[crying and struggling to talk] Because I am carrying your child.

Themba: Which child? The one you wanted to abort without telling me or is it really my child?

Me: It's yours Themba please. Don't drop me off please. The child is yours I didn't have sex with anyone else besides you. Please. Don't kill me.

Themba: I am making your job easy because you wanted to kill my child. This way you won't live with guilt.

Me: I have a daughter. She still needs me.

Themba: I didn't need my baby that you were going to kill?

Me: It was a mistake Themba. I wasn't supposed to get pregnant we used protection to protect ourselves from that.

Themba: You were jumpy man Thandeka. You think those condoms didn't break? If I knew that you were not on birth control I was going to tell you. But I thought you're smart enough to think about birth control clearly I was wrong. I guess you planned your first pregnancy as you say this was a mistake.

He was crying. It was my first time seeing Themba crying because of me. I was regretting everything that I did.

Me: I am sorry I didn't mean to hurt you.

He pulled me back and he closed the windows. I couched holding my neck. It was painful and I was scared.

Themba: Please leave my apartment now!

Me: Themba we can talk about this.

Themba: There's nothing to talk about. Take everything that belongs to you and leave my apartment now!

I looked at him with tears. I went to his wore drop I took my sport bag and I took everything that belonged to me. I went to the bathroom and I took what belonged to me. Themba was sitting on top of his bed looking at me. I closed the bag. I took my hoodie that was on top of his bed. I took out the key to his door. I placed it on top of the dressing table.

Me: I will come back tomorrow for Alondwe's things since I can't take them today. He nodded and he looked down. I went to the door. Before I could open he called my name.

Themba: Thandeka. [I turned back] Here is your pill. You can continue and do what you wanted to do with it, after all he/she is a mistake anyway.

I went to him and took the box. I put it inside my handbag.

Me: Thanks for everything that you have done for me and Alondwe.

He nodded. I took my bag and I went to my car. I stepped inside the car. I drove off. "I guess have the kind of face that's written " Make me pregnant and leave me afterwards" I said out loud and I sighed. I held my tummy and cried. "I am sorry baby. I am sorry" I said out loud.

I cried until I made it to my flat. I stepped out of my car. I took my bag and I walked inside my flat. The lounge had no one. I went to my room. Alondwe was alone. My heart started beating fast. I placed my sport bag inside my wore drop. I looked around.

Me: Thobile?

Thobi: [from the bathroom] Is that Thandeka?

Me: HUUUH you had me worried for a second. Yes it's me.

Thobi: Sorry [she laughed] Why are you back?

Me: Uhm it's nothing. I will give you the cab money and your overtime money.

Thobile: okay sisi.

I went to my baby and she was so beautiful. She was sleeping peacefully. I kissed her slightly opened lips. "I love you baby and I am sorry I almost robbed you a chance to meet your half brother or half sister. But I will dedicate all my life and love to both of you. I will always protect you two as long as I live" I said out loud. I kissed her forehead. I sat on my bed.

Thobile came back I took out the money and I gave it to her.

Thobile: Thanks. Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight. Thanks.

She nodded and she left. I took the box of the pill and I went to the bathroom. I opened the toilet seat and I threw it away and I flushed it down. I threw the box away. I sat on top of the toilet seat and I held my tummy. "Please forgive me baby Smith. I was desperate but you don't have to suffer for my wrong doings and carelessness. I love you" I said. I took off my clothes and I took a shower. I finished and I went to my room to lotion. I wore my pyjamas. I went to the kitchen and I started cooking. I took bread and I made the sandwich. I pasted cheese spread. I couldn't eat it because it had a bad smell. I threw up on the trash can since I wasn't going to make it to the bathroom. I finished and I drank water.

"Mxm uyabheda kanti. You don't eat everything nx!" I said. I took my phone and I checked my bank balance. I had enough money. I was going to manage because I was going to pay the nanny myself. Since Themba was no longer part of my life. Andile was working in Johannesburg. He deposited money for me every month end. I didn't have to worry about Alondwe because she had her own bank account. Her grandmother opened it for her. They deposit money for her every month on her account. All I had to do was to focus on my baby Alondwe, my studies and unborn child qha. I ate my food and I went to sleep.

The following evening I drove to Themba's flat. I knocked on the door there was no

response. I tried again. He opened the door. He looked at me. I looked at him, he was wearing boxers only. He looked like someone who didn't go to work. His eyes were red and puffy. I cleared my throat.

Me: Hy. I am here for Alondwe's things.

Themba: Come in.

I nodded and I went to her room. I took everything that belonged to Alondwe. I went to my car and packed them all. I went back for another bag. I took the bag. I went to Themba's room. I knocked on the door.

Themba: I am naked but you can come in if you don't mind.

Me: Okay.

I opened the door, he was moisturizing his body. I looked at him for a second than I remembered what I came to his room for.

Me: Uhm I wanted to know if I should take the cot or what?

Themba: I am not planning on having a baby so you can take it.

Me: Can you pack it up for me please.

Themba: Sure.

He walked out of his room butt naked as he was. I sighed and followed him. I stood by the wall. I didn't want to look at him naked. He was making my body hot. I went to his kitchen and drank cold water.

Themba:[at my back] Here is the cot.

I put the glass away and I took the box from him. I looked at him once more and my heart broke into a million pieces.

Me: Thank you for everything.

Themba: Okay. You will manage to pay the nanny for Alondwe. I can continue if you can't.

Me: You have done enough already. I will manage. But uhm\_\_ no never mind. [I wanted to say please kiss me. One last time]

Themba: What?

Me: Nothing let me go back home. Bye.

Themba: Okay bye.

I walked to the lounge. He followed me. I opened the door and he called my name.

Themba: Thandeka. [I turned back] uhm. Did you take the pill?

I looked at him and I thought, why should I tell him the truth? Maybe he will take my child because I wanted to kill him/her.

Me: Yes I did. I am sorry.

He nodded and closed the door.

I drove back to my flat. I arrived and I transported everything inside. I told Thobile to go. Alondwe was sleeping. I went to the kitchen and I ate cereals without milk. I thought about the lies I told Themba. My thoughts were disturbed by my phone. I went to my room and pick it up. Dad was calling. I took a deep breath. For once in my life I was going to speak the truth.

Me: Dad.

Dad: My baby how are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Dad: I am fine too. Alondwe's Grandfather called they want to come during Easter holidays. They want to pay damages for her.

Me: Uhm. That's good for her. But I can't come. I am sorry dad but I have disappointed you even more. I am so sorry. I will understand if you want nothing to do with me. I should've known better but I was careless. I am sorry. I am so sorry tata. [I was crying]

He didn't respond for the longest time. I was starting to get worried.

Dad: You're pregnant again?

Me: [low tone] Ye\_\_s

Dad: [sighed] What is done is like what is created. Maybe I am not meant to have grandchildren with my children in marriage. The father of the baby is that coloured boy?

Me: Yes dad. I made a horrible mistake. I was about to take an abortion pill. And he caught me. He wants nothing to do with me dad.

Dad: Thandeka! Uyahlanya? Huh? Why would you want to kill an innocent child. It not the child's fault that you were careless and he was conceived. I don't blame that boy for doing that. I am disappointed that you want to kill your baby while other married woman cry every single night because they can't conceive. What's wrong with you?

Me: I was scared that I was going to loose you again. And my first baby is still young dad.

Dad: You won't loose me ever again mntanami. I love you and I am sorry for disowning you. I am your father I will support you. The father of your second child will come around just keep the baby. Children are a blessing from God regardless of how they were conceived.

Okay?

Me:[sniffing] Yes dad. Thank you. Please don't tell Andile because he will tell Samkelo and they will take my baby.

Dad: No one will take Alondwe away from you. I think she must come back and stay with me. We will look for someone who will take care of her. Someone who will stay with us.

Me: Thank you dad. I will come back with her.

Dad: Okay. Hire a car because I don't think yours will be enough. We will fix a room for her with Qiniso.

Me: [smiling] Thanks.

Dad: You have said enough Thank you. That's what your mother would've done. Even if you have disappointed us but she was never going to let you suffer alone. I love you.

Me: I love you too dad. Goodnight.

Dad: Goodnight.

I hung up the call. And I attended my pots who were almost burning. I finished cooking and I ate my food. I went to sleep afterwards.

The following morning I was woken up by the alarm clock going crazy on my bedside. I was pissed off. I didn't want to wake up. I took the clock and I threw it on the wall "stupid clock!" I said. It made a loud bang and Alondwe woke up and cried. I screamed and covered myself with blankets. "What did I get myself into dear Lord" I stood up and I went to the bathroom. I washed my face I went back to my room. I took Alondwe. She didn't stop crying. I put her down on the carpet on my lounge. I went to the kitchen and I cooked purity porridge for her. I took out purity from the fridge and I put on hot water while I made formula. I was doing all this while she was crying her lungs out. I took the purity. I picked her up and I fed her. She stopped crying and ate. Thobile came in.

Thobi: I am sorry that I am late.

Me: No problem. Please continue and feed her while I get ready for school.

Thobile took her.

Me: I wanted to talk to you. Do you mind going with Alondwe. You two will stay with my father Empangeni.

Thobi: I will stay in your father's house?

Me: Yes.

Thobi: Because I am used to Alondwe. I don't have a problem. I will tell my grandmother tonight. When are we going?

Me: Easter holidays. We will go together.

Thobi: Mmm I can't wait.

Me: No man allowed!

She laughed really hard. I laughed too.

Thobi: Relax.

I smiled and I went to take a shower. I did all the necessities and I drove straight to school. I attended my first classes and I was sleepy through out the lecture. Lunch time, we bought lunch with Thobelani and we went to sit in my car and we ate.

Thobe: So what happened?

Me: I didn't take the pill. Themba caught me before I could take the pill.

Thobe: Brah that's good news.

Me: He broke up with me after that and told me to take the pill if I want to.

Thobe: Let me guess and you took the pill?

Me: No I didn't take the pill.

Thobe: Wow I am proud of your flat ass. I bet Themba is happy.

Me: Well he doesn't know. I told him that I took the pill. I didn't tell him the truth.

Themba: Are you mad? After what you did. It was expected of him to break up with you. And you're unremorseful. Wow!

Me: He tried to throw me out through the window dude. Who does that?

Thobe: You should've known better. He once bath you with ice cold water. Was he supposed to clap hands for you?

Me: Mxm.

Thobe: Sometimes you act like you think with your ass not your brain. Because your actions are nothing but shit!

Me: How could you say something like that to me?

Thobe: It's the truth and you know it.

I couldn't answer him because my phone rang. I took it and answered.

Me: Thandeka speaking hello.

Hope: Hey Trinity it's Hope. Are you fine?

Me: Oh Hope? I am fine and you?

Hope: I am fine. Sorry I couldn't call you because I was busy.

Me: It's cool.

Hope: Can I take you out on a date this Saturday?

Me: A date?

Hope: Yes. Please.

Me: Okay no problem.

Hope: I will pick you up. Please send me your address.

Me: I will do just that.

Hope: Okay. Have a good day ahead. Goodbye.

Me: Thanks you too. Goodbye.

I hung up the call and I sent her my address.

Thobe: It's that white girl we met the last time?

Me: Yes.

Thobe: You're a lesbian now?

Me: I don't know. But did you see that girl she's beautiful.

Thobe: What's wrong with you?

Me: Nothing. At least I won't get pregnant again.

Thobe: Tsk! Let me leave!

He slammed the door shut and he left. I looked at him. I sighed and I drove straight to my flat. I didn't want to attend any classes. I arrived in my flat. Thobile was playing with Alondwe. I took her and I gave Thobile the rest of the day off. I went to my room with my daughter. I played with her until we both fell asleep.

Later I was woken up by the knock on the door. I stood up and I wore my gown. I went to the

door. I checked and Bheki, Brandon and Emma were on my doorstep. I opened up for them. They went to sit down on the couch. I didn't even get the chance to tell them that they should come in.

Me: How can I help you?

Bheki: How can you do such a cruel thing to Themba, Thandeka?

Me: I see you're here to attack me again?

Emma: I told you this was a bad idea. Let's go.

Bheki: I won't go yet. I want to give her a piece of my mind. I always knew that there was nothing different about you. But to kill his child. I never thought you can do such a thing.

Brandon: You're something else Thandeka. To break my friend's heart like that broeh.

Me: What is done is done.

Bheki: After everything he did for you. He even bought this apartment for you. But this is how you thank him.

Me: I will pay him back.

Brandon: Let's go before I threw her out through the window.

Me: Your friend tried doing that.

Brandon: Tsk! Let's go Emma.

Emma: Please wait for me. I want to talk to her alone as my friend.

They nodded. They stood up and left.

Emma looked at me. I looked down.

Emma: You look ugly. You don't look like someone who is not pregnant.

Me: It's the pill. It crashed me.

Emma: I know you were scared and all that. But the baby was Ethan's first born. To hurt him like that Thandeka.

Me: I don't know what to say.

Emma: Please talk to him. The guy loves you.

Me: And I love him too. But part of me is scared of his anger. He almost killed me.

Emma: It's better for you because he almost killed you. But you killed his kid.

Me: I didn't mean to hurt him. Can we talk about something else.

Emma: Okay I am inviting you to my graduation celebration after Easter holidays. I will tell you the details.

I counted months and I was going to be three months pregnant.

Me: If Themba is going to be there I don't think I can come.

Emma: Come on. You won't be doing it for him but for me. Please.

Me: Eish Okay.

Emma: And [showing me her ring] Can you be my maid of honor.

Me: Damn girl. Congratulations my friend. Brandon is doing it big hey?

Emma: Very big. Ethan is the Best man. Maybe you two can reconcile.

Me: Hhaybo. Don't even think about it please.

Emma: I am serious. You two still love each other.

Me: Uhm. So when is the wedding?

Emma: 17th of July.

Me: Mmm after my birthday. Next year right?

Emma: No duh! This year.

Me: What? No! It can't be this year.

Emma: Why?

Me: Uhm... I...I... Oh it's okay no problem.

Emma: Okay thanks.

We hugged each other and she left..

I sat on my couch and I thought long and hard about what I was doing. Two people were going to hate me for shutting them out of each other's lives. It was Themba and his child. I didn't know what I wanted to do. But I didn't want Themba involved in our lives. "We will be fine baby. It's not like we desperately need daddy. We have each other. Me, your sister and you. You two are my everything. Your father is a good man but he's short tempered. I am scared of his temper, Argh life!" I thought out loud.

I stood up and I went to my room. My phone rang. Samkelo was calling. I picked up.

Me: Samkelo?

Sam: How are you mama ka Alondwe?

Me: I am fine and you?

Sam: I am good. Why didn't you tell me that Alondwe is going to stay with your father?

Me: I had a lot going on but I was going to tell you. Her nanny will go with her.

Sam: Thobile?

Me: Yes her. At least she'll be closed to your mom too.

Sam: Why can't she stay with my mom full time? And her nanny?

Me: Let's not debate about it Ndunakazi because you know I won't agree.

Sam: But mama ka Alondwe-

Me: No. Your mother raised you and your sisters now she must raise our child.

Asingamqilazi phela. And my dad lives alone vele because Qiniso is also working.

Sam: Okay there's no problem.

Me: Hooh! At least you can listen.

Sam:[laughing] Come on. I wanted to tell you that I am going to take her on Friday. I will bring her back Monday morning

Me: No problem. Yoh! Ingane yami izokhulela endleleni.

Sam:[laughing] come on she's a traveler. Goodnight you two. Kiss my Princess for me.

Me: No kisses for me?

Sam: [laughing] Argh! You're not my Princess.

Me:[laughing] I am kidding. I don't want your ugly lips.

Sam: You once kissed them like your life depended on them.

Me:[laughing] Samkelo Brah leave me alone.

Sam: But honestly I miss you Thandeka.

Me: Let's not go there please.

Sam: I was just telling you the truth.

Me: Okay Samke goodnight.

Sam:[laughing] Wena kodwa! Goodnight Joy.

I laughed and I hung up the call. I smiled a little. I stood up and I went to the bathroom. I took a shower. I lotioned and wore my pyjamas.

I woke Alondwe up and I bathed her. She was playing with water. She was splashing it all over. "Uyangithela!" I shouted. She got a fright. She stopped and looked at me. She cried after that. I rinsed her and I took her out of the water. She was crying. "I am sorry Princess ka Samkelo. Don't cry baby" I said and I kissed her. She didn't stop crying. I put her on warm clothes. I went to kitchen with her and I fed her purity porridge. She stopped crying and ate her food. After eating I gave her formula. I put her down and I gave her toys. I made something to eat for myself. I ate while I watched my daughter trying to crawl. I clapped hands for her and she screamed. I took my phone out of my gown pocket and I took a video of her. I called her name. She looked at me and screamed even louder. I got emotional and I cried. I picked her up and I kissed her. She giggled. I took her and we went to my room. we played together until we fell asleep.

Days went by. Nothing interesting happened. Thobelani wasn't talking to me. All I did was to go on campus and attend my classes, spend time with my daughter and study. I never tried to

contact Themba and he did the same. I wasn't that closed with Emma because she was working. She was no longer around campus. It was Friday afternoon. Alondwe was ready to go. Around 4pm Samkelo came. We hugged each other and he picked up Alondwe. He swung her up on the air and she laughed. He did it repeatedly and she laughed.

Me: Please give my daughter some air to breathe.

Sam: I am giving her an exercise. Isdudla phela lesi.

Me: Your mother over fed her. Please tell her to slow down.

Sam: I won't. I want my girl to be chubby.

Me: I don't want that. She's trying to crawl.

Sam: [kissing her cheeks] Wow you're growing. You're making mom and dad proud.

MaNdunakazi wami lo. Isdudla sika Thandeka. [Alondwe smiled and did the baby scream]

Me: Argh wena Samkelo! Let me walk you both out.

Sam: [laughing] Thanks.

I took Alondwe's bags and I walked them out. Samkelo was with his friend.

Sam: These is my friend Phumlani. Phumlani these is my Baby mama. Thandeka.

Phumla: Yeah. Baby mama. You look more beautiful on the picture.

Me: Argh Brah please.

Sam: Why are you this ugly vele Thandeka. What is wrong with your skin?

Me: Nothing. Please drive safe with my baby.

Sam: Okay. Bye.

He buckled Alondwe on her seat that he bought with him. I gave him her bags. I kissed my baby. She giggled. I hugged her daddy. He kissed my cheek. I waved goodbye to Phumlani and I went back to my flat. I went to my room and I put together the outfit I was going to wear on my date with Hope....

The following morning I woke up and I took a shower. I walked around naked. I was missing my daughter. I played some old school music. I tried to make something to eat for myself. I didn't know what to eat. I was craving for Pizza. I went to my room and I wore my tracksuit. I took my car keys. I put them down. "Let's walk baby Smith" I said out loud. I took some cash and I walked to Musgrave center. I went to Debonairs Pizza.

Cashier: What are you gonna eat mam?

Me: I will have two boxes of something meaty, four seasons. Uhm is it possible to tell the kitchen staff not to add some cheese on the pizza.

Cashier: Uhm I will try.

Voice: [from my back] You're allergic to cheese?

Me: [looking back] You? Are you guys following me? Or what?

Bheki: Oh please why would we follow you?

Me: I don't know.

Themba: Hi. Thandeka.

Me: Hi. Themba.

Emma: My friend you look ugly dude.

The guys laughed at that. I hugged Emma. Themba went close to the counter and he placed an order.

Emma: I wasn't saying that you should laugh.

Brandon: Oh please bbe. But you look ugly serious.

Me: Thanks.

Bheki: Are you allergic to cheese?

Me: Uhm... Yes I am

Emma: Isn't Ethan suddenly allergic to cheese?

Bheki: Yeah he is.

Themba: You're gossiping about me now?

Brandon: No we were discussing your allergies towards cheese.

Themba: Hheyi. Don't even talk about it.

Bheki: Ava was mad at you last night Brah.

Emma: That girl is a drama Queen!

They all laughed. I wanted to go under ground. Luckily my order was called. I went to the counter. I took the boxes.

Cashier: They didn't put-

Me: Thank you sisi.

I didn't want her to remind me about cheese. I walked away and I went to hug Emma.

Emma: You don't want a lift?

Me: No. We're actually exercising that's why-

Emma: You and who?

Me: Uhm\_\_\_ Me and Alondwe's nanny. She went to clicks or something.

Themba: You left Alondwe alone.

Me: Uhm yeah. She's sleeping. Look I have to go now.

I walked away and I walked straight to my flat. I was actually feeling a little bit scared because I almost told them the truth. I went to my room and I ate my pizza. I ate the first box alone. I fell asleep afterwards.

I woke up around 4pm. I took a shower, I indigenously brushed my teeth and I used Listerine. I lotioned and I wore white jeans, purple shirt and a white coat. I put on purple stilettos with gold deco. I put on my red lipstick. I put on some make-up since I was ugly. My phone beeped. I took it and Hope was outside the building. I took my bag and I left. She saw me and she stepped out of the car. She met me halfway. We hugged each other.

Hope: You look lovely.

Me: Thanks. You look good too.

We stepped inside the car and we drove straight to Durban North. We went to some fancy restaurant. We sat on the table and we looked at our menu.

Me: I don't think I can eat here.

Hope: Why?

Me: Not my kind of food.

Hope: Please try it.

I nodded and we ordered.

Hope: So tell me about yourself.

Me: You first.

Hope: Okay. I am a mother of a beautiful baby boy. He's two years. I am engaged to one of the richest men but it feels like I don't have a man.

Me: He's the father of your son?

Hope: Yes. He's always busy. On business trips, business meetings and all that so I don't really see him often. I had an affair. I dated a woman. She was from Johannesburg but she was involved in a plane crash and she died. So yah. I am actually a full time mom but I have my own qualifications just that John doesn't want me to work. Yah so enough about me. You?

Me: Well. I am also a mother of a beautiful baby girl. She turned six months last week. On the first of March. Me and her daddy are no longer together. I am expecting another baby from a different guy and we're no longer together with him too.

Hope: Mmm. What happened?

Me: I was...[I told her everything]

Hope: Do you think you will manage to keep the baby a secret?

Me: I don't know. Ethan has moved on with his life. I supposed his friends helped him with

that. So I will be fine.

Hope: How do you know that he has moved on

Me: I know. I heard his friends talking about some Ava. So I don't want to get involved. [The food arrived] Enough about all this. Let's eat.

Hope: Yeah.

We laughed and ate our food. We talked about a lot of things. It was very fun. We went to play some games. I had to take off my shoes. After a long day. She drove me back to my flat. We arrived and she stepped out of the car with me

Me: Ain't you gonna come in?

Hope: Why not?

We walked inside my flat. We made popcorn and we sat in front of the TV. I stood up and I took off my clothes. I was left with my bra and panties. I lay down on the couch and I rested my head on her lap. She placed the popcorn on my stomach. We watched comedy and we ate popcorn.

Me: So your son is alone?

Hope: No I have more than two maids.

Me: Mmm nice.

She showed me the picture of her son. He was beautiful. We ate the popcorn and we finished it. We put the bowl down. And she played with my hair. We were watching comedy so we were laughing non stop. There was a knock on the door.

Me: Come in if you're not here to attack us.

We laughed really hard that I even cried. The door swung open and Themba walked in. I quickly raised my head from Hope's lap and I sat up straight.

Me: Themba!

Themba: Look lady can I talk to Thandeka alone.

Hope: Uhm okay. I will see you soon Trinity.

Me: Yeah. Thank you for a lovely evening I had a lot of fun.

Hope: I am glad to make you and the li-

Me: Yah. Yah thanks.

I hugged her. She hugged me back. She whispered "these is him?" I whispered back "Yes". We let go.

Me: Goodnight.

Hope: Goodnight.

I opened the door for her and she left. I went back to the lounge. I sat down.

Me: Can you pass my coat, on that couch you're sitting on.

Themba: You're fine like that.

Me: Okay. Why are you here?

Themba: Why are you lying to me?

Me: About?

Themba: About our child? Your friend told me you didn't take the pill.

Me: What? Who? Thobelani?

Themba: Do you have another friend?

Me: Uhm. I thought Emma was my friend but I guess she's not. I don't know. But he's lying. I took the pill.

Themba: I need prove. Tomorrow I am taking you to the Doctor.

Me:[sarcastic laugh] You're mad dude. You can't force me to go and see the Doctor.

Themba: Just give me proof Damn it!

Me: Listen here Themba. You can't shout at me like that I am not your daughter. Nx!

I stood up and I went to my bathroom. Though a week had passed but my bathroom trash can was not full yet. I searched for the box of the pill. I found it and I took it. I went him and I

gave it to him.

Me: That's your proof.

Themba: I am not satisfied.

He stood up and he went to my room. I followed him. He went to my bathroom. He saw the trash can. I left the other waste on the floor. He threw the box on the floor. He came towards me and he gave me one disturbing hot slap. I almost fell on the floor but I held the dressing table. My cheek was burning. I cried silently.

Themba: You killed my child you bitch! How could you? I thought you were joking! I thought you were going to tell me you didn't kill him when you're ready to tell me. But I was wrong. Why?

I didn't respond. I cried silently. He grabbed me by arm. He looked at me. His face was pink. His breath explained the anger he had.

Themba: You can't talk now?

I didn't respond. He smashed his lips on my lips. I didn't respond, he picked me up. He walked with me to my bed. He threw me on top of it. He got on top of me.

Me: What are you doing Themba?

Themba: So you can talk now? I want my child damnit.

Me: I don't have your child! Please leave me alone. Why don't you go to your who? Ava. Make her pregnant and leave me alone.

He clicked his tongue and he strangled me. I couldn't breathe. I tried to tell him to stop but he didn't I dug my nails on his skin and he let me go. I coughed.

Themba: I promise one day I will come for you. I will kill you. Before I kill you I will make you suffer like you did to my child. It won't be soon because I am not stupid but I will kill you bitch! Tsk!

He got off me and he left. I was struggling to breathe. I stood up but I couldn't walk because I was shocked. I crawled to my dressing table drawers and I took out the paper bag. That contain the medication. I used it to breathe. But I was struggling to breathe. I crawled to my phone. I called Hope. She picked up. I tried to speak.

Me: Hee\_\_lp mee\_ plee\_\_

Hope: [Panicking] Trinity?? What's wrong?

Me: Heeel\_\_\_\_\_

I couldn't finish the sentence because I passed out....

I woke up in a hospital bed. Hope was with me. I tried to speak but I had the oxygen thingy on me. Hope held my hand.

Hope: Hey Trinity are you fine?

Me:[removing it] Ye\_\_s. H\_o\_w is my ba\_\_

Hope: Your baby is fine but you have stop stressing yourself out dear. This is not healthy for the baby.

Me:[clearing my throat] I am not stressed I just don't want Themba anywhere near me. In fact I don't want anyone beside my child.

Hope: Not even me?

Me: Not you come on.

Hope: Okay. I called your dad. He was the only person I could call because I don't know other contacts.

Me: Thanks. What did he say?

Hope: He said your daughter won't come back. He has hired a van that will come today and take your daughter's things.

Me: No! I won't see my daughter now? Today is Sunday?

Hope: No. It's Monday.

Me: Who will go to my flat and monitor those people.

Hope: I will. Your dad gave them my number. They will call me when they are here. I will go to them and they will take everything that belongs to your daughter.

Me: I don't like this but what can I say. It's all organized. I will live alone without Alondwe. No man this is going to be hard. It was better because I had a few days with her before Easter holidays.

Hope: You'll be fine. I-

Her phone rang and she excused herself. I drank water. She came back.

Hope: They are here. I will get someone to buy you lunch. So I will see you later.

Me: Okay thanks for everything.

She nodded and she left.

The Doctor came.

Doc: You're awake.

Me: Yes.

Doc: How is your neck?

Me:[touching it] Not bad.

Doc: Do you know what happened? Maybe you will want to involve the police. Because it's clear that the person who did this wanted to kill you. You and your baby are in danger.

Me: We will be fine. How far am I?

Doc: You're five weeks. Next month you'll start showing.

Me: It's too soon. I can't be showing Doctor. Next month is April. I have a party to attend I can't go with a bump.

Doc: It will be a small bump. You can hide it with a maternity top. One more thing stress is not good for you and the baby. If you stress yourself you'll end up being depressed. I will give you medication. And you'll go home later.

Me: Thanks Doctor.

He nodded and left. A nurse came in and gave me the takeaways and the change.

Me: Keep the change sisi.

Nurse: That lady gave me money.

Me: It's cool take it.

Nurse: Thanks.

She took the money the money and left. I ate and I fell asleep.

I woke up later. Hope was pacing up and down in my room. She looked really scared.

Me: What's wrong Hope?

Hope:[coming towards me] I got this on your doorstep. I am sorry that I opened it.

She gave me a box. I took it and opened it. It was a box with a torn up teddy bear. It had blood on it. And there was a knife with blood. There was a note written "Your day is coming, it won't be soon but it's coming" it was Themba's handwriting. I dropped the box and I cried.

Hope held me tight.

Me: These bastard will kill me.

Hope: Just tell him about the baby.

Me: I rather die than to tell him about my child. If he wants to kill me. It's fine let him kill me.

Hope: Your daughter?

Me: She has a father. And grandparents. I grew up without a mother. So I don't care about it all. Themba will just have to kill me and his child.

Hope: You're being selfish.

Me: I know.

Hope: Just come and stay with me in my house. You will be fine and safe.

Me: I won't do that. Even if I tell him the truth. He'll beat me up for lying so I might as well

live with the lie.

Hope: I rest my case. Stand up and change. You're going home.

Me: In my flat right?

Hope: Yes. I thought you love this guy.

Me: I love him but hey Brah it's all hard.

She shook her head. I stood up and I fixed myself. I wore clothes that she brought for me. I took the box and she took the bags.

Hope: Why are you taking the box?

Me: I will send it back to him. I want to show him that I am not scared.

Hope: But you're scared.

Me: Hell yes! I am scared.

Hope: You're both crazy. This is not love now it's war!

Me: I know. I won't give him the satisfaction. One thing I have to do is to pay back his money that he used to buy the flat for me. I am Thandeka. I might be scared of him. But I am also capable of killing him too. Regardless of whatever that I have done to him he had no right to slap me, strangle me and try to throw me out of the window. I will work up my plan to get out of this mess.

Hope: Because I love you. I am going to save both of you from yourselves love. So work out your plan and I will work out mine. Because I can see this is not only love. But it's love and war.

Me: Whatever! Let's go please.

I took my file and I reported to the reception. We walked out of the hospital. I felt the wave of fresh air. I inhaled it.

Me: Can we please go to the beach. I just want to walk on the soil and look at the waves.

Hope: This is South Beach. Your boyfriend lives around right?

Me: Ex boyfriend. Yes but he's at work now. But let me call my dad first.

We stepped inside the car. I took my phone and I called dad. He answered.

Me: Mkhabela.

Dad: Bhelesi omncane how are you?

Me: I am fine dad and you?

Dad: I am alright. You're out of the hospital?

Me: Yes. I am going to my flat now.

Dad: My grandchild is alright?

Me: Yes dad.

Dad: What happened?

Me: Nothing much dad. Just a little stress. But I will be fine. How is my fetty boom boom?

Dad:[laughing] She's fine. I called that girl. Her nanny. Your friend gave me her number. She said she's coming tomorrow.

Me: Okay dad thanks. I will see you next week. But I want to ask something.

Dad: Okay.

Me: My ex boyfriend bought my flat for me. The time you disowned me. Now that we broke up under circumstances of me trying to kill his baby. I am tired of hearing his friends tell me that he bought the flat for me. So please dad can you repay him on my behalf.

Dad: Did you fix things with him about the baby?

Me: Not yet.

Dad: Thandeka! What are you waiting for. You're not doing this for yourself but for your child. You have to make things right. Even if you don't date him again.

Me: Ngiyakuzwa baba.

Dad: I will deposit the money on his account tomorrow. Just email me all the expenses of the

flat. And his account number.

Me: Okay dad. Thank you so much.

Dad: Okay. Go and get some rest.

Me: Yes Doctor Dhlomo. I love you.

Dad: I love you too.

We hung up the call. Hope drove to the beach.

We arrived at the beach. We stepped out of the car.

Hope: Don't you have a scarf to cover your neck.

Me: No. I don't. Are the marks really bad?

Hope: Yes they are. Here use this face powder. Just to powder your left cheek. I will go and buy a scarf for you.

I nodded and I took the powder. I sat down on the car and I looked at my cheek. I had his finger strips on my cheek. My neck too. I covered the strips with the powder and I waited for Hope. She came back and gave me the scarf. I took it and I covered my neck. We went to steers and I bought ice cream. Hope bought a burger. We walked around the beach. Just looking at people and taking pictures.

Voice: [from our backs] Thandeka?

Me:[turning back] Thobelani. Hi. And Olwethu Hi.

Olwethu: Hey. Look Thandeka I never got a chance to speak to you. I am sorry about what happened between my mom and your dad. I didn't like the idea but I had no choice because I am nothing but the child.

Me: It's cool. It's all in the past. Let me leave you.

Thobe: Uhm Thandeka did you fix things with Themba?

Me: Yes we did. Like this.

I removed my scarf. And I wiped the powder off my left cheek. They were surprised.

Me: Thanks to you dear friend. I trusted you with my life but you betrayed me.

Thobe: But I thought Themba doesn't beat women.

Me: Not unless you push him too far and you assisted me do that. What happened to loyalty kanti? I thought you were the only friend I can rely on but I was wrong.

Thobe: I am sorry Thandeka. I didn't know-

Me: Yeah. Save your sorry for someone who cares. Tsk! Let's go Hope.

I walked away and Hope followed me. We stepped inside the car and she drove me straight to my flat. I thanked her for everything and she left. I closed the door. I went to the bathroom and I took a shower. I lotioned and I wore my pyjamas. I cleaned up my flat. My room looked so empty without Alondwe's things. I took my drawing tools and a chair. I took the box that Themba sent me. I opened it. I placed the teddy bear outside the box, the knife and the note. I drew up everything as I placed it on the floor. I even drew the note. I gave my drawing colour. I finished and I put everything away. I went to my fridge and I made something to eat for myself. I sat on my lounge and ate. I called Themba. He answered quickly but he wasn't talking to me. He was talking to a lady on the background.

Themba: "I told you don't make me eat something with cheese!!"

Lady:( " why do you hate cheese this much Ethan I don't understand! ")

Themba: "I don't like cheese. The smell of cheese is horrible! Just listen to me and do what I say you must do."

Lady:( " I am sorry bbe I won't give you cheese again. Now let me make your anger cool down ")

Themba: " You're the best you know "

She giggled and I heard kissing sounds. I hung up the call and I placed it aside. I sighed heavily. I stood up and I went to my fridge. I took the container of cheese spread and I went to my bathroom. I opened the container. I smelled it and it had a very horrible smell. I threw

up on the toilet seat. I finished and I closed my nostrils using one hand. I took the cheese and I threw it away in my kitchen trash can. After that I went to the lounge and I watched movies. I was trying so hard not to think about Themba being with another woman. I watched a movie. My phone rang as I was feeling sleepy. I took it. Themba was calling.

Lady: Ethan mistakenly answered your call. He saw that now. Sorry. He said I must ask you that what do you want?

Me: I wanted to ask for his account number.

Lady:[talking to Themba] Bbe she wants your account number.

Themba: [at the back] ” Ask why?”

Me: Tell him I want repay him his money. The one he used to buy the flat.

Lady: [She told him]

Themba: ” Tell her we will send it just now. And she must stop calling me.

Lady: He-

Me: I heard that mam.

Lady: Good so stay away.

Me: I am away already dear.

I hung up the call. He sent account number. The text was written “I don’t want your money so just send the money to my girlfriend’s account” I took the account number. I emailed dad everything he needed to know. After that I went to sleep with a very lonely heart.

&

&

The following days I was busy studying. I had a test week so I had no time for anything else besides my books. I decided to plan whatever I was going to plan for Themba after the Easter holidays. I was always scared that anything can happen to me. I used to go on campus and go back to my flat. Lock myself up and study. I even changed my door locks because I didn’t take my key from Themba. My dad paid back all his money.

After my test week I went back home. I spent the whole week with my family though Andile was not around. Alondwe was crawling and she was fond of my father. My relationship with dad was good and I was happy. As days went by it was like I was becoming more ugly and gaining weight. On April my bump started showing only if I was wearing tight clothes. I wasn’t pleased at all. Andile didn’t know about my pregnancy. I wasn’t ready to tell him. Samkelo and his family did pay damages for Alondwe. Samkelo didn’t know about my pregnancy too and I wasn’t going to tell him. He was going to see himself. After the Easter conference I had to go back to school and leave my baby. She was seven months old. It was hard leaving her but I had to. So it was a Friday afternoon I was getting ready for Emma’s celebration party. Hope was going with me....

In my head I had a long Brazilian weave. It made my ugly face look at lot better. I wore navy jeans, navy loose top and a pink blazer. I put on black stilettos and make-up just to look a little pretty. I put on pink lipstick. I was looking good on my clothes. My face was just fine. I took my handbag and I went to the lounge. Hope came. She was looking good.

We hugged each other.

Hope: Today you look different.

Me: Different good or different bad?

Hope: Different good.

Me: Am I really that bad without make up?

Hope: Compared to the first day I saw you. You’re really bad. Your neck is darker than your skin. And those bruises are no longer there but you’re just different and you’re getting fat.

Me: My first pregnancy was good to me. I was beautiful and I had no big bump nor ugly face. Argh! Let me put on a scarf.

I took a scarf in my room and I put it on. I went back to hope.

Me: My bump doesn't show?

Hope: Not really.

Me: Okay.

We opened the door and there was a box on the doorstep. I took it. I looked at Hope.

Me: Should I open it?

Hope: Just read the note.

I took the note and read it. It was written "Women like you don't deserve to live. If this is what you do to our children. Tonight after the party you better expect something great coming to you. Your day is here!" I started shaking because I was scared. I cried. Hope tried to calm me down. I pushed her away.

Me: I want to open the box.

Hope: Open it. But don't! what if something scary. Maybe it's a dead fetus. Look at that part of the note. "If this is what you do to our children" So don't.

Me: Yeah you're right. But I am going to that party.

Hope: He's crazy Brah. He'll kill you.

Me: I will see. I don't want to show him that I am scared come Hope.

We went to her car. I threw the box and the note away. Hope was driving. I gave her the address that Emma gave me. The house was in Glenwood.

In no time we were in Glenwood. There were lot of cars parked outside the house. The house was beautiful. It was a double storey house. We stepped out of the car. My phone rang. I took it out of my bag.

Me: I will meet you inside.

She nodded and she went through. I picked up the call from Andile.

Andile: You're pregnant again and you didn't bother yourself with telling me.

Me: I was going to tell you Bhuti I am sorry.

Andile: Thandeka are you crazy?

Me: No I am not.

Andile: Why are you so irresponsible?

Me: I am sorry Andile.

Andile: Tsk!

He hung up the call. I put my phone back inside my bag, I sighed and I walked inside the house. I looked around and the house was full. I couldn't find Hope. I just went to the bar and asked for non alcoholic drink.

Voice: [from my back] I didn't think you will come.

Me: [looking back] Emma. How are you?

Emma: I am fine.

We hugged each other.

Emma: You look chubby. Are you fine.

Me: Yes. I am fine. Let's just say being single treats me good. [I looked around]

Emma: That's nice.

Me: You don't have to pretend Emma it's fine. Uhm. You know that girl? [Pointing her]

Emma: Oh her. Yes. She's Bheki's girlfriend.

Me: Oh are you serious.

Emma: Yes. Do you know her?

Me: Uhm.. No she's just beautiful.

Emma: Yeah. So I will see you later.

Me: Yeah sure. Congratulations again.

Emma: Thanks.

We hugged each other once again. She left. I saw Themba and his friends. He was with a very beautiful skinny coloured woman. She was beautiful as fuck. They looked happy and good together. I

sighed and I walked out of the house. I went at the back of the house. Hope was sitting alone by the pool chairs. I joined her.

Me: You look bored.

Hope: I am bored. I just want to go to some club and get wasted.

Me: [laughing] You can go afterwards.

Hope: You'll be dead by then.

Me: If I die serious please tell my family that I love them.

She looked at me and laughed. I laughed too. She stood up and held my hand.

Hope: Let's go to a club by South Beach please.

Me: I can't dude. It's risky for me. My condition doesn't allow me.

Hope: Come on you will sit by the bar. Or VIP section.

Me: No dude. It's hot now please I want to chill here and relax.

I took off my blazer. I sat up straight. Hope sat next to me and sulked.

Hope: I wish I can swim now.

Me: [laughing] Come on let's swim.

She laughed and took off her shirt. There was no one at the back of the house. I also took off my shirt. I was about to unzip my jeans when somebody called for my name. I got a fright and I hide my tummy using my hands.

Emma: So you lied?

Me: About?

Emma: Your pregnancy! How could you?

Me: Pass me my shirt Hope.

Emma ran to it before Hope could take it.

Me: Bring back my shirt Emma I want to go!

Emma: No! Bitch you're going nowhere!

Brandon: [joining in] Bbe what's-

He looked at me and his eyes popped out.

Me: Let's go hope.

I tried to grab her arm. Emma grabbed mine first.

Emma: I said you're going nowhere!

Brandon: So she didn't abort the-

Emma: She's been fooling us.

Brandon took out his gun and he pointed us with it. Hope screamed. He held her mouth.

Brandon: You will go to that backroom now both of you. So that we can solve this thing once and for all.

Me: Please just let me go. I promise you won't see me ever again.

Brandon: Just go!

I had no choice but to go. They both followed me. Brandon had Hope with him. Emma opened the backroom and we went through. We sat on the chairs provided. Brandon left us with Emma.

Me: Please give me my clothes.

Emma: I thought you were my friend. But you lied to me too.

Me: Even if I wanted to tell you. You never called me unless it was about your party. You were no longer my friend Emma so don't use that line on me.

Emma: I-

Brandon came in. He was with Themba and Bheki. I buried my face on my lap trying to hide my bump.

Brandon: You can't hide now Thandeka.

Themba: What's going on here? Emma?

Hope: Trinity please just stop this. You can't hide now.

Me: I want them to leave us alone. We were very much better without them. Specially without Themba.

Themba: What is she talking about! Can somebody tell me what's going on??

Emma: She lied about aborting your baby. I saw her by the pool with her friend. I think they wanted to swim.

Themba: You're lying. I saw the container of the pill.

Brandon: Your girlfriend is a master mind Ethan. She's good with missions.

Me: I am his ex girlfriend!

Bheki: Make her get up Brandon. Shoot her foot.

Me:[getting up quickly] You don't have to shoot me. [I stood up]

Themba looked at me and tears streamed down his face. He was shocked. I couldn't look at him I just looked down.

Themba: [crying] Thandeka? [I didn't respond]

Thandeka!?!?!?

Me: Yini??? Yini?? [What?]

I looked at him. He buried his face on his hands. He wiped his tears. He held his head.

Emma: You have to abort the mission Ethan your child is not dead.

Bheki: Yeah Brah. You have to.

Themba: How? It's all done. It's impossible to abort.

Me: So you all wanted to kill me?

Brandon: They will take the bed and dump it somewhere else

Emma&Bheki: Yeah....

Me: [low tone] Emma can you please give my clothes back.

Themba:Thandeka I am sorry.

Me: Emma can I have my top, my blazer and my scarf dear. I want to go.

Bheki: Let me call them and tell them to take the bed away.

Themba: Yeah please.

Bheki left the room. Themba's girlfriend came inside the room.

Her: Bbe I was looking for you. What's going on here?

Themba: Please go Ava. I will see you later.

Her: But bbe-

Themba: I said go!!

She left the room. I sat down and I looked at them. They looked at me.

Themba: Thandeka-

Me: Emma dude can I have my clothes.

She gave me my clothes. I wore them.

Me: Wear your top Hope we are leaving.

Brandon: Please don't go.

Emma: Thandeka you want us to beg you now. Oh please man! If you didn't lie to us non of this could've happened. You were selfish. After everything Ethan has-

Me: He was supposed to beat me because he has done a lot of things for me? He was supposed to strangle me? Am I the first girl to have an abortion. You all were ready to kill me. You were going to make my daughter an orphan. Yah. Anyway Themba I did say thank you for everything you did for me and it's not like I was milking your money. You were doing it because you wanted to do it. I don't want to hear from all of you. Please leave me alone.

Themba: I won't leave you alone. You're carrying my child.

Me: I will call you when I give birth brah. But now I need to sleep. I am tired.

Hope: Why don't you sleep in my house. You can go back to your flat when they have replaced your bed.

Me: I will buy my own bed. You want them to say "Themba bought you a new bed. This is

how you repay him” No!

Hope laughed. I looked at her.

Hope: Sorry but this is funny. You can't always use something like that on someone like your boyfriend was forced to do things for you. My fiancée does everything for me but he never used that against me no matter what.

Me: You don't get it. The bad thing about it is it's not him who says “after everything that I have done for you” but its his friends it's like they assisted him to do that. So please Themba let me go.

Themba: Can you all leave us alone for a few minutes.

Me: No guys please. Don't leave us alone. You want to strangle me again?

Themba: Guys please.

They all stood up and left the room. Themba sat next to me. He held my hand. I shifted awkwardly. He looked at me and I looked down.

Me: Please don't hold my hand.

Themba: Thandeka please don't do this I beg you.

Me: What? I asked you not to hold my hand and you're telling me “Thandeka don't do this?”  
[He let go of my hands]

Themba: I am sorry.

Me: Save your sorry Themba. If you cared enough you were never going to try to throw me out through the window, while you knew p that I was still pregnant. You didn't even try to reason with me. Find out why I tried to abort our child. But you were too quick to try and threw me out. I was wrong I know but if you gave me some sort of assurance instead of violence it was going to be better. It was enough for me that you shouted at me. But no for Thembaletu Smith it wasn't enough. He had to throw me out through the window. I was mad at you Themba. I don't understand why do you have to be this violent. I hope this is not what you are going to teach my child.

Themba: I am sorry Thandeka. I will work on it. I don't want my child to grow up knowing that violence can solve things. But I want her/him to grow up in a comfortable home with love and care.

Me: You better make sure that your girlfriend will be nice to my child otherwise you won't get to spend time with him in that comfortable home.

Themba: No house of mine can be comfortable without you.

Me: Mxm I am not going to play happy family with a man who tried to kill me.

Themba: I was angry.

Me:[crying] Regardless of it all Themba I loved you. You were my life. I might have used my baby to hurt you but you gave up so easy on us. You moved on with your life. You're forgetting one thing that you broke up with me. I didn't break up with you.

Themba: I needed distraction. If I didn't try to get Ava I was going to go crazy Thandeka. You know that I love you. And I have never stopped loving you. Just that my love was easily turned into hatred by your actions. You pushed me too far Thandeka.

Me: [crying harder] I am sorry too for trying to kill little Ethan I was scared I was going to loose my dad again. Alondwe was only five/six months. I am sorry for that.

Themba:[holding me] Shhh it's okay. It's in the past now. So we gonna have a baby boy?

Me: I don't know but I think so. I wasn't ugly like this when I had Alondwe.

Themba: Eyi plus umubi nawe.

I punched him playfully and he laughed. He tickled me and I laughed in between my tears. I told him to stop and he did. There was a moment of silence. He wiped my tears using his fingers. We looked at each other and he slowly kissed me. I slowly kissed him back. We kissed each other intensely. He made me sit on him and he kissed me even deeper. I held onto him like I didn't want him to ever stop holding me. It felt so real.

Voice: [on the door] I should've known! How could you Ethan. [We stopped] How could you!

I got off him and his girlfriend tried to hit me with her handbag but Themba stopped her.

Her: You promised me that she's no longer part of your life. But you're here kissing her.

Themba: Ava. Calm down thi-

Ava: Don't tell me to calm down. You! Leave my man alone bitch. I will kill you.

Me: Okay. When there is a crazy bitch behind. Thandeka you better run.

I took my scarf and I walked to the door.

Themba: Thandeka please don't go. We still have to talk.

Me: There's nothing to talk about. I can't take chances maybe I will die serious this time around. Bye.

Themba: Thandeka! Plea-

I closed the door before he could finish off his sentence.

I went back to the house and I looked for Hope. She was on the dancefloor with some chick. I tapped her shoulder. I shouted through the music.

Me: Let's go please.

Hope: I just want to dance.

Me: I want to go.

Hope: Wait for me in the car please.

She gave me the car keys. I walked out of the house. I walked to the gate. I stopped when someone called my name. I looked back and it was Emma.

Emma: Look I wanted to say I am sorry for what almost happened to you.

Me: Okay can I go now.

Emma: So our friendship is alright?

Me: I am no longer your friend.

Emma: I had to support Ethan. He's my brother. But I don't want to lose you as a friend.

Me:[sarcastic laugh] But I was going to die tonight right? So take it as if I am dead.

Emma: But I am sure that's not what you said to Ethan. I am sure that you will go back to him.

Me: He moved on with his life. I am no longer part of it. One thing that is keeping us together is the baby qha.

Emma: But you can't deny the fact that you love him.

Me: I also love Baba ka Alondwe but I am not with him. So that doesn't mean anything. And I don't want that chick to kill me. So if you don't mind I want to go.

Emma: Okay. Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight. Please tell Themba to drive Hope to my flat so she can get her car because I won't wait for her.

Emma: Okay.

Me: Thank you.

She went back to the house and I went to the car. I drove straight to my flat. I arrived, I didn't lock the door because Hope was going to take her keys. Everything was in order beside my bed. I had to sleep on the couch because I had no bed. I couldn't sleep on one couch so I made a comfortable bed with two of them. I took pillows and blankets. I went to the kitchen and eat. After eating I took off my clothes and I fell asleep immediately.

I felt hands touching my face. The person kissed my forehead. I pretend like I was sleeping.

Themba: I almost took away your lives both of you. I was full of anger and hatred.

He went down to my tummy and he touched it

Themba: I am sorry boy. I love you. You and your mother are my life. One can say but I wanted to kill her. I didn't want see her and remember what happened. I hope you will stop

making your mom ugly mjita. I will take some pictures and keep them for you. So that you can see the damage you've done. I will marry these woman though she doesn't want me for now but I won't rest until she becomes Mrs Smith.

He came back up to my face and he kissed my lips and my forehead.

Themba: You're my family.

Me:[with my eyes closed] What about your parents?

Themba: I thought you were sleeping.

Me: I was sleeping. But I woke up because a frog kissed me.

He laughed. I sat up straight up. He took off his shoes and sat next to me.

Themba: I hope I have turned out to be a Prince. Your Prince.

Me: Mxm. Answer my question.

Themba: I didn't have courage to go and see my parents without you.

Me: So if I were to die. You were never going to fix your relationship with them?

Themba: Can we promise each other one thing.

Me: I am listening.

Themba: I am not proud of what I did to you. And what I was going to do to you. So please don't ever use it against me nor mention it.

Me: I won't if you won't use trying to abort our child against me or mention it. And do you mind telling me how were you planning on killing me. I just want to know.

Themba: I promise I won't use it against you. But I won't tell you that. I can't. It's better if you don't know.

Me: Okay. I won't use it against you too than. Back to your parents.

Themba: If you can go with me I will try and fix a relationship with them.

Me: Your girlfriend won't mind?

Themba: Do we really have to consider her?

Me: Yes because if I was her and you going with your baby mama to your parents. I was going to be heart broken.

Themba: But I want to go with you. And I would like to fix our relationship first before my parents.

Me: There's nothing to fix. We just have to be better parents to our child.

Themba: Ava won't kill you. I know you're scared of that. Please give us another try.

Me: Break up with your Ava first. And you have to work on your anger issues.

Themba: You will help me find someone who can help me?

Me: Yes I will help you.

Themba: Thank you. Can I hold you until you go back to sleep?

I smiled and I rested my head on his chest. He held me tight. He played with my weave until I fell asleep.

The following morning I woke up with Themba's arms wrapped around me. I removed them and I shook him. He opened his eyes and he closed them again. I stood up and I let him be since it was Saturday he wasn't going to work. I went to the bathroom and I took a shower. I indegenously brushed my teeth. I lotioned and I wore my gown only. I went to the kitchen. I wanted to eat a full meal so I started cooking. I felt Themba touching my tummy coming from my back. He kissed my cheek.

Themba: Good morning.

Me: Morning.

Themba: I need clothes to wear. I never took my clothes.

Me: I burnt your clothes.

Themba: You're cruel you know.

Me: Yes I know [laughing] I am kidding. Your clothes are in my wore drop.

I turned back and I looked at him. He was butt naked. I closed my eyes.

Me: Why do you like walking around naked?

Themba: I wanted to know if you still have my clothes around.

Me: You should've checked on my wore drop. Or wrap up your waist using my towel.

Themba: [chuckles] I am sorry. Are you traumatised?

Me: Yes I am.

Themba: Please open your eyes.

Me: No I don't want to.

He laughed and I felt his lips lingering on my lips. He kissed me and I kissed him back. I wrapped my arms around his neck. We kissed each other intensely. I felt my spine getting cold. I felt goosebumps all over my body. We broke the kiss after a long time. Our foreheads met and we were both breathing heavily.

Me: I've missed you and my ego didn't allow me to tell you the truth.

Themba: I have missed you too. I swear I will make things right.

Me: We will make things right.

We hugged each other for a long time and we backed away.

Themba: I won't get to see little Princess. I missed her screams.

Me: She's with her grandfather now.

Themba: But our son won't stay Empangeni Thandeka.

Me: I don't know. Just go and wear your clothes.

He kissed my cheek and he left. I finished up cooking and I dished up for us. I texted my brother saying I am sorry for disappointing him. He didn't respond. I placed my phone away. I sat down.

Themba joined me and we ate together after praying.

Themba: What are your plans for today.

Me: I don't have a bed so I will buy one.

Themba: I will replace your bed.

Me: No I will do it myself. I was serious Themba I don't want you to do anything for me. I can take care of myself.

Themba: But I am your boyfriend.

Me: That doesn't mean anything.

Themba: So I won't even buy chocolates for you?

Me: No. Nothing.

Themba: I will be buying those chocolate for my son not for you.

Me: No. I can buy him chocolates if he wants chocolates. You can buy those things if he's in this world.

Themba: That's crap.

Me: And I don't want your friends involved in our relationship Themba. I am tired of them sticking their nose where it doesn't belong. I don't care if you grew up together or what.

What happens between is our business.

Themba: Okay but please fix your friendship with Emma.

Me: No. She's not my friend. There's no friendship to fix.

Themba: But Thandeka-

Me: No Themba. There's no friendship between us. Please wash the dishes I want to change.

Themba: Okay.

I went to my room and I wore a grey tight long sleeve dress. I wore a black ankle heel boots. I fixed my weave and I put on make-up. I put on red lipstick. I took my ID and my handbag. I went back to the lounge. Themba had fixed the lounge. Thobelani was on my lounge. I went to them.

Me: Hi.

Thobe: Hey. Thandeka. Are you alright?

Me: Yes I am fine and you?

Thobe: I am fine. I wanted us to talk.

Me: About?

Thobe: About what happened. Me, telling Themba about the baby. I am sorry my friend. I miss you and I don't want to end our friendship just like that. I was trying to help.

Me: I know. But I was seriously hurt by what you said to me.

Thobe: I was angry Brah. I am sorry.

I stood up and I opened my arms for him. We hugged each other for the longest time. We backed away and he kissed my cheek.

Thobe: Thanks.

Me: I am sorry too for being a jerk. I have missed your flat ass in my couch.

We laughed and we hugged each other once more.

Me: I will see you later. You will stay here or?

Thobe: I will stay. I will see you when you come back.

Me: Okay. Don't burn my place down.

He laughed. Themba stood up and we left.

We went to his car. He opened the front door for me. I stepped in and we drove to Durban station. I wanted to buy my bed at Trend design furniture shop if I am not mistaken about the name.

Themba: You shouldn't wear stilettos. You're pregnant.

Me: Don't lecture me Themba please.

Themba: But bbe I am serious.

Me: Okay. Stop calling me bbe futhi.

Themba: You want me to call you wife? But You kissed me this morning.

Me: No don't call me that. I guess I am your side chick.

Themba: No you're not. But you have fixed your friendship with Thobelani. Why not with Emma?

Me: He's the only friend I have.

Themba: The white girl?

Me: I just like her. She's a nice girl and she's fun but not that she's my friend.

Themba: Okay.

We arrived by the shop and I looked at different types of beds. I found the one. I bought it and they were going to deliver the bed the following day. We went back to the car. We drove to Brandon and Emma's house. They were having some lunch.

Me: I will sleep on the couch again.

Themba: Come and sleep in my place.

Me: You want your main chick to stab me.

Themba: Thandeka please.

Me: Okay cool. I don't see the reason why I should go with you to this lunch you're having with your friends.

Themba: Thandeka please don't be like that.

Me: Okay.

Themba: Thanks.

In no time we were at Brandon's house. We stepped out of the car and we walked inside the house. They were all gathered together around the table. We joined them. We greeted them. I looked at Bheki's girlfriend. She looked at me and she looked down.

Me: I heard you finally found the one Bheki. Congratulations.

Bheki: Thanks. She's just lovely.

Me: Mmmm.

Emma: So how is the baby.

Me: The baby is fine except that there's "Cheese in this table" Themba and I said that at the same time and we ran to the nearest bathroom. He made it to the bathroom first. I threw up on the vase that had flowers.

I was pissed off big time but I tried to contain my anger. I put the vase down and I went to the bathroom. Themba was still throwing up. I rinsed my mouth and I washed my hands. I left him like that. I went back to the lounge but the vase was no longer where I left it. I went back to the table. They were actually laughing.

Me: Who took your vase?

Emma: The cleaner did. I am sorry about the cheese. I completely forgot.

Themba:[sitting down] Don't ever do that broeh.

Brandon: You will buy my vase Ethan.

Themba: It wasn't that beautiful.

Emma: But it was a beautiful gift.

Themba: Whatever.

Me: You don't have to throw it away. It's not like it's broken.

They all went silent but I wasn't shouting. I was just suggesting. I didn't say anything further too. I ate the food provided. Bheki cleared his throat. I looked up because I was looking down. He was standing.

Bheki: Actually the main reason of having this lunch is to apologize to our Mrs Smith for what we did. I know it's quite unforgivable but I wish that you can find it in your to forgive us. He sat down and Brandon stood up.

Me: Y'all don't have to apologize I forgive you. It's cool. I think Bheki was speaking for everyone.

Them: Thank you.

We continued eating.

Bheki: I told you that someone was pregnant Themba but you didn't listen.

Themba: [laughing] I didn't know. Because I knew that the baby was no more since she was my only girlfriend.

Emma: But it was quite obvious. You can't just hate cheese all of the sudden.

Bheki's girl: I wouldn't like to hate cheese. I love cheese too much.

Me: But you don't choose for yourself.

Her: That's the bad thing.

Brandon: I just can't wait to go partying with little Ethan.

They all laughed. I just shook my head.

Me: He'll be a mama's boy.

Bheki: You will make him gay.

Themba: Yoh! That can be a challenge.

We laughed. Dessert was served and after that we hugged each other goodbye.

We drove back to my flat. I called Thobile. She picked up on third ring.

Thobi: Hello.

Me: Hey how are you?

Thobi: We are fine and you?

Me: We're fine. How is my angel?

Thobi: She's fine but she's not around.

Me: Where is she?

Thobi: She left with Qiniso, Enhle [Qiniso's daughter] and her grandfather. They went to the beach.

Me: Hhaybo She's seven months but she went to the beach?

Thobi: Yes they insisted on going with her. She was with her grandmother the whole week she came back yesterday.

Me: Mmm okay. Send my love to everyone.

Thobi: Okay bye.

Me: Bye.

I hung up the call and placed my phone away.

Themba: Alondwe went to the beach?

Me: Yes. She'll be sick. I don't like it.

Themba: She'll be fine relax. I was thinking that maybe you can go with me this coming weekend to visit my parents.

Me: Okay. There's no problem. I hope they won't throw us out.

Themba: I will leave if they do that.

Me: Hhaybo you have to be patient.

Themba: Okay. After that I want to pay damages for my son.

Me: Hhayi Okay.

Themba: Thank you.

I smiled and I kissed his cheek.

Within a few minutes on the road we arrived in my flat. We went through. Thobelani was watching soccer. We sat on the couch.

Me: Mjita you will sleep here right?

Thobe: Are you leaving?

Me: Yes I can't sleep on the couch again. My bed will delivered tomorrow.

Thobe: What happened to it?

Me: I needed a new one.

Thobe: Okay. Can I call Olwethu?

Me: Uhhh. Oh. Are you two still in a relationship?

Thobe: Yes why?

Me:[hitting him playfully] Come on. I was just asking. Let me pack a few things. Smith come

Themba: Okay.

He held my hand and we went to my room. I packed a few clothes.

Themba: You gonna leave the other clothes in my apartment?

Me: No I won't.

Themba: Why not?

Me: Anghandi.

Themba: Oh okay.

Me: Please take off my boots.

He went down and took off my boots. I wore my slippers. He took my bag and we went to the lounge. I hugged Thobelani.

And we left. We drove straight to his apartment. We were talking about general things along the way. We arrived and we stepped out of the car. It was already dark outside. We went to his flat. We went through.

There was soft music playing on his room.

Themba: I think I forgot to switch off music.

Me: You're crazy.

He chuckled and opened his room. He turned on the lights and BOOM! Ava was on a white lingerie. There were roses petals around the bed.

Ava: What's going on Ethan? What is she doing here?

Me: I think I should go Themba. This was a mistake Brah.

Ava: You're going nowhere until I solve you bitch. Right here right now!

Me: [ngavele ngangena kuJuly right on the spot]

Me: Themba I am leaving now!

Themba: Bbe wait.

Ava: Which bbe should wait me or her?

Themba: I am sorry Ava but I love Thandeka and I want to be with her.

Ava: And where does that leaves me?

Themba: You just have to move on.

Ava: Move on?

I slowly moved out of the the room. Ava quickly get off the bed and she slapped the shit out of Themba's cheek. I gasped in shock. Themba held his cheek. It turned pink within a few minutes. I tried to run away but she grabbed me fast. I was scared.

Me: Please leave me alone. I will leave you and Ethan alone Brah. You will never see my face again.

Ava: You will leave after I have worked you out. You can't just leave.

Themba came towards us. He tried to stop her but Ava strangled me.

Themba: Ava stop this Thandeka is pregnant.

Ava: Do you think I care? [She loosen up her grip and that gave me a chance to breath]

Themba: She's carrying my child damnit!

Ava: The very good reason to kill her right now. You can't play with my feelings while you have your side piece of gold.

Me: I bet you are piece of rusty silver!

Themba: Thandeka stop being rude!

Ava strangled me again.

Themba: please Ava stop this.

Ava: If you come any where near us I will strangle her even more.

Themba raised his hands up as the sign of surrendering. Ava walked with me to the kitchen. She took the knife. And she pointed it on my tummy. I screamed.

Ava: I will give her a surgery while you're watching Ethan so that you will never mess with women's feelings while you know you have someone else.

Themba: Please don't do this.

Ava: One move. I will stab her. You will follow us to the bedroom. Do you understand?

He nodded. I had no tears at all until I felt my baby moving my heart broke down. Tears started streaming down. I looked at Themba, his whole face was pink. He signaled that I must stepped my foot on her toe but Ava saw that.

Ava: If you try it. It will be dead end for you.

Me: I won't do it.

We walked to the bedroom backwards and Themba was following us. We arrived in the bedroom. She took a black rope it on top of the bed she took it with one hand and she gave it to me.

Ava: Tie your hands.

Themba: Ava please don't do this.

Me: What do you want because Themba insured your heart.

Themba: Thandeka!!!!

Ava: You think money is enough? No! Tie up your hands bitch. One move from you Ethan she'll die.

I tied up my hands loosely because I couldn't tie the knot. She stepped on top of the bed and dragged me along. She made me lie on the bed while the knife pointed my tummy. She was looking at Themba waiting for him to move so that she can stab me. I laid on my back and she kneeled on the bed facing Themba's side. She was on my left side. She lifted up my dress

and exposed my tummy.

Themba: No! No! Please don't.

Ava: These baby is making you go crazy right. I will give her the early surgery. I felt the coldness of the knife touch my tummy. My baby moved. I cried.

Themba: No! Ava I beg you-

Ava: Shut up!

She rubbed the spot she wanted to cut first. She raised the knife. And the next minute

Themba was on the floor. He fainted.

Me: [crying] Themba??

Ava: Shut up. Now it is you, me and junior. Let's take him out.

I cried. She stood up and her butts faced my face. Her hands were on my tummy. She almost sat on my chest but she didn't. I thought of a quickest plan before she could take out my baby. I had no choice than to dig my teeth on her butts. [Ngamluma izinga] She screamed. I didn't let go. I saw the knife rising up. I pushed her off using my head. She stabbed my leg. I screamed. I let the rope loose in my hands and I pushed her off. She fell off the bed. And she hit the floor with her head. I looked at her. She had passed out. I dragged myself out of the bed. I limped to the door. I took the knife where it fell off. I was bleeding and my leg was painful. I looked around for my bag. I took it. I had no time to wake Themba up. I had to go to Addington hospital because it was the nearest hospital. I left them like that. I walked out of the flat. I tried hard to limp. My leg was leaving blood drops behind me. I called the cab. I couldn't walk. I kept looking at the back. There was no sign of Themba nor Ava. After a long time of waiting the cab arrived. I stepped in and the driver drove straight to Addington hospital. I was in great pain. I asked him to walk in with me but the hospital was full.

Me: Please drive me to City hospital. I will die here.

Him: Okay.

He lifted me up and he drove to city hospital. The minute we were outside. He walked in with me. And they assisted us..

The cab driver was my superhero. I gave him my phone and I told him to text Themba and tell him where I was. I paid and he left. The doctor and the nurses attended me. After the Doctor had attended me. I was dizzy. I ended up falling asleep. I woke up the following morning which was a Sunday. People were arguing. By the judge of voices. It was Themba and his friends. I didn't open my eyes.

Emma: ....From the first place Ethan you weren't supposed to move on with Thandeka while Ava is still your girlfriend. She was supposed to say thank you Ethan we had fun. Thandeka you can take over?

Themba: No! But that doesn't mean she must try to kill her. Why not kill me?

Emma: How can she kill you because she wants you.

Bheki: And fainted dude come on?

Themba: I couldn't take it dude. The past was repeating itself. My sister- [he didn't continue]

Brandon: Sorry Ethan broeh.

Themba: She was stabbed like that and you all know that. How was my body supposed to take the shock when I had to witness my girlfriend being given an indigenous surgery and my baby die. Were you going to look at that Bheki?

Bheki: I am sorry dude. I didn't think about it that way.

Emma: Yah sorry. But atleast little Ethan is fine. He didn't die.

Bheki: Yeah be great full for that.

I opened my eyes and Brandon saw me.

Brandon: She's awake.

Themba stood up from the chair and he looked at me. I looked back at him.

Themba: Thandeka are you alright?

I nodded and I looked away.

Emma: You two got us all worried.

Me:.....

Themba: Do you need anything to eat?

Me:.....

Bheki: That's hectic than. I think we should give her some space.

Themba: But I want to talk to her. Why can't she just talk to us.

Brandon: You will come back later.

They stood up and left.

I took my handbag and I searched for my phone. I took it and I called Thobelani. He answered.

Thobe: Ntwana?

Me:[clearing my throat] Hey dude. Are you still in my flat right?

Thobe: Yes. I will be leaving soon though.

Me: Please don't dude. I want to sign for my bed when they deliver.

Thobe: Okay no problem. When are you coming back?

Me: I don't know I am at the hospital.

Thobe: What? What happened?

Me: it's a long story. I am actually running out of airtime. I will see you when I come back.

Thobe: Okay Brah I hope junior is fine.

Me: Yes he's fine.

Thobe: Okay sure.

I hung up the call. The Doctor and the nurse came. The nurse change the bandages in my wound.

The Doctor gave a whole lot of lecture about keeping away from dangerous places. I was given food and medication. After that I took a nap.

I woke up later. Themba was with me.

Themba: How are you feeling?

Me: I am breathing as you can see.

Themba: I am sorry Thandeka. I didn't know that she was going to be in my apartment.

Me: Where is she?

Themba: Uhm. She's\_ She got the message.

Me: I asked that where is she??

Themba: We fought and she ran away.

Me: meaning she's still out there. She can come for me anytime?

Themba: No bbe. We will find her.

Me: Where? Where will you find her?

Themba: Please don't worry yourself too much Thandeka. Think about the baby.

Me: I am thinking about my baby Themba. If that woman can find me. That means I will be dead meat. Do you want that?

Themba: Of course not. I don't want that.

Me: And how did she get inside your place anyway without your presence?

Themba: She told me that she saw a spare key and she took it. The key which was supposed to be your key.

Me: What does supposed to mean? Are you saying it was my fault?

Themba: Hell yes! It was your fault Thandeka. The key was supposed to be on your possession. But you tried-

Me: I tried to kill our son. What happened to you won't use that against me? Now you blaming me for your girlfriends craziness? How could you?

Themba: Someone must be responsible for all this mess.

Me: Oh that someone must be me? What about you? It's your girlfriend that did this to me and you're blaming me?

Themba: Who to blame?

Me: Blame your fuckin self man!

Themba: I won't blame myself for all this.

Me: So I brought this to myself? Uyangidakelwa yazi wena. Please leave!

Themba: Thandeka I –

Me: Leave right now damnit!! Tsk!

He stood up and he left. I cried because I was scared of what might happen to me. I wasn't safe at all...

The following day I was discharged. I called Hope because she wasn't working. She came to get me.

Hope: What happened?

Me: Ethan's girlfriend happened. She stabbed me. She wanted to take out my baby.

Hope:[giving me clothes] What she's crazy! Did Ethan take care of her?

Me: Mxm. Take care of her? He's blaming me instead.

Hope: Yoh! Yoh! This is bad for the baby. You can't keep on having stress like this.

Me: I will be fine.

Hope: Come and stay with me for a while.

Me: Your fiancée?

Hope: He's away for the whole month of May.

Me: Are you sure I can stay with you?

Hope: Yes. You can go back to your place when John comes back.

Me: Thank you. I really appreciate that.

Hope: My son will love you.

I giggled and I continued wearing my clothes. We finished and I took my file. I reported to the reception and we left. I wasn't using a walking stick. I could walk on my own but I couldn't walk properly. Hope drove to my flat. Thobelani was not around. I packed my clothes and my toiletries. Hope took my bag. I locked my flat.

We went to her car. She drove straight to Durban North. My phone rang. I took it out. It was Andile. I answered.

Me: Hello.

Andile: How are you?

Me: I am fine bhuti and you?

Andile: I am fine. Can you please come to Johannesburg this coming weekend.

Me: Why?

Andile: I am graduating next week Wednesday. I want you and dad to come. I will deposit money for you to buy a bus ticket. We will go for shopping something that you will wear and I want your help with my outfit too.

Me: Okay bhuti I will come but I got a leg injury. It's not that big though.

Andile: What? What happened? Is the baby okay?

Me: Uhm yes. Some chick picked a fight with me and I pushed her off and she stabbed my leg. Please don't tell dad though.

Andile: Okay. You have to be careful Thandeka. You can't go around and fight.

Me: It won't happen again. So you're not mad at me anymore about the baby?

Andile: No, being mad won't change anything but I am just disappointed that you never learn from your mistakes Thandeka.

Me: It was a mistake.

Andile: Hhayi. Okay. Guess what?

Me: What?

Andile: I bought a house.

Me: You're lying! You only have five months working and now you own a house?  
Andile: Packs of being an engineer. I am still paying for it though.  
Me: Wow! I thought you were going to buy another car.  
Andile: No. I will buy car after a few years.  
Me: Yoh! I am so happy Brah!  
Andile: If God had said "Yes" I was going get married this year.  
Me: I am sorry bhuti. But he will give you a wife don't worry.  
Andile: I hope so. You will also meet my new girlfriend.  
Me: I hope she's beautiful and well mannered.  
Andile: Are you well mannered?  
Me: Mxm usuyaphapha ke manje Hawu.  
Andile: [laughing] I am kidding. I have to go. I will see you Friday.  
Me: I can't wait to see your ugly face.  
He laughed and hung up the call.  
Me: I am going to Johannesburg this weekend. My brother asked me to visit him.  
Hope: Is he cute?  
Me: And why would you ask that?  
Hope: Come on I just want to know.  
Me: He's ugly.  
Hope: Oh that's sad.  
We laughed and we continued talking until we arrived at the beautiful house. It was an enormous double storey house. It was very beautiful.  
We stepped out of the car.  
Me: Wow your house is out of this world.  
Hope:[giggles] Thanks. I wish my husband was always around. To enjoy this house with our son. Let's go in.  
We walked inside the house. And it was clean and it had class. It showed that the owner loved herself. Her son came running to her.  
Him: Mommy.  
She hugged him. She picked him up.  
Hope: These is my friend Trinity. You can call her –  
Him: Aunty Trinity.  
Hope: Good boy. Trinity these is my son Nathan.  
Me: Nice to meet you Nathan.  
Nathan: Nice to meet you too aunt Trin.  
We laughed.  
Hope: Sophia!  
Sophia: Madam.  
Hope: Please take my friend to the guest room. She'll be staying with us this month. She will leave beginning of June. Let the rest of the staff know. Her name is Trinity but the Zulu one is Theindekha.  
Sophia: Okay madam. Come Thandeka sisi.  
Hope gave her my bag and I followed her. We went upstairs. I tried to go through the stairs. The room was huge and beautiful.  
Me: Thank you mama.  
Sophia: My pleasure. Can I make you something to eat.  
Me: Yes please.  
Sophia: What would you prefer?  
Me: Anything that doesn't have cheese.  
She nodded and left. My phone rang. I took it. Themba was calling. I dropped the call and I

switched it off. I decided to take a nap while I wait for my food...

The first week with Hope and her son I was stress free and for once I focused on myself. I forgot about all the problems that I had. Nathan made me laugh and wish that my daughter could start walking and talking. I didn't switch on my phone and I was happy with that. Andile deposited the money for me to buy a bus ticket and I bought the ticket. It was a Thursday afternoon. I had just finished packing my bag for my trip to Johannesburg. I took my laptop and I connected the speakers provided in the bedroom I was using. I played the song by Tamar Braxton – Love & war. I turned the volume down and I put the song on repeat. I laid on the bed on my back and I looked at the ceiling. I brushed my tummy and I thought about my life. Everything that had happened. How I thought Samkelo was my forever but it never happened. He gave me a daughter, I made a mistake and he never wanted to listen to my explanation after all the shit I kept up with when we were still in high school. He thought about coming back the time I had moved on and I was in love with Themba. It was far from possible to leave him. I thought about how I was telling myself that Themba was my superhero. That he saved me from losing myself but that changed within a blink of an eye. He also gave me a son and almost get me killed. But I was still in love with him. I needed a break from him but I didn't want to lose him. I sighed heavily. At a thought of being 20 years and having two kids. Though the following year was going to be my last year in varsity but it wasn't easy to be in my shoes. My thoughts were disturbed by a knock on the door.

Me: Come in.

Hope came in and sat on the edge of the bed.

Hope: You have a visitor.

Me: Who is that?

Hope: Baby daddy.

Me: Samkelo?

Hope: No Ethan.

Me: What? How did he find my ass?

Hope:[laughing] He invited me on Facebook. He was nagging until I ended up telling him that you're here.

Me: Eish let him in.

She nodded and she stood up. I sat up straight, I shifted and sat on the edge of the bed.

Themba walked in and he came to me. He kneeled down before me.

Themba: Hi.

Me: Hey.

Themba: I was worried about you. You didn't even tell me that you're leaving the hospital.

Me: I was fixing my fault remember.

Themba: Do you think leaving without telling me fixed that fault?

Me: Heeh! I am always wrong here.

Themba:[he stood up] I came here in peace.

Me: It will be peace if you can tell me that you have found Ava.

Themba: I haven't Thandeka but I will find her. She won't do anything to harm you.

Me: There's no peace than. So please leave me alone because you'll forever blame me.

Themba: I am sorry Thandeka. I was just mad.

Me: Yah. Just go.

He nodded and walked to the door. He saw my bags and the tickets by the dressing table. He took the ticket and read it. He put it down and he came back to me.

Themba: You're going to Johannesburg?

Me: Yes.

Themba: And you were not going to tell me?

Me: Yes I wasn't going to tell you.

Themba: You're going to see who? Samkelo?

Me:[sarcastic laugh] Hheee Samkelo?? What if I say yes?

Themba: Don't test me Thandeka!

Me: [standing up] If I do? Uzongenzani? Huh?

His jaw tightened. He closed his eyes.

Themba:[shouting] There's no Johannesburg that you're going to. Uyandiva???

Me: You're not my father and stop shouting at me Themba. I have two ears.

Themba: Uyanginyanyisa man Thandeka!

Me: Hlanza phela! Hlanza!

Themba: Thandeka!!!! Don't-

Me: Yini????? Kanti WHY CAN'T WE STOP FIGHTING???

He shut up. He was breathing heavily and his face had turned pink. He looked at me with eyes that were full of anger. I looked at him. He slowly moved his hands up in my face. He caress his hand on my face. I looked down. He lifted my face up using his index finger. He made me look at him. And he kissed me. I kissed him back. We kissed each other gentle. We ended up kissing each other passionately. He took off my shirt. I unbuttoned his T-shirt and I took it off. He gentle made me lie down on top of the bed. He took off my leggings and my panties. I closed my eyes. I heard the song volume going up but not too loud. Within a few seconds his lips found their way back on my lips. We kissed each other. He down on my neck and I gasped as I felt my spine getting cold and my blood got warm. He kissed me all over my body and he went down on me. He used his tongue on me. I moaned and I held his head pushing him deeper. I came and kissed my belly. He put my legs together and he placed them on his shoulder. He slowly inserted himself inside me. I screamed and I shifted back. He held my waist and he pulled me back to him.

Themba: [soft voice] Bbe relax.

I nodded shyly. He tried again. I pressed my teeth together and I held the bed sheets tightly. He started moving forward and backward. Pleasure slowly kicked in and I started moaning and he thrush in deeper. I felt more wanted and close to him. We climaxed and we did two more rounds. As we finished I couldn't feel my legs. We got under covers and cuddled me.

Me: I can't feel my legs where did you put them?

Themba:[chuckles] I gave them a drug.

Me: I see.

Themba: How is your leg?

Me: It's much better now. I am going to visit Andile not Samkelo.

Themba: Eish.

Me: Yah.

Themba: I am sorry Mrs Smith.

Me: It's Okay.

Themba: How is my champ doing in here? [He brushed my tummy]

Me: He's doing just fine.

Themba: I hope I didn't hurt him.

Me: Ubhodloza ukhakhayi lo mfana wami ngalomshiza wakho.

He laughed really hard. He kissed my cheek.

Themba: Unezimanga kodwa umama wakho E.J.

I smiled and I faced him. I kissed him.

Themba: I love you mama ka E.J

Me: I love you more Baba ka E.J

He kissed my forehead. I rested my head on his chest. He brushed my weave with his hand

and I ended up falling asleep.

The following morning I woke up. Themba was on the phone. He was sitting on the edge of the bed. I didn't get up because I wanted to hear what he was saying but I couldn't hear a thing because he was speaking Afrikaans.

Themba: "...As sy uitvind daardie ons vermoor haar pa, sy sal kom vir ons\_\_\_ Ek het bekommerd te wees, Ek het 'n gesin\_\_ hy verkrag Emma\_\_maak seker dat sy nie terugkeer"

He hung up the call. I was confused as hell. He came up to me and he kissed my forehead. I opened my eyes.

Themba: You're awake?

Me: Yes who was that on the phone?

Themba: Just an old friend. Let's go and bath. I will drive you to Durban station.

Me: What were you talking about?

Themba: Bbe it's nothing that you have to worry about.

Me: How will I know? Maybe you're talking to – argh never mind.

Themba: Talking to who Thandeka?

Me: I said never mind. Let's go and bath.

He didn't say anything. I stood up and I went to the bathroom. I went inside the shower.

Themba used the bathtub. I finished and indigenously brushed my teeth. I walked back to the bedroom and I lotioned. I wore black leggings and a black and brown tank top. I wore brown sandals. I brushed my weave. I made the bed. Themba walked inside the bedroom. I walked out and I joined Hope for breakfast.

Me: Good morning.

Hope: Morning. Yesterday you didn't even have dinner. You were having baby daddy as dinner.

Me:[laughing] Please will you behave. Nathan went to daycare today?

Hope: Yes. You're leaving right? So that's why he went to daycare.

Me: I will miss him.

Hope: He will too.

Themba:[joining in] Morning Hope.

Hope: Morning Ethan.

Themba: Thank you for letting me stay in your house.

Hope: My pleasure.

Themba: I will take your bags to the car Thandeka.

I nodded and he walked away. I ate my breakfast.

Hope: And than the coldness?

Me: It's nothing.

Themba walked out with my bags. I stood up.

Me: Baby thanks. I will see you on Monday.

Hope: I will miss your fine ass.

Me: Not like I will miss your flat ass.

We laughed and she stood up. We hugged each other. We broke the hug. She looked at me. I looked at her. She baby kissed me. It was a baby kiss but it lingered longer on my lips.

Themba cleared his throat. We backed away from each other. She smiled and I smiled back.

Me: I will see you Monday.

Themba: On second thought. You're not coming back here. You will stay with me.

Me: So that your girlfriend can attack me. No!

Themba: I bought a new flat and I am selling the one I had.

Hope: It's Okay Trinity. I will see you around.

Me: Mxm. Okay.

We hugged once more and I walked passed Themba. He followed me. I opened the backseat door and I sat there. He stepped inside and he started the engine.

Themba: What was that all about?

Me: What?

Themba: Kissing Hope! Are you lesbian now?

Me: It was a friendly kiss.

I plugged in my iPod. I listened to music. I turned the volume to the max. Themba was quite angry but I didn't care. I didn't want to argue with him.

He drove to Broadway first. He bought me goodies and he gave them to me. I looked at him and I took out my earphones.

Themba: It's for my son not you.

Me: Oh Okay.

I took the plastic and I put on my lap. I listened to music. We arrived by Durban station. We went to the bus station. He took my bags. I took my hand bag and the plastic he gave me. He placed the bags down before the bus. We looked at each other. I snuggled myself on him. He held me tight.

Me: I will miss you.

Themba: I will miss you too bbe. I love you.

Me: I love you too bbe.

We backed away from each other and we kissed each other. We broke the kiss and I took my bags. I walked inside the bus. Themba was looking at me all along. I sat with an old lady. I listened to music.

After hours on the road. I was in Johannesburg. I saw Andile and he walked up to me. We hugged each other for the longest time. He kissed my cheek.

Me: Look at you big boy you have grown up.

Andile: [laughing] How far are you? You look huge.

I hit him playfully and we laughed.

Andile: I have a housewarming party tonight. So let's go.

Me: Mmm party. That's nice.

We laughed. He took my bags and we walked to his car. He packed my bags and we stepped inside the car. I took out my phone.

Me: Do you know how I can get Afrikaans lessons in Durban.

Andile: Afrikaans? Why?

Me: I just want to learn the language.

Andile: Yoh! I will find out for you.

Me: Thanks you will pay right?

Andile: Uyahlanya!

Me: Please!

Andile: I will think about it. My girlfriend is around the house please be nice.

Me: Come on. I am always nice.

We laughed and he told me more about his girlfriend...

Andile drove in a beautiful mansion. It was a big beautiful house. I stepped out and I looked around. It had a beautiful pool and white chairs and table by the pool. Andile walked out of the house using the kitchen door.

Me: Your house is seriously beautiful Bhuti.

Andile: Come and meet your sister in-law.

Me: Okay.

We walked inside the house. And there was a beautiful African woman. She was cooking. I looked at Andile and she smiled.

Andile: Shemah bbe come close.

She smiled and walked up to us. Andile held her waist.

Andile: Thandeka these is my girlfriend Shemah. Shemah my sister Thandeka.

Me: Nice to meet you Shemah.

Shemah:[Nigerian accent] Nice to meet you too Thandeka.

Me: Mmm.

I smiled and looked at Andile. He smiled too.

Shemah: Can I get you something to eat?

Me: No sister I am fine.

She nodded and she went back to her pots.

Me: Can you show me my room?

Andile: Who said you have your room?

Me: I must have a permanent room here. This is my brother's house after all.

Andile: [laughing] I knew you were going to be dramatic. You have your own room my sister.

I giggled and he leaded the way.

His house had the bigger space. It was open and clean. He showed me the room. It was huge and beautiful. It had two baby cots on the other side of the room.

Me: Baby cots?

Andile: Yes just in case you and your rainbow nation come to visit.

Me: Oh okay.

It hurt a little to hear him say that but I guess he was right hey. I sat on the edge of the bed and I took off my sandals.

Andile: I didn't mean it in a bad way.

Me: It's cool Brah. I understand.

Andile: Sisi I am sorry serious.

Me: As I said it's cool. I don't have a problem. Indlela obabona ngayo nawe. If you don't mind can I take a little nap.

He nodded and left. I took my phone and I called Themba. It rang and he didn't pick up. I tried again. I tried three times and he didn't answer. I clicked my tongue and I put my phone away. I tried to sleep but I couldn't sleep. Themba wasn't answering his phone and that got me worried. And what Andile said really broke my heart but anyway I ended up falling asleep.

I woke up later. Shemah told me to get ready because people were starting to fill up the house. I nodded and I stepped out of the bed.

Shemah: Are you alright?

I nodded and I went to the bathroom. I took a quick shower. I used Listerine for my teeth. I lotioned and I checked up on my phone and I had no missed calls nor texts from Themba. I wore a white maternity dress. I put on purple cardigan and black sandals. I tied my weave neatly and I put on the dark purple lipstick. I went to the lounge and there were people not a lot of people. There was no music. I looked around and I saw a piano. I smiled faintly and I went to the piano. I sat down. I started playing soft sounds. I closed my eyes and I created my own sounds. I played until I got emotional about the instrument I was playing. Tears started streaming down. I played it deeper and deeper. Trying to feel better but my tears didn't stop gushing out, I stopped playing and I wiped my tears. People clapped hands. I looked around and smiled faintly.

Andile: That's my sister everyone!

Everyone laughed. They started playing the music not loud. I went sit down on the couch and I looked at people. A white woman came to me and she sat next me. She smiled.

Her: That was beautiful.

Me: What?

Her: What you played.

Me: Thank you.

Her: I have a restaurant around Sandton. I would to see you play for my customers.

Me: I would love to but I don't stay here.

Her: Oh. That's my loss than.

I faked a smile and she did the same. She taped my shoulder and she left. I was so down and sad. But mostly I was worried about Themba. Andile came to me with a guy. I looked at him and he was familiar.

Andile: Thandeka these my colleague and my new friend

Me and him: [same time] "Nhlanzeko"? "Thandeka"?

I smiled and I stood up.

Me: Oh my God!

We hugged each other for the longest time ever. I ended up crying thinking about how he left me and went back to Swaziland. We backed away from each other. I wiped my tears. And he looked at me. I looked down.

Andile: Am I missing something?

Me: Nhlanzeko was my first boyfriend. The first guy I kissed. [He smiled]

Andile: Samkelo?

Me: Samkelo was not my first boyfriend but my first mmhmm you know.

Andile: Oh I didn't know. Let me leave you two.

He left and we laughed. We hugged each other once more.

Me: Come. Let's go and sit by the pool.

He held my hand and we walked out. We sat by the pool. I started to lightening up a little.

Me: So where have you been?

Nhlanzeko: After I left –

Me: Yeah you left me miserable and my life turned upside down.

Nhlanzeko: I had no choice Thandeka and you know that. My family was moving back to Swaziland and I couldn't stay behind.

Me: We were in love. It took me forever to move on. I got messed up big time.

Nhlanzeko: I can see you're expecting.

Me: Actually my second child. Different fathers.

Nhlanzeko: Thandeka!?! Are you alright?

Me: Don't judge dude but I am fine.

Nhlanzeko: I am sorry. I should've tried to contact you or do something just to keep contact maybe non of this would've happened

Me: It's Okay. It's in the past now.

Nhlanzeko: Uyati [I blushed] my sister didn't forget about you. Even today if I can call her and tell her that I am with you. She'll be happy.

Me: No. Don't do that, hearing her voice will break my heart.

I looked down and I wiped my tears. He held me closer to him. He held me tight. I cried inside his chest. Why? I don't know exactly. I had mixed emotions. He brushed my back.

Nhlanzeko: Don't cry. I am sorry for everything. All will work out just fine. You don't deserve to be sad. Remember what I used to tell you.

Me&him:"Always wear a smile, don't let anything get you down"

Me: A lot of things have get me down.

Nhlanzeko: You're strong. I believe in you.

I smiled.

Me: Please sing our favorite song for me.

He laughed out loud and he started singing. "Buy me a rose" I rested my head on his

shoulder. I closed my eyes and I listened to his angelic voice. Someone disturbed us.

Voice: [from the back] Thandeka! We need to talk. [We both looked back]

Me: Samkelo?

Sam: Please excuse us man.

Nhlanzeko: I will see you later.

Me: Okay. [He left]

Sam: You're pregnant???

Me:

Me: You can see that so why are you asking?

Sam: Why didn't you tell me about this?

Me: I have to report to you?

Sam: We have a daughter together.

Me: So what does that mean?

Sam: Our daughter is too young. She still needs your full attention but you will shift your attention and focus on your new baby!

Me: That won't happen. I love Alondwe and nothing will change that.

Sam: I think I have to take my daughter.

Me: Uyahlanya ke manje wena! Alondwe won't go anywhere. I am her mother and she deserves to have a relationship with her half brother so please don't take my daughter.

Sam: She doesn't stay with you Thandeka.

Me: The following year is my last year, after that I am going to work. I will stay with my kids. You have five years to go before you get a proper job. You want my daughter to stay with your mother who is getting married next month right?

Sam: Yeah but that doesn't mean anything. She won't mind.

Me: Your stepfather? He won't mind too?

Sam: She must stay with my father than.

Me: Never! That won't happen. Alondwe is fine with my dad. She can visit her other grandparents but you're not taking my daughter away from me.

Sam: If you marry your boyfriend I will take her. After all she belongs to me.

Me: You're mad so that she can have Sanelisiwe as a stepmother?

Sam: It's better than a stepfather. What if your boyfriend rapes her.

Me: Excuse me? [I stood up]

Sam: What if that boyfriend of yours rapes my daughter?

I felt my blood boil and I gave him on hard slap across his cheek. It turned red immediately. He held it.

Me: Themba has been nothing but good to your daughter. He loved her like his own. He even pay the damn nanny to look after her and this is the shit you gotta say about him.

Sam: Yeah. It's his investment on my daughter one day he'll want to rape her for pay back.

Or when you have lost your touch in bed he'll want my daughter.

I made a fist and I sent it across his pretty face. His nose bleed. He was breathing heavily because of anger. He raised his hand as an aim of slapping me. I stopped him by talking.

Me: Since when do you have the courage to slap me Samkelo? [He lowered his hand]

Sam: You think it's alright if you slap me? And punch me until I bleed.

Me: I can even kick your ass off right now but I expect no slap from you. You think you can insult my boyfriend like that and I will smile?

Sam: But –

Me: Yah shut up! And sit down.

He did as I said. I took off his shirt and I held his head up, I pressed the shirt on his nose to make the bleeding stop. He looked at me and smiled.

Me: What?

Sam: I am just thinking.

Me: About?

Sam: It's only fair that I make love to you tonight.

Me: [laughing] Because?

Sam: As payback. Your boyfriend slept with you while you were carrying my child and I must do the same.

Me: Uyahlanya wena. Just say uyangihlalela nje qha not that you want to payback.

Sam: If I were to say that-

Me: Don't even think about it.

He smiled. I let go of his nose. It had stop bleeding.

Me: Wait here I will go and find a shirt for you on Andile's clothes. He nodded. I went back to the house.

I went to Andile.

Me: Can I take your shirt?

Andile: Why?

Me: It's for Samkelo.

Andile: What happened?

Me: I punched his nose and he was bleeding so his shirt has blood.

Andile: [laughing] Okay.

I went to his room and I looked for something that can suit Samkelo. I found it and I went back to him.

Me: Here wear this.

Sam: You won't help me do that?

Me: Mxm wear this shirt before I throw you on that pool.

He laughed. He took it and he wore the shirt.

Sam: Okay I am sorry about what I said about your boyfriend.

Me: Okay. I am going back inside.

Sam: Yeah Let's go.

We went back inside. I looked for Nhlanzeko. I found him with a bunch of guys. I tapped his shoulder.

Me: Hey I am going sleep now. It was nice seeing you.

Nhlanzeko: It was nice seeing you too MaBhelesi.

I smiled. We hugged each other and he kissed my forehead. He asked for my numbers and I gave him. I went to the kitchen. There was a lot of food. I took a big Tupperware container. I took meat only. I closed the container and I went to my room. I closed the door behind. I took off my clothes and I took my phone. I sat on the bed. I had no missed calls no messages. I called Emma. She picked up when I was about to hung up.

Emma:[she sounded down] Thandeka.

Me: Emma where is Themba. I have been trying to call him but he's not picking up.

Emma started sobbing and my heart started beating pretty fast.

Emma: [crying] Ethan is in the hospital and –

Brandon from the background stopped her" Ethan said don't tell her. Do you want her stress level to rise?" Emma replied "No but she must know" Brandon roared" No! Emma!"

Brandon: Thandeka. It's nothing much. He will be fine. Don't worry [I started crying]

Me: How I not not be worried. Tell me what's going on please.

Brandon: Don't stress yourself. He'll be fine. Just have fun with your brother. Please.

He hung up the call. I tried to call him again he didn't answer. I thought about someone who was going to tell me. I thought about Bheki's girlfriend. I had her numbers. I called her. She picked up.

Me: Hey can you please tell what's going on with Themba.

Olwethu: I can't tell you. [She was whispering]

Me: If you don't tell me. I will tell Thobelani that you're cheating on him. And I will tell Bheki too.

Olwethu: Okay! Okay! I will tell you after an hour not now. I am still with them.

She hung up the call. The bitch was useless. I stood up and wore my clothes. I walked out of my room crying. I went to Andile fast I needed to be in Durban as soon as possible..

Andile was with a bunch of guys. They were talking and laughing. I stood behind them, they didn't notice my presence. I grabbed Andile by his arm and I led him to my bedroom. I closed the door behind.

Andile: And than?

Me: I need to go back to Durban. Themba is in the hospital and they don't want to tell me what's going on.

Andile: But your presence won't change anything. You just have to pray.

Me: I need to be with him so that I won't stress myself to death in here. What if something happens while I am here having fun? These is the father of my child and my boyfriend. I need to be with him please bhuti.

Andile: What do you want me to do?

Me:[crying] Please book a plane ticket for me. I have to go.

Andile: Okay I am coming with you. We will leave tomorrow first thing.

Me: You will do that for me?

Andile: Yes. You're my little sister what's important to you is also important to me. Your boyfriend came to Bontle's funeral though I didn't like him but he showed up. So I will do the same.

Me: [hugging him] Thank you. You're the best brother in the world.

Andile: Yah I know. Now get some rest. Wait is meat on that container?

Me: Come on. I wanted to hear your girlfriends hand. Is she legal?

Andile:[laughing] Yes she is.

Me: So how does it feel to date a Nigerian woman?

Andile: How does it feel to date a coloured man?

Me: Argh yaphapha. Hamba la!

He laughed and left. I took the meat and I ate it. I kept checking my phone now and than. An hour passed and Olwethu didn't call me. I called her but her phone was on voicemail. I cried because I was worried about Themba. I prayed for him. After praying I tried to sleep.

The following morning I was woken up by Andile.

Andile: Our plane will leave in an hour. We are late please hurry.

Me: Okay.

I quickly stood up and I rushed to the bathroom. I did my hygiene process quickly and I went back to my room. I wore white leggings and a purple maternity top. I brushed my weave.

There was a knock on the door.

Me: Come in.

Nhlanzeko came inside the room.

Nhlanzeko: Morning. Your brother said I must get your bags.

Me: Thanks. You can take them.

I pointed them. He took them and he left. I finished. Andile called me from the lounge. I took my handbag and I rushed out. There were guys on the dining table. They were having breakfast. I greeted them and I looked around for Andile. They all chanted "Outside" I smiled and said Thank you. I went to the car. Nhlanzeko was driving us to the airport. He drove like a mad man on the road. In no time we were at the airport. I hugged him goodbye. We took

our bags and we joined the line. I switched off my phone and we went through. Along the way I fell asleep.

I was woken up by Andile. We were in Durban. We took a cab to my flat. We dropped our bags and we drove to City hospital first. I wasn't sure which hospital he was in. Andile was driving my car. But City hospital was the hospital he took me to, the time I passed out. I was hoping he was there. We arrived by the hospital. We were told that Themba was not in the hospital. I tried to call his friends but their phones were off. We drove to the nearest hospital St. Aidan's hospital but he was not there.

Andile: Let's go to Nkosi Albert Luthuli hospital.

Me: Okay.

We drove to Nkosi Albert Luthuli. Luckily we found him. We waited for visiting hours. I went to the bathroom. I went back to Andile.

Andile: Let's go. It's time already. I have seen his friends.

Me: Okay.

We went to his ward and we found him. He wasn't sleeping. He looked so pale like something was eating him up. He was shocked to see him. They were all surprised. Emma offered me a sit because there was one chair to sit on.

Me: Hi. [Referring to Themba]

Themba: Thandeka you shouldn't be here.

Me: I am greeting you that's all you can say.

Themba: I am sorry. Are you two alright?

Me: We are worried about you. What's going on?

Themba: Bbe it's –

Me: Don't think about lying to me Themba.

Emma: Ethan please tell her the truth.

Themba: Inhaled a chemical at work. I was working with our pharmacologist on a drug for a certain disease. I inhaled a chemical while doing an experiment.

Me: What? Did they try get the chemical out of your system?

Themba: They are working on it. I will be fine.

Me: What is this chemical doing to you Themba? Look at your skin it's pale.

Themba: I am fine.

Me:[crying and shouting] What is the chemical doing to you damnit!!

Andile: Sisi calm down please.

Me: No don't tell me to calm down. I want to know. Themba?

Themba: It's slowly crashing down other organs of my body.

Me: What are the Doctors saying? They must do something.

I looked at everyone around the room, waiting for an answer but they didn't answer me. I cried, Emma held me tight. I cried inside her arms.

Themba: I told you guys not to tell her. I didn't want all this to happen. Look at her now!

Emma: I am sorry Ethan.

He clicked his tongue while I sobbed inside Emma's arms. I cooled down and she let go. I held Themba's hand.

Me: Bbe?

Themba:[he looked at me] Hmm?

Me: Please quit this job.

Themba: Bbe. I will be fine. I love my job I can't quit my job.

Me: You have to think about us Themba. It's not only you. There's me and our son. Please Themba.

Themba: It was a mistake bbe. I took out my nose cover because I wanted to answer an important phone call. It won't happen again.

Me: You're selfish Themba! Can someone please tell him to stop this job.

Emma: Ethan you have to consider it. You have a family. These chemicals you work with. They will kill you.

Themba: I won't die.

Me:[crying] Themba please. You can take another field in engineering and change this one. Please. I beg you.

Bheki: Thandeka don't worry. He will be fine.

Me:[I stood up] Fine kuphi enjena? Do you see him? Ngathi ivampire lo muntu. Wena uthi he'll be fine!!! Themba please leave this job.

Themba: I can't bbe. I love my job.

Me: Fine die ke. [I stepped aside]

Them: Thandeka??!

Me: Hhayi ngiyekeni! USelfish uThemba right now. He doesn't even think about his son. Asazomudla lama chemicals in future. Argh!

Themba: It's not like that.

Me: Hhayi! IFA! Man Nxx!

I left them and I walked out of the hospital crying. Andile followed me. He opened the door for me. I sat at the backseat and sobbed.

We drove to my flat. I was quiet on the road. We arrived in my flat and we sat down. I looked down, counting the squares of the tiles

Me: Can we go home Andile.

Andile: Sisi?

Me: It's Saturday today and it's 11am. By 14:30 we will be at Empangeni. Please let's go. I want to see my daughter and my father.

Andile: And your boyfriend?

Me: I will see him Monday afternoon. He didn't want me here anyway.

Andile: Are you sure you want us to go home?

I nodded.

Andile: Okay let's go. When are you written your first semester exams?

Me: Beginning of June. Monday I must start studying.

Andile: UBoy doesn't give you answers?

Me:[laughing] I get A+ qha. It's a pity that November I won't be pregnant.

Andile: [laughing] Sorry. Let's go and see sdudla and her grandfather.

I smiled and I stood up. I took my hand bag. I had clothes at home so there was no need for me to pack anything. We went to the car. We stepped inside. We drove to Musgrave center for petrol and food. After that Andile drove straight to Empangeni.

Andile: So you really want your boyfriend to quit his job.

Me: Even if it was you Andile I was going to say the same.

Andile: That means he must start studying something else.

Me: Yes. Last year he was studying part time. He was doing BTech in Chemical engineering. If it's going to kill him. He must change.

Andile: But sisi where will he get income for your son? If he stop working?

Me: There is something called Unemployment insurance fund. He pays for it so nothing can make him poor.

Andile: But you have a point sisi. There's nothing painful like losing your partner. Waking up in the morning and check your phone. There's no good morning text. No phone calls from them. There will be no one who'll just show up in your place unannounced. Their laughter and sadness too. So I understand your situation sisi. Themba must really consider changing his career field.

I just cried. It was painful and I couldn't imagine my life without Themba.

Andile: We are going home so that you won't stress yourself. Don't cry.

I nodded and wiped my tears away. I ate the food that we bought.

Me: 25th of May is his birthday.

Andile: This coming Saturday?

Me: Yes. I want to do something special for him but I don't know what.

Andile: Talk to his friends. If they don't know what to do. I will help you.

Me: Thank you

Andile: Yeah. Even though you never planned a party for me.

Me: [laughing] Come on. Bontle is always there for that.

Andile: Was.

Me: Shit! I am sorry. Was.

He smiled and shook his head. We talked about general things until we made it home. Yeah!

I didn't sleep this time around.

We arrived at home. We went to the door.

Me:[whispering] Let's knock.

Andile: [chuckles] Uyahlanya wena. [You're crazy]

Me: Please!

I giggled and I knocked on the door.

Dad: [shouting] Who is it?

Me:[mimicking Pakistanis] Sidayisa ama comfort bhabha. Ngamanani amafishane.

Andile laughed. I pinched him.

Dad: [laughing] We have a lot in here. I can even give you a few to sell.

I giggled and I looked at Andile. We laughed. Qiniso opened the door.

Us: Awu wayimosha lento!

He laughed. We also laughed and we walked inside the house. Dad smiled when he saw us.

He stood up and I hugged him. They did the man hug with Andile. We hugged Qiniso.

Dad: What a nice surprise. How are you two?

Us: We are fine dad and you?

Dad: I am fine. I am happy to see you.

Us: We are happy too.

Thobile walked out of her room with Alondwe. I smiled and I walked up to them. Alondwe looked at me for a long time. I smiled and she did the baby scream. I took her.

Me: Hello my Angel. [She giggled] Uyasinda!

We went to sit down on the lounge with the others. Alondwe had a big black afro. I plaited her hair nicely.

Dad: Udlala ngengane.

Me: I want her to look like a glamour.

Andile: Bring her to uncle Andile. [He stood up and walked up to us] Woza sudla.

Alondwe opened up her arms and Andile took her from me.

Dad: So how much do you need?

Me: Dad?

Dad: Weeh. You can't just come unannounced surely you need money.

The others laughed at me. I looked at dad.

Me: Yoh! I was just missing my old man, my daughter and the rest of the family.

Dad: Hahaha You're growing up.

He played with my cheeks and I giggled.

Me: Andile give me my baby back.

Andile: No play with boy lapho esiswini. [In your tummy]

Me: Mxm. What are we eating?

Dad: You're here to destroy my food?

Me: Yoh! Tata. [I stood up]

Dad: Easter holidays, you left my fridge empty.

Me: [laughing] June I will do the same.

Dad: Baba ka loyo mfana must pay for groceries ngo June.

We all laughed really hard. I took my phone and I went to the kitchen. I cooked up the storm. I even made dessert. I was cooking while eating. After cooking I cleaned up the whole place.

I went to the lounge. I took Alondwe and we went Andile's bathroom. We took a bath together inside his bathtub. Alondwe played with water. Splashing it all over the place.

Me: Alondwe Ndunakazi Yeka ukudlala ngamanzi. [She continued] ALONDWE!!!

She stopped immediately and she looked at me. She laughed. I shook my head and she tried to turn back and face me. I assisted her. She brushed my tummy. My baby moved. She quickly removed her hands and laughed. She brushed her tummy and looked at me. She did it again, the baby was moving. She laughed and touched her tummy. She looked at me and cried. I laughed.

Me: Usile. MaNdunakazi wami omuhle. [I kissed her and she stopped crying and she giggled] uNophiko wami omuhle lo, nokhula ngamazwi,Phamule,mbonambi,mazwi angidinile

She did the baby scream like she knew that I was praising her. I smiled. I took her out of the tub. I carefully stepped out and I picked her up. I tiptoe and I went to the dry spot. I made her sit on the towel I moped around. I drained the water on the tub and I washed it. I wrapped myself with my towel and I wrapped Alondwe too. I walked with her to her room. The room had change. It had two baby cots. I laughed. Hhe! My dad plans things without me. I lotioned Alondwe and I put her on warm clothes. I carried her to my room. I lotion and wore my pyjamas. I took my gown and I wore it. We joined the family on the table.

Me: You started eating without us. The whole three people. That's rude.

They laughed.

Me: Dad you bought another cot?

Dad: Your brother did but I told him to.

Me: But the baby won't stay here nje.

Dad: Who said that?

Me: Uhm. His father.

Dad: Umtshele ukuthi ngithi uyahlanya. [Tell him I said he is crazy]

Me: Hawu baba.

Dad: The baby will stay with who?

Me: My apartment and his apartment.

Dad: Umbhedo lowo. Once you give birth. The baby will come back and stay here with me.

Me: But dad-

Dad: No! It's not up for discussion Thandeka. Tell him if he have a problem with that he must come here. I will tell him the same thing.

Me: Yoh! Angisazi ke. Andile?

Andile: Angazi lutho Mina. I bought his things as dad instructed me the last time I came here. There's nothing we can do. Useshilo.

Dad: Ngishilo akushintshi. Nobody will change that. My grandson will stay here with me. Finish and Klaar.

I sighed heavily and ate my food while feeding Alondwe...

After dinner we cleaned the kitchen with Andile. I went to the lounge and took Alondwe. She was in my dad's arms. She was sleepy. I went to change the bed covers and I went back to the lounge to take her, I walked up to my room with her. I put her inside the bed covers and I crawled in next to her. I held her tight. She placed tiny hands on my face. I hummed a song

twinkle Little Star until she fell asleep. I kissed her forehead. I took my phone and called Themba but his phone was on voicemail. I sighed and placed my phone aside. It rang and I took it. Emma was calling. I answered.

Me: Hello.

Emma: Hey I am at your apartment and you're not here.

Me: I am not around Durban. I am at home.

Emma: Oh Wow!

Me: What??

Emma: So you decided to leave just like that?

Me: Yes. You wanted me to do what?

Emma: You are seriously going to ask me that?

Me: You're forgetting one thing. Themba didn't want me to know that he is sick. He was shutting me out. I paved my way in to the truth and he doesn't want to listen to me. I need a break too. I wanted to see my daughter is that wrong?

Emma: No but Ethan could use your support right now.

Me: The one he didn't need? Musani ukudlala ngami nina ngeke phela. I will see him Monday. [stop playing with my feelings]

I hung up the call. I placed my phone away. I prayed. And I fell asleep.

The following morning was a Sunday. We went to church as a family. It was so spirit lifting and I was at peace for a while. Alondwe loved church. She couldn't stop clapping her hands and screaming during the praise and worship service. After church we drove to spur for lunch. Spending time with my family made me happy. Later that day we had to leave because Andile was going to take a bus to Johannesburg by 9pm. Alondwe was asleep when Andile and I were leaving. I wanted to wake her up and kiss her all over the face so that I can hear her giggle. But I couldn't. I looked at her as she was sleeping. Tears escaped from my eye. "I love you my baby and I am going to miss you" I said and wiped my tears.

Dad:[From the door] Andile is waiting for you.

Me: Oh I am coming.

He left and I kissed my baby goodbye. I walked out of the house. They were all outside with Andile. I hugged Thobile, Qiniso and my dad.

Dad: Take care of yourself. And talk to that boyfriend of yours about the baby.

Me: Yes dad I will but I doubt that he will agree to it.

Dad: He has no choice.

I giggled and I hugged him again. He gave me money. I thanked him. We stepped inside the car and we drove off.

Andile: Do you think Themba will agree to let the baby stay with dad?

Me: I don't think so. He made it clear that he doesn't want his son to live Empangeni.

Andile: Let's just hope this doesn't turn to war

Me: I will talk to him but I also don't want my baby to leave right after giving birth? No Brah that is not right.

Andile: Hhayi. We will see.

We talked about general things until he talked alone because I ended up falling asleep.

He woke me up when we were at Durban station. I looked at the time it was still early.

Me: It's 8pm now why don't you go to my place for a while.

Andile: An hour is nothing. Just sleep I will wake you up later.

Me: Okay.

I did just that. I slept and dreamt about paradise.

. Andile woke me up when it was time for him to go. We hugged each other and he left. I drove straight to my place. I arrived and I parked my car. I walked up to my flat. I wasted no time. I went straight to bed.

The following morning I wasn't going nowhere. We were given a study week because the syllabus/chapters for the semester were over. I woke up in the morning and I took a shower. I finished and lotion my body. I wore my gown. I made breakfast and ate. After eating, I brushed my teeth. And I studied my ass off the whole morning. I took a break by taking a nap. I woke up around 3pm and I continued with studying and eating. I didn't want to stress myself about Themba. I focused on studying because I seriously couldn't afford to fail. My phone rang. I took it. Themba was calling. I sighed and answered.

Me: Themba.

Themba: I need someone who will take me to my apartment.

Me: Search for that person than.

Themba: Thandeka come to the hospital and drive me to my place.

Me: You are not asking me.

Themba: Please. And bring my clothes with you. Anything.

Me: Okay.

I hung up the call, I stood up and I fixed my weave. I change my gown and I wore blue tracksuit. I wore my sneakers, I took his clothes, I took my phone and my car keys and I went to my car. I drove straight to the hospital. I arrived at the hospital and I went to his ward. I went to his room and I gave him, his clothes after greeting him. He took the clothes and changed. He looked much better than before. His Doctor came and he looked at him.

Doc: You must be his wife?

Hhaybo? Do I look that old to be a wife?

Me: No I am his girlfriend not wife.

Doc: Okay. Please make sure that he takes his medication in time. And that he doesn't go back to work for two weeks. Than after two weeks he can go back to work.

Themba: I will stay at home for two weeks and do what?

Me: You see Doctor? What selfish cow these man is? He doesn't care about no one but himself. We have a child on the way but he wants to die.

Doc: You have to listen to your wife. Argh I mean girlfriend and rest. The chemical might be out of your system but that doesn't mean go back to work this early. You almost died. Think about your family. This lovely lady and the baby that she's carrying. Mam look after him.

I nodded and he gave me his medication. He told me how he should take it. He signed his file and we took the file. We went to the reception with it. We left the hospital.

Themba: Give me the car keys. I am driving.

I looked at him and gave him the keys. I stepped inside the car and he drove to his new place. He had a beautiful flat by Essenwood. It had two bedrooms, one bathroom with both shower and bathtub, lounge and the kitchen. I followed him to his bedroom and I unpacked his things. He was awkwardly quiet. I did the same.

Me: Should I make something to eat for you?

He stood up and went to the kitchen. I followed him.

Themba: Yes. Make eggs, bacon and bread.

Me: You don't want a full meal?

Themba: No.

I nodded and I took the pan. I took the cooking oil. And everything else I was going to use.

Themba: Don't use cooking oil. Use margarine. I nodded and I put the pan on the stove. I waited for it to heat up. Once it was hot I poured cooking oil.

Themba:[shouting] I said use margarine not cooking oil damnit!!!

Me: I forgot. Ungithethiselani pho??[why are you shouting at me?]

Themba: Awuzwa angithi uma umuntu ekhuluma kahle nawe. Ufuna ngize ngithethe. [You don't hear me when I use a moderate tone. You want me to shout!]

I looked away and I poured out the cooking oil from the pan. And I used margarine. I felt my

eyes burning with tears. There's nothing I hate like someone who shouts at me. It makes me feel stupid and useless. And after all I didn't understand why Themba was mad. Because it was clear that he was mad at me. For what? I don't know too. I wiped my tears. I made his food and I finished. I made tea for him. I put everything on a tray and I gave it to him. He thanked me, he prayed and started eating. I made myself a cup of hot chocolate and I sat down with him.

Me: My dad said our son will stay with him.

He looked at me without a word and he continued eating. I looked at him but he didn't look back at me.

Me: Themba ngikhuluma nawe. [I am talking to you]

Themba: You know my answer to that so go and tell him that answer.

Me: I don't know your answer.

Themba: Tell your father that my son will not stay with him.

Me: He said if you will have a problem with that you can come to him.

Themba: I don't mind. I will.

I didn't respond.

He finished eating. I gave him, his medication, he took it. I took the eating utensils and I washed them. I dried them up and packed them on his cupboard. I took my car keys. Themba looked at me. I was walking passed him. He held my hand.

Themba: You're leaving?

Me: Yes.

Themba: Why?

Me: I wasn't done studying. You called while I was still studying.

Themba: So you will come back right?

Me: Just now you were shouting at me and giving me attitude. What is your problem?

Themba: You left man Thandeka! You think that was supposed to make me happy?

Me: You didn't want me to be with you Themba. You didn't want me to know that you're sick.

Themba: I didn't want you to be stressed out.

Me: That's why I left. I missed my daughter and I didn't want to be stressed.

Themba: Okay.

I sighed. I pulled my hand out of his hand. I went to his room. I was going to continue with my studying the following day. I took off my clothes. He came in and sat on the edge of the bed. I walked out and went to the bathroom. His new flat didn't have a walk in bathroom. He followed me.

Me: Why are you following me?

Themba: Is it wrong to follow the mother of my son?

I looked at him and shrugged my shoulders. I went to the bathroom and I stepped inside the shower, I closed the door of the shower. He sat on the toilet seat.

Themba: Please don't close the door. I want to look at you.

Hhayi? Isimanga lesi. I opened the door and he seriously looked at me taking a shower. I showered and finished.

Themba: Let me dry your body?

I looked at him and he looked at me with begging eyes. I stepped out of the shower and gave him my dry big towel. He dried my whole body. He took out my shower cap and hung it up where it stays. I indigenously brushed my teeth. We walked back to his room. I took his body lotion.

Themba: Let me lotion your body.

Okay? I gave him the lotion and he lotions my body. He finished and placed the lotion away.

Me: I don't have anything to wear here.

Themba: You do have that spot bag you left the day you got stabbed. I unpacked your clothes. They are on the wore drop.

Me: That was unnecessary because I don't want my clothes to be here.

Themba: oh. I am sorry than.

He took off his clothes and wore his pyjamas. He went to bed and I did the same. He came close to me and he held me tight. He was breathing on my ear because he was so close to me. His breath was warm so it turned me on. I wanted to tell him or do something but I couldn't.

Themba: Thandeka?

Me: Hmmm?

Themba: Please be my wife.

Me: What?

Themba: Will you please marry me?

Me: Because you're dying you want me to marry you and I will be a widow within a year.

Themba: No it's not like that. I love you. Please Me: I won't marry you Themba.

He didn't respond but instead his breath quickened maybe he was angry but that made me more horny than before. My breath changed because I wanted him so bad. Tears started flooding out of my eyes. Why was I crying? I was crying because I wanted to have sex with him and I couldn't tell my boyfriend. I sniffed more than twice. Maybe I sniffed because I wanted him to ask why I am crying. He didn't. I cried even more until he noticed.

Themba: Why are you crying Thandeka?

Me: [sniffing] its you.

Themba: What did I do?

Me: You're breathing on my ear and that is turning me on.

He let out a slight laugh.

Themba: You want me to chow you but you don't want to marry me.

Me: [my voice was so low] Themba bbe this is not about marriage.

Themba: You can't want my dick but you don't want my ring though I didn't have it right now.

Me: It's not like that. It's not about the ring.

Themba: It's about what?

Me: I don't know Themba please just make love to me now.

Themba: No. Vele sex before marriage is sin [he laughed sarcastically] So you won't get my dick until we get married.

Me: You can't be serious!

Themba: I am dead serious.

Me: Bbe please just now only.

Themba: No.

I cried and he came closer to butts, we were not facing each other. He was cuddling me from behind. He came close to my butts and I felt his hard dick against me. It made me worst.

Me: Themba stop torturing yourself. You want me as much as I want you baby please. We will see marriage some other time right now the situation is not about marriage.

Themba: You just want me to sex you. You don't want me to be your husband.

Me: Mxm Yeka!

He laughed. Yho! I cried Brah. My situation was too intense. I pressed my thighs together trying to calm down. Themba fell asleep first. I think. I turned back and looked at him. He was cute as hell.

Me: If I can rape you now. What can you do. You're sleeping now.

Themba: [with his eyes closed] I can get you arrested.

I quickly turned back and I tried to sleep. I couldn't sleep. I stood up and I went to the kitchen. I drank cold water and I ate ice cubes. I felt better after that. I went back to bed and I fell asleep.

The following morning I woke up early and I took a shower. I did all the necessity. I made breakfast for Themba and I. While I ate cereals. Themba came to the kitchen and he hugged me from behind brushing my tummy.

Themba: Morning Junior and mommy.

Me: Morning Daddy.

I turned back and he kissed me. The kiss got intense. He carefully placed me on top of the counter

and his hands went underneath my pyjamas top and he rubbed my breasts. I unbuttoned his top and he stopped. He broke the kiss and kissed my forehead.

Me: Why did you stop?

Themba: We're not married yet Bbe.

Me: Argh! Themba please man Brah come on.

Themba: No.

Me: Okay I will marry you. now come.

I said kissing him but he stopped me.

Themba: You know you don't mean that. Let's eat and feed my boy please.

I sulked and he laughed. He put me down and I prepared the table for breakfast. We prayed and ate in silence. I was angry. We finished eating and I gave him his medication. He took it while I washed the dishes. After that he wanted us to go to Musgrave. And later we going to go to my flat and take my books and a few things because I was going to spend the whole two weeks with him. We walked to Musgrave center because it was down the road from his flat.

Me: You want me to stay with you for two weeks, we're not married but you don't want to have sex with me.

Themba: You're taking care of me because I am not okay.

I sulked, he held my hand and laughed at me. If I were to have sex with someone else it was going to be war. But he wouldn't consider that he was the one who was flaunting what he has and using marriage as an excuse. We arrived by Musgrave center. I saw Olwethu and Thobelani at Steers but they didn't see me.

Themba: Let me buy fried chips here. [Pointing steers]

Me: [standing in front of him] No! No! Don't!

I didn't want him to see them. Because they were cosy and they were holding each other's hands.

Themba: Hhaybo why?

Me: They are not healthy bbe. Please.

Themba: Mxm!

He carefully pushed me aside. He walked in and he saw them. They started kissing each other. He looked at me. I looked down.

Themba: You knew?

My throat went dry! It's not my business nje

Me: Hhaybo it's non of my business. Who she dates.

Themba: But she's cheating on my friend with your friend.

Me: No! Bbe you got it wrong. She's cheating on my friend with your friend.

Themba: So you're striking for your friend?

Me: Like you're doing the same thing for Bheki.

Themba: Let's go to them

Me: I ain't doing that. I told you I don't want your friends in my relationship so I won't do the same in their relationship.

Themba: But I will tell Bheki about this.

Me: And you want me to marry you while you can't mind your business. Will your friends ever mind their business? Or if we get married they will be more involved or less involved?

Themba: [smiling] Oh that's the problem? I will mind my business ke marry me Bbe.

Cashier: Are you guys going to order or you're here to talk.

Themba: Wait sisi we will order. I was telling my woman that I love her so much.

Me: You didn't tell me Themba you're lying.

Themba: I was thinking about it. But you know I love you.

The cashiers were looking at us. Some were laughing.

Me: Themba please order.

Themba: I love you Thandeka.

Me: I love you too Themba. Order ke babe.

Themba: Kiss me first.

Me: Yoh! Themba man! Hhayi.

He pouted for me. I smiled and I kissed him. We broke the kiss and he ordered large fried chips. We got our order and I waved my hand at Thobelani and Olwethu. Thobelani waved back. Olwethu looked at her plate.

We walked out. Themba ate his chips.

Themba: You said you will mind your business bbe but you didn't.

Me: [laughing] I was just greeting Themba.

Themba: But I will tell Bheki.

Me: I won't marry you.

Themba: I won't shag you.

Me: Mxm. I can shag myself.

Themba: [looking at me] Are you for real?

Me: [raising my hands up] What must I do?

Themba: Sies. My Vrou.

I laughed and I remembered that I had to learn Afrikaans. I made a mental note that I was going to call Andile later. We went to Pick n Pay clothing. We bought clothes for baby Ethan.

Me: I have an appointment with my gynecologist Wednesday. You will go with me angithi?

Themba: You don't even have to ask bbe. I will go with you. I wanna hear my boy's heart beat.

I giggled and he kissed me. We broke the kiss and he held my hand. He was picking up the clothes. I didn't know why he was buying clothes because for me it was still early. He bought a few maternity clothes for me and we went to pay.

Themba: Let's go and buy a few groceries.

Me: Pick n pay is down. You should've start there. And baby we didn't bring the car with us.

Themba: We will take a taxi. Come.

I sulked and I followed him. I dragged my feet. Themba looked back at me. He was in a good mood. He came back to me.

Themba: Bbe walk fast please.

He dragged me along like a baby. I followed him. He took the trolley his other hand was still holding mine. We bought a few groceries and we went to pay. We passed by steers and we bought burgers. We took a taxi. We got off the taxi and he paid.

Themba: Bbe you will take the groceries. I will take the babies clothes.

Me: Usile [you're clever] I won't do that.

I took the baby's clothes and one grocery bag. I left him hanging. He looked at me and I kept on looking back at him until I couldn't see him. I arrived at his place and the key was with him.

I took out my phone and called him. He answered.

Me: Bbe come with the key please.

Themba: Come back with the baby's clothes and I will carry them.

Me: Themba? Bbe you're not serious!

Themba: I am.

I hung up the call. "Ingenza islima le ndoda nxx!" I took the plastic bags with the baby's clothes and I walked back to Themba. He smiled when saw me. I didn't smile. I gave him the bags and I took the groceries bags. We walked together. He was talking non stop I didn't pay attention to him. I was mad and the bags were heavy Brah. We arrived at the flat and he opened the door. I took the bags inside and the one I left. I unpacked the groceries.

Themba: Bbe I think we must decorate the baby's room what do you think?

I nodded. He paid no attention to my sour mood. He took the burgers. He held my hand and

we went to eat on the lounge.

Me: Bbe. We have to talk about the baby and my father.

Themba: My baby will live here with me.

Me: Not with me?

Themba: You don't want to marry me Thandeka so that we can be a family.

Me: Not now.

Themba: We can take Alondwe too. Maybe after you're done Studying if your dad has a problem.

Me: Let's eat and go fetch my books please.

Themba: You see? Uyazibona kodwa ukuthi unjani. You're ignoring me.

Me: We will talk later.

He nodded and we ate. After eating we walked to my flat. It wasn't far. It was on the other road. Musgrave and Essenwood are neighbors.

Me: Why did you choose Essenwood. Ubungilandela? [You were following me?]

Themba:[laughing] I wanted to be closed to my family mos.

I laughed and I took out my phone. I texted Andile about Afrikaans lessons. I sent the text and put my phone on my pocket. I held my babe's hand and we walked to my flat. We arrived and we gathered my books together and we walked back to his flat.

We arrived to his flat and we placed my books on the spare bedroom. I took fruit tree juice and glasses. We sat on the lounge. We watched romantic comedy. I gave him my feet

Me: Give me a massage. I am tired.

Themba: Okay. But I have a request mam.

Me: What?

Themba: My friends are coming here later.

Me: Aah Hhayi. Can we have a little break?

Themba: Hawu bbe?

Me: I will go to my apartment. I will come back when they are gone.

Themba: You hate them that much?

Me: No I don't. My feet please Themba.

He nodded and massage them. He stood up and went to the bedroom to take baby oil in my bag. There was a knock on the door. I stood up and opened the door. His friends were at the doorstep.

Me: Oh Hi guys. Come in.

They walked in and I went to sit down. Themba came back. He acted surprised to see them.

Themba: Oh guys. You're here already.

Bheki: You said we must come no –

Themba: Yah Yah I know. I forgot.

I looked at him and he looked away. He came to sit next to me. He took my feet.

Me: You will do that later. I want to sleep.

Themba: Bbe awume.

Emma: You said you saw something at shopping center today.

I gave Themba a dead stare. He cleared his throat. He rubbed my feet.

Themba: I saw your girlfriend Bheki. With another man.

Huh? I thought he was going to lie. Hhe! Nkosi

Bheki: I didn't get that well?

Themba: Yes. She was with Thandeka's friend. They were kissing.

Me: Themba!!!

Others: What???

Bheki:[standing up] Ngizoyiphanyeka esihlahleni le ngane. Iyangidakelwa.

He slammed the door shut. I looked at Themba he shrugged his shoulders. What's wrong

with my Smith now???

Me: Bbe what's wrong with you now?

Themba: I was just telling the truth.

Brandon: If I were to see you kissing another man. I would've done the same. That's what friends do.

Me: Mxm I didn't ask for your opinion.

Emma: You can't talk to my boyfriend like you're talking to your child.

Me: So if –

Themba: Please guys! My girlfriend was talking to me not you two.

Brandon: So you will let her come between us

Themba: Don't be unfair Brandon Bro she told you she didn't want your opinion not that she was creating war between us.

Emma: Mxm. Let's leave bbe. Don't come crying to us when she leaves you.

They stood up and left, slamming the door shut behind them. I stood up and held Themba's hand. I was trying to make him stand up. He stood up and he looked at me. There was a little pain in his eyes. He smiled faintly to hide it.

Me: Maybe I might marry you now.

Themba: Than I will munch you everyday.

Me: Hhaybo Themba! Let's go and try to save Olwethu before Bheki kills her.

Themba: Hhayi let them be please!

Me: No. Let's go.

He nodded and he took his car keys. We went to his car. I directed him to Olwethu's res.

We arrived and we spoke to the security guard

Me: Sawubona baba. Did you see a dark short girl leaving the residents maybe about a few minutes ago?

Secu: She might have left with who maybe?

Themba: My friend. He drives a navy navara.

Secu: Oooh! Hheyi. That boy is young to drive such a nice car. Only if my boy can be friends with education maybe he might get a good job[Themba and I looked at each other. Than back at the security] He can take care of me. Maybe I can stop this tiring job and the students bantabami they are so rude. Sometimes we turned into cleaners. Hhayi kodwa umfana wami. Is on drugs. Umlazi is dirty with-

Themba: Sorry tata but did they leave together?

Secu: Ewe. Klk these girls of today like money. They follow big guys and-

Themba: Thank you Sir. You can buy a cool drink.

He gave him a R200 note. He was about to talk again. Themba dragged me by my arm and we walked to his car. He drove straight to Bheki's house. He had a house by Morning side. Within a few minutes. We were at the gate. The helper opened up for us. Themba drove in. We went to the house.

Themba: Where is Bheki mama?

Helper: He's at the garden with his girlfriend.

Themba: Come.

He grabbed my hand and we walked to the garden. Bheki had two trees and a few flowers and few veges. And a BIG rectangle pool. It was deep if I looked at it. He was sitting on the garden chair. He was sipping his whiskey.

Themba: Bro where is your girl?

Bheki: That bitch is not my girl. She fooled me

Me: Where is she?

Bheki: Hheyi shut up wena! You didn't want me to find out right? [He was drunk]

Me: You were going to find out yourself.

Themba: Where is she?

Bheki: I don't know

I looked around. And I looked up the trees. Olwethu was pinned against the trees branch. The strong branch. She had a tap around her mouth to stop her from screaming I suppose. She was naked. She only had her panties on.

Me: Yoh! Bawo. Themba. There she is bbe. Please help her.

Bheki: Don't do that I will. Untie her in the morning. .

Themba: You're mad now!

Themba walked to the tree. I followed him.

Themba: Bbe stepped aside please.

I nodded and obeyed his word. I stepped aside. Bheki stood up, he walked up to me and held me by my neck. He placed his hands on my mouth to stop me from screaming. He walked with me to the pool. He stood by the deep side of the pool. He held me roughly. He called Themba. Themba looked back.

Bheki: If you untie her on that tree. I will throw your girlfriend on this pool. Don't even think about it.

Themba: Bheki let go of my woman bro.

Bheki: Why should I?

I was crying because I was scared. Anything was possible with Bheki. He could've threw me on the pool. I wasn't going to be able to swim with a big bump though I knew how to swim but the pool was too deep in my eyes. He was drunk and I was scared.

Themba: Please I am begging you dude. I will leave your girlfriend alone.

Bheki: From the first place why did you come to my house.

Themba: I didn't want you to do something stupid.

Bheki: How about I do something stupid with your girlfriend?

He said tempting to throw me on the pool by making me move backward and forward. I was praying and hoping that Themba won't faint. He went down on his knees and begged.

Themba: That woman is my life Bheki please don't do it. Please. I can't imagine my life without her. She brought light when I thought my life was over. I deserve to be happy too. I want make her happy. I want to see my son grow bro. And see my other children if God gives us more. Please Don't take that away by throwing her on that pool please.

I cried even harder. Bheki let go of me. I ran to Themba crying. He stood up and met me halfway. We hugged each other tightly. I was crying. And I was scared. But I felt safe with Themba. He brushed my hair.

Themba: I am sorry bbe.

Me: [crying] I will marry you! I will marry you Themba!

Themba: Bbe are you serious?

Me: Yes bbe I am serious. I love you and I want to spend the rest of my life with you.

He smiled and he hugged me tightly. He kissed me and held my hand. Bheki was sitting by the pool. His legs were on the water

Me: We gonna leave them like this?

Themba: Yes I don't want to die and I don't want you to die.

I smiled and I kissed his cheek. We walked to his car. We stepped in. My phone rang. I took it out. Andile was calling. I picked up.

Me: My handsome brother.

Andile: Beautiful sister, How are you?

Me: I am good bhuti and you?

Andile: I am fine. I got you a woman who will teach you Afrikaans.

Me: Really?

Andile: Yes. I will email you her contact details and information you need.

Me: Thanks bhuti. You're going to pay right?

Andile: Yes. But I won't send the same amount of money that I used to send you.

Me: Hawu bhuti!

Andile: No serious Thandeka.

Me: Okay. Thanks though.

Andile: Okay bye.

Me: No I love you?

Andile: I love you wani? You're making me bankrupt.

I laughed and we hung up the call. I looked at the road and we were not going to his place.

Me: Where are we going?

Themba: I just want us to walk around the sea.

Me: Mmm okay.

We went to Spar and we bought drinks. We walked back to the beach. We took off our shoes and we walked holding hands.

Themba: So when are we getting married?

Me: Next year on our son's birthday.

Themba: That's too far. October? Why not on my birthday?

Me: No mine is alright.

Themba: Okay let's just take the Valentine's day and get married on that day.

Me: Okay. But we have to go and meet your parents.

Themba: Yes I know. We will go after my birthday.

I nodded and we spoke about a lot of things. Just planning our future together. Whether we want more kids or not. Where will we stay? And all those things made me nervous because I was going to commit myself to him. Share a life, space, bed and almost everything with him for the rest of my life. After walking we went back to his flat.

The week went by and we heard nothing from his friends. They were not taking his calls. I could see that he was sad but he tried to hide it. Wednesday we went to the gynaecologist and our Son was just fine. Themba was over the moon and stars. I never got a chance to speak to Thobelani. He wasn't using his phone because of exams. I was also studying my ass off. Alondwe was trying stand using objects. Thobile used to send videos and I would forward them to Samkelo. We were just proud parents. I was going to start my Afrikaans lessons second semester.

It was a Friday morning. 24th of May. We were in bed with Themba. We just talking.

Me: Bbe?

Themba: Hmmhm.

Me: We're leaving tonight.

Themba: Leaving? We're going to?

Me: It's a surprise. Just a pre – birthday present for my handsome man.

Themba: Mmm okay. This is going to be a first birthday celebration without my friends.

I looked at him. He was sad. There was pain in his eyes. He tried to hide with a fake smile.

Me: It's Okay bbe. Just go to them today and fix your friendship. But I don't want them involved in my relationship. Otherwise you'll end up marrying them.

Themba: [excited] I promise bbe I won't let them bbe. Thank you! Thank you!

Me: Come back before 5pm. Don't be late.

Themba: I will be here in time bbe. I promise.

He was so excited like he was a preschool boy who just got a big toy truck. He squeezed me and he got up. He walked out and went to the bathroom. I pulled the covers and I tried to go back to sleep. He came back later blowing whistle. I heard him coming up to me. I pretended

to be asleep. He shook me. He kissed my forehead and he left. I fell asleep. I spent all day sleeping. I woke up around 4:30pm. I went to the bathroom and I took a shower. I went back to his room and lotion. I took my phone and called him. He didn't pick up. I went to the kitchen and I made something to eat. I ate. Time went by it was already 6pm and there was sign of Themba. We were supposed to leave at 7pm. I called him again and his phone was off. I called his friends and they didn't pick up their calls. I was so disappointed that I ended up crying. It was a huge disappointment that I wasn't expecting from him. I took out the tickets. I put them on the dressing table. I wanted him to see them when he comes back. I wrote a note for him. I wasn't planning on talking to him. I wrote: "I wanted us to go to Cape Town for your birthday and meet up with your parents. But you didn't care about what I planned for you. Just know that I won't go with you to see them. You will do that alone. HAPPY BIRTHDAY in advance." I put the note with the tickets and I went to bed. Themba's friends were way pass my nerves. I wanted them to fall already but I didn't know what to do and I wasn't going to do anything to stop his friendship with them. This made me think that maybe Themba was a mama's boy. I was heart broken, I cried myself to sleep.

The following morning I was woken up by my phone ringing. The ringtone was irritating. I took it with great force and I answered it without checking.

Me: You better have a good reason to wake me up this early Brah.

Hope: You like say Brah?

Me: Argh! Hope that's in my blood.

Hope: And you like saying Argh!

Me: Hhaybo!

Hope: As much as you like saying Hhaybo.

Me: [Laughing] Yoh!

Hope: Yah that yoh! too. [Laughing] How are you doing?

Me: I am fine babe and you?

Hope: I will be fine if you can go out with me today. Please. I miss you. The last time I saw you was when you left for Johannesburg.

Me: Yoh! I am such a bad bitch you know. I am sorry. I will make it up to you today Brah. I got up from the bed. Themba was sitting at the edge of the bed. He had the note and the tickets on his hands. He was looking at them. I went to the wore drop and took my gown.

Me: Meet me at my apartment after an hour.

Hope: We will go wherever I want right?

Me: Yes. Can I bring Thobelani with me it's been a while since I spent time with him too.

Hope: The guy you were with on the club?

I took my car keys. And I walked to the door. Themba called my name. I looked back.

Themba: please don't go just now. Can we talk. Please.

Me: There's nothing to talk about.

I walked out of the door. He followed me.

Hope: What's wrong?

Me: No I was talking to Themba. Let me try and contact Thobelani.

Hope: Okay.

She hung up the call. I walked out and I made my way to my car.

Themba: Thandeka please bbe don't go.

I stepped inside my car and I drove off.

I didn't want Themba to ruin my mood with whatever excuse he had. It was pretty clear that he had fun the previous night and Thandeka must say "oh bbe it's okay" No! Man I wasn't going to do that. I arrived in my flat and I sat on the couch and I called Thobelani's

roommate.

Him: Thandeka right?

Me: Yes. Where's Thobe?

Him: He's sleeping.

Me: Please wake him up.

I heard shuffling sounds. And the sound of a long yawn. I laughed a little.

Thobe: Early so Thandeka.

Me: It's been a while dude. Get ready in an hour I will be picking you up.

Thobe: Where to? You know that I changed the course. IT is not like OMT.

Me: Yes. But that doesn't mean you must kill yourself with your studies. Get ready! That's an order!

He laughed. And I hung up the call. I went to the bathroom and I took a shower. I did all the necessities. I wore a white short maternity dress. Brown sandals and gold accessories. I brushed my weave. There was a knock on the door. I went to attend it. I checked first before opening the door. It was Themba. I sighed and I didn't open.

Themba: I know that you're inside. Please open the door.

Me: Leave me alone please.

Themba: Bbe please. You know yesterday [ I knew that his pregnant ass was going to confess. Because he was acting like he was the pregnant one. And I was his man] I lost track of time. I was just happy to see my friends that I even forgot about our trip.

Me: [shouting] My ears are closed Themba I can't hear you please leave.

I huffed and I walked away from the door. I went back to my room and I finished up. I wanted to give birth already. I was tired of being ugly and my lips had turned black. I had pimples on my forehead. Something that I have never heard before. But foundation made my face looked better.

After a few minutes. There was another knock on the door. I took my bag and I went to open. Hope was at the door. Themba was still there standing. I looked at him. Hope and I hugged each other.

Me: You look beautiful.

Hope: You look lovely.

Me: Don't lie please.

Hope: What's wrong with baby daddy?

Me: I don't know. Let's go.

Themba: Thandeka don't make me follow you around like a headless chicken.

Hope and I laughed. I thought of him running around like a headless chicken and I laughed even harder.

Me: Please Themba. Go and take a shower you look horrible. And celebrate your birthday with your friends.

Themba: But I want to celebrate it with you.

Me: If you wanted to celebrate it with me. You were going to come back last night but you didn't so please Brah. Let's go home.

We left him like that and we went to Hope's car. We drove to Thobelani's res.

We arrived and I texted his roommate. After a few minutes he was down. And he was in the car at the backseat with me.

Thobe: Hey ladies.

Us: Hey.

We hugged each other. He held my left hand.

Thobe: Such a big rock.

Me: [laughing] What rock?

I looked at my left hand and there was a silver ring with a huge diamond. I was shocked

because I didn't realize I had a ring on my finger.

Thobe: Why are you surprised?

Me: Please pinch me.

Hope: You're getting married?

Me: Eh! My God!

Thobe: What's wrong kant?

Me: Argh! Nothing Brah. I am just acting up. I am getting married to Themba. He proposed last week.

Thobe: Wow! I thought you were going to end up with Ndunakazi.

Me: Weeh! Sanelisiwe? I don't want to die.

We laughed.

Them: Congratulations.

Me: [smiling] Thank you.

We drove to gateway. We had breakfast there, we watched a movie and we went to the beach. They played a lot of games and I was looking at them. Later we had supper. It was dark outside. We drove Thobelani to his res.

Thobe: Goodnight. Thanks I had a wonderful time.

Me: Can we talk.

Thobe: Okay.

We stepped out of the car and we stood by the gate.

Me: How are things going between you and Olwethu?

Thobe: She broke up with me. Apparently she found a new matured man.

Me: Uhm I am sorry but that is Themba's friend. I wanted her to tell you herself.

Thobe: It's cool. If she thinks he is the one. Than I will just move on.

I nodded and I hugged him. And stepped inside the car.

Hope: You're going to your place?

Me: No. Themba's place.

She nodded. I gave her directions and I looked at my ring. It was beautiful.

Hope: You like it?

Me: Uhm. Yes I love it.

She smiled. We arrived by Themba's place. We both stepped out of the car. We hugged each other and we backed away. We looked at each other and smiled. She kissed my cheek and she stepped back inside her car. I waved my hand and she did the same. She drove off. I walked inside the flat. They were having a mini party. The music was low and they were drinking and eating. It was Themba and his friends. Olwethu and two other girls. The girls were both sitting with Themba. He looked surprised to see me. Actually everyone was. I didn't greet them. I went straight to Themba's room. I took my clothes off. I wore his gown and I walked out of his room. I went to the bathroom. They all looked at me. I took a shower. I brushed my teeth. And I went back to his room. I heard sex sounds coming from the other room. It was Bheki and Olwethu. I could hear them moaning each other's names. I lotion and wore my pyjamas. I went to bed. I heard Themba shouting.

Themba: "Bheki! My Vrou is home bro. Please leave you will finish up that later. And that's my son's room man!"

Bheki: "I am about to come man. Boy will understand."

Themba: "And my Vrou?"

Bheki: "Awu. What about her? It's not like I care about what she thinks"

Themba:[he banged the door] "Don't make me break this door. This is my apartment"

Emma:[joining in] "Leave them like that."

Themba: "How will Thandeka sleep with such noise? "

Emma: "She'll understand."

Themba: “No. Y’all should leave now. Thanks for the birthday party. She’s not talking to me because y’all forced me to go clubbing last night. Leave guys”

Emma: “Your girlfriend is drama queen ”

Themba: “My fiancée!”

Emma: “Whatever! ”

After a few minutes there was no noise. They had left. I suppose. But Themba didn’t come back to his room. I sat up straight and I took my books and studied. Themba came back naked. He was drunk. He lotion and wore his pyjamas. He joined me. He put his head on my thighs and his hand on my tummy. I placed my books aside.

Themba: Mommy is not talking to me boy and I don’t know what to do now. I must chow her do you think she’ll talk? {he paused like was waiting for a response} Yes boy. I think so too. But I was wrong you know. I was just overwhelmed and I forgot about our plans. {He paused again} I won’t do it again. {He paused again} Hhayi! Hhayi! Lala manje mjita usuyabheda. Champ!

He kissed my tummy and he placed his head back on my thighs. His hand was still on my tummy.

Themba:[lazy voice] I am sorry bbe. I love you my vrou. Please forgive me.

Me: Did you take your medication today?

He shook his head meaning No. I let him be because he was drunk. I brushed his head until he fell asleep on my thighs.

Later Themba shook me awake. I rubbed my eyes. I looked at him. He was staring at me.

Themba: Bbe wake up and sleep in a proper way.

I didn’t realize that I fell asleep brushing his head. I was quite irritated that he woke me up just to tell me that I must sleep well.

Me: Really? You woke me up just to tell me that I must sleep the right way?

Themba: Yes. Please bbe. Umntanami uzophuka. Ulele kabi. [My son will be twisted inside you. Your position is not pleasant]

Me: Mxm. No child will be twisted here.

He stood up and went to switch off the lights. I slept in “pleasant” position. He joined me. We faced each other.

Themba: Bbe I am sorry for going like that yesterday.

Me: You went out clubbing and you forgot about me?

Themba: [shocked] How do you know about that?

Me: I heard you talking to your friends. How about I give you an ice cold bath?

Themba: No,! No! Don’t do that. I will die.

Me: If it was me you were going to do things to me right?

Themba: I am sorry muntu wami. I will do whatever you want.

Me: How about you make love to me now?

Themba: Bbe not that. Something else.

Me: Kanti whatsup with you and sex? Are you getting it somewhere else? Or you just don’t want to do it with me anymore just because I am pregnant?

Themba: No. –

Me: Those girls? Were you going to do three sum with them if I didn’t come back?

He didn’t answer me. I turned on the bedside lamp and he was staring at me. He looked at me. I turned off the lights. I gave him my back.

Themba: Bbe I am sorry.

Me: So you were going to do it?

Themba: Bbe it’s just –

Me: Don’t! Don’t explain.

I blinked my tears away. I tried to sleep. He held my waist. I removed his hand. I held my tummy and I drifted off.

The following morning was a Sunday. I knew that Themba wasn't going to church because the previous night he was drunk. I woke up while Themba was still sleeping. I took a shower, brushed my teeth, lotion and I wore my gown. I went to make breakfast for Themba before I leave. I finished and I put everything on a tray. I went to the bedroom. I shook him. He woke up.

Me: Here's your breakfast. Eat and take your medication.

Themba: [holding his head] I have a headache bbe please get me some water.

I went to the kitchen and I gave him water. I changed and I wore a blue summer dress. I wore my slippers and I tied up my weave.

Themba: Are you going somewhere?

Me: Yes. I am going back to my apartment.

Themba: What about me bbe? Who will look after me? And remind me to take my medication?

I knew he was using that to stop me from leaving but I had to leave.

Me: I have to study. I will call you and remind you.

Themba: You're leaving because of those strippers?

Me: Strippers? Wow! But anyway I have to study. I need some time alone. I spend the whole week with you. I am writing Wednesday

He didn't respond. He ate his food. I didn't believe that he brought strippers to his apartment.

Me: Please drive me to my place. I left my car there.

Themba: You can walk. It's not far nje.

Me: I have to – Ok I will walk.

I went to his spare room which was going to be our son's room. I took all my books that I was using for studying. They were quite heavy but I had to take them all. I took them and I took my phone. I left. On the road a white guy who was jogging offered to help me by carrying the books for me. I thanked him and we walked together until I made it to my flat. He gave me my things and he continued with his jogging. I went inside my room. I made something to eat for myself. I switched off my phone and the studying began.

Days went by and my exam began. I was studying my ass off. I had to pass. I had two babies to think about since my fiancé was just a moody man. I didn't go back to his apartment. I put my phone on aeroplane mode to avoid people. I only changed the mode when I want to remind Themba about taking his medication. He went back to work. We were not really talking. I decided to shift my focus on everything and study.

It was a Wednesday. I just had my last paper which I believe I did good. I called Hope to come and spend time with me. Late around 4pm she came. We made popcorn and we watched romantic comedy. The weather was cold. It was June. I was Five months pregnant. Alondwe was 9 months. We sat on the couch and covered ourselves with a blanket. We were laughing and having until the other couple kissed. It felt so awkward. Hope touched my thigh. I looked at her. She slowly came closer to me and she kissed me. I kissed her back. She touched me in a way that I wanted to be touched and I felt so good about it. She unbuttoned my dress and I took her shirt. The bowl of popcorn fell on the floor. We giggled in between the kisses. I unhooked her bra. She tried to do the same to me but I stopped her. I didn't want her to expose my breasts they were not attractive. Maybe that's why Themba didn't want to have sex with me. We kissed intensely and I didn't think I was going to get wet or want more but actually I did. I was wet as hell. My hands were on her breasts. She went down on my neck and we were both moaning. We stopped immediately when someone said "So this is what you've been doing behind my back?"

I froze and my body went cold. The past was repeating itself. I closed my eyes. I didn't want

to look at Themba. I heard Hope screaming. I opened my eyes quickly. Themba was holding her with her hair in a rough way. I could tell that it was painful. She was crying.

Hope: Please let go of my hair you're hurting me.

Me: Themba leave her alone.

Themba: Shut up!!!!

Going to a warehouse was going to be a waste of my time. I opted for build it. I bought a strong black rope and a pair of scissors. I went to Spar and I bought the longest knife on shelves. I drove to the beach. I went to those people who sell traditional goods. I bought a sjambok. I went to buy a little snack for energy and I ate. I did everything fast and I drove straight to Themba's flat. Before going inside, I wore my sneakers that I packed for going home. I cut the rope into two little pieces and one big piece. I went inside the flat with my things. They were still on the go. Maybe it was another round. I pushed the key out using my key. I unlocked the door and I slowly walked in. I went to the kitchen and I took two chairs. I walked inside the bedroom. I put the chairs down. I took the knife and the sjambok. Themba was on top of her. Themba was fucking the living daylights out of her vagina. The girl had her legs wide open and her eyes closed. She was moaning uncontrollably. I was more than hurt. I used all the strength that I have to whip Themba's back once. He groaned and he jumped off the girl. They were both shocked to see me. I looked down at him, he was wearing a condom. He disposed it. He was kneeling down on the bed.

Me: How could you Themba?

Themba: Bbe I –

Me: Bbe? Ngiwu Bbe manje? [I am bbe now]

Themba: Thandeka –

I whipped them both once. The girl screamed. Themba jumped off the bed. I let go of the sjambok. I grabbed the girl out of the bed by her hair. I placed the knife on her neck.

Me: One wrong move dear I will cut your throat and you Themba. You will do everything that I say or else she dies.

He nodded fast.

Me: Take that little piece of rope and tie her up

Themba: Tie up what?

Me: Tie up her hands.

He nodded and he slowly did that.

Themba: Bbe I am sorry.

Me: Shut up! Take another rope and she will assist you to tie up your hands.

Themba: Thandeka I won't do –

Girl: Hheyi Themba I don't want to die just take the fucking rope!

He quickly took the rope and he gave the girl they both assisted each other.

Me: Good! Now turn the chairs. Bind them together but in a position that they give each other their backs. Put them on this open space.

He did that slowly because his hands were tied up.

Me: Now sit on the chair.

He did just that. I walked with girl. I made her sit on the chair. The knife was still on her neck.

Me: You move I push the knife.

Girl: I won't move.

I took the bigger role and I tie them up with my free hand. Once the rope was around them. I let go of the knife and I made the rope knot strong.

I sat down on the floor and cried.

Me: Why Themba? I love you and you're doing this to me? Why are you hurting me like this.

Themba: I am sorry sthandwa sami. I just. I can't touch you bbe. Please understand.

Me: If you can't touch me than why do you have to touch someone else?

Themba: I don't know what came over me bbe I am sorry. Please forgive me.

Me: And you? You were here the other day. You know that I am with him why are you doing this?

Girl: I am doing my job.

Me: Themba this is the last child I am going to have with you. I am not going to have another baby after this baby do you understand?

Themba: But bbe that was not what we want.

Me: What you're doing is not what we wanted Themba.

Themba: I am sorry.

Me: Save it!

I stood up and I took the sjambok. I whipped them hard. I was crying. The more I cried was the more I had power to whip them. The girl was screaming and Themba was groaning loudly. Themba's body was red enough for me go stop. The girl had a strong black complexion like Ghana people. I was tired as hell. I sat down and I wiped my tears.

Me: I am too tired to drive. I will see you tomorrow. I will sleep in EJ's room. You will see yourselves.

Girl: I have to go to work.

Me: And fuck more guys.

Girl: I am not a street prostitute. I am just a call girl.

Me: Themba will figure it out.

Themba: Bbe please don't do this!

Me: Watch me.

I went to our son's room and I threw myself on top of the bed. I fell asleep immediately.

The following morning. I woke up Themba was sitting on the chair looking at me.

Themba: Good morning.

Me: Morning.

Themba: Bbe I am sorry about yesterday.

Me: I have to go home today.

I stood up and Themba followed me. I went to the bathroom and I walked inside the shower. Themba used the bathtub. After we finished. We brushed our teeth. Him with the toothpaste and me with water. We finished and we went to his room to lotion. He wore his clothes and I wore one of the maternity dresses that he bought for me. I wore his slippers.

Me: I will bring them back when I come back.

Themba: You won't drive yourself to Empangeni Thandeka.

Me: Watch me!

I walked to the door. He grabbed me by my arm.

Me: Let me go!

Themba: I don't want to fight with you. Uyangizwa. You're carrying my son and I won't do anything to put him and you in danger. I will drive you home!

I yanked my arm out of his hold. I threw my keys on his face. He took them. He took his wallet and we walked out of the flat. We drove to Musgrave center first and Themba bought food for himself and his "son" I was going to eat that obviously. He than drove us straight to Empangeni. He was slow on the road because his body was in pain but he tried to hide it. I gave him painkillers that I had with me. And a few minutes later his speed picked up

I fell asleep along the way. I woke up when Themba was shaking me. I opened my eyes and rubbed them. I looked around we were at home. But outside the gate.

Me: Why ain't you going through?

Themba: I wanted to wake you up first. I want to see your father.

Me: Why?

Themba: I need to talk to him about my son.

Me: Drive through. I will check if he's home or not. Maybe he is at work.

He used my controller to open the gate. He drove through. I stepped out of the car. I went to the door and it was locked. It was clear that Qiniso was working and dad also. Thobile was not around because Alondwe was on vacation. I went back to Themba.

Me: Dad is not around. You will wait or?

Themba: At what time does he comes back from work?

Me: At 6pm.

Themba: Okay I will wait. I will book a room at a hotel. I have to talk to him.

Me: Okay. You will come in or?

Themba: Let's drive to the mall.

Me: Okay.

I stepped inside the car and we drove to the mall. We went to Spur and we ordered. Our order arrived later and we started eating.

Me: Uhm how was is your body?

Themba:[clears throat] It's cool. I am fine.

I giggled and continue with eating.

Me: So will you cheat on me again?

Themba: No! No! Bbe I won't. But you also cheated on me.

Me: I am sorry for doing that and I won't do it again.

Themba: I trust you. I won't too.

Me: So when should I expect the police?

Themba: She won't press charges. And she's quitting being a call girl. That's what she said before she left. Apparently you're not the first to beat her.

Me: Shame. I was angry though.

Themba: I am jerk. I don't want my son to grow up knowing that I was not treating his mother well. He must know that you are Queen.

Me: Welele. Ethan!

Themba: You're too forward Mrs Smith!

We laughed and we had quite a good time without fighting. He wanted to see Richards bay sea. So I took him there. We saw a beautiful art that people make using sand.

Themba: Let's race to that beautiful art work.

Me: Ethan Junior and I will arrived first.

He ran faster than me. I couldn't keep up with him. I was struggling and the sand was making everything difficult for little Ethan and I. I decided to cry just to get Themba's attention. I placed my hands on my knees and I cried. Some guy who saw us, called Themba. He ran back to me. He held my waist. He was panicking.

Themba: Bbe what's wrong?

Me: [crying] I think I am in labor.

Themba: No you can't be. You're only five months pregnant.

Me: Arhh. Please kneel down now!

He quickly did. I laughed and I ran faster than before leaving him behind. He ran after me. We arrived first. The guy who called him was laughing. He was the only one who noticed us other people were doing their things. I raised my hands up as the sign of victory.

Themba: Usile yazi! You almost gave me a heart attack.

Me: [laughing] Let's go home. Mommy and boy won.

Themba: I will get you some other time. Can I kiss you?

Me: Did you brush your teeth and clean your lips after kissing that cheek.

Themba: Yes. Do you remember I kissed you too after kissing your ex last year at your dad's

wedding.

Me: Unamagqubu.

I laughed and I kissed him intensely. After that lot fun we had together. we drove to my father's house. It was late.

We arrived at home and I went through the house first. Dad was on the lounge. He smiled when he saw me. We hugged each other and he kissed my face all over.

Me: [giggles] Daddy!

Dad: You're my little Princess.

Me: I am old dad. I am 20 yrs. Sawubona bhuti Qiniso.

Qini: Hey mommy.

Me: Weeeh! Dad there's someone who would like to talk to you.

Dad: Who's that?

Me: My boyfriend dad.

Dad: Heeeh! He's here to pay lobola alone?

Me: Dad!

Dad: Okay. Show him in.

Me: Thank you!

I jumped out and I went to Themba.

Me: Bbe come.

Themba: Okay.

He stepped out of the car. We walked inside the house. He stood by the door. Dad walked up to him. They did handshake.

Dad: You can sit boy.

Themba: Thank you Sir.

They sat down. I sat next to dad.

Dad: Princess you can excuse us.

Me: Dad??

Dad: Yes baby go to your room.

I looked at Themba and he looked down. I sulked Qiniso laughed. I went to my room and I stood by the door. I ears drop.

Themba: "Eh baba. I know you are wondering why I am here"

Dad:" You're probably here to talk about your son"

Themba:" Yes. I would like him to stay with me. I promise to do things right before he's even born."

Dad:" And how are you planning on doing that? "

Themba:" I would like to pay damages and I would like to make his mother my wife but today I want to talk about my son"

Dad:"Hhayi my daughter is young to get married. Your son will stay here. Whether you paid damages or not"

Themba:" But baba I have proposed and she accepted my proposal "

Dad:"What? THANDEKA!!! THANDEKA!! "

I got scared fast. I thought about taking off my ring but I didn't. I quickly went to dad.

Me: Dad?

Dad: You accepted these boy's proposal?

Me:[looking down] Yes dad.

Dad: You're young! What do you know about marriage?

Me: But dad I love him.

Dad: You're proving that love by giving him a baby?

Me: Hhayi tata. It's not like that.

Dad: Take off that ring.

Themba: But baba –

Dad: Shut up! I am talking to my daughter! Take off that ring!!!

Qini: But she's bound to get married baba. If she's ready now you must support her.

Dad: No! Take off that ring!!!

Me: Dad no. I want to marry him.

Dad: Than you don't have my blessing!

Me: Dad!

Dad: Leave my house boy now!

I cried. Themba stood up and I stood up too.

Dad: I didn't say Thandeka!

Me: I am driving him to the hotel. There are no taxis at this hour.

Dad: Qiniso drive him to that hotel.

Qiniso stood up and I ran to my room. I closed the door and I laid on my back. I cried

I took my phone and I called Andile. I was still crying. Andile answered.

Andile: Sisi wami.

Me: [crying] Dad doesn't want me to get married Andile. This is unfair.

Andile: Woah! Woah! You're getting married to who exactly?

Me: To Themba.

Andile: You're young Thandeka.

Me: I don't care. I love him bhuti and I want to be with him. Please speak to dad for me.

Andile: Okay I am on the road right now. I am coming home with shemah. Dad wanted to meet her.

Me: When will you be here?

Andile: I don't know but you will see me tomorrow.

Me: Okay bhuti see you tomorrow bye. Drive safe.

Andile: Thanks.

We hung up and I placed my phone aside. Dad knocked on the door. I stood up and I opened the door for him. I walked to bed and he sat on the edge of the bed.

He faced my direction.

Dad: Mntanami I don't want you to go. You're still my little baby. You can't get married.

Me: But dad I won't stay with you forever. Andile is the one who supposed to be here forever because he won't change his surname.

Dad: Where does the family of these boy lives.

Me: Cape Town dad.

Dad: Hawu! Thandeka No! You can't. Even your mother wasn't going to allow this. You're our Trinity. Our last born. Maybe you can get married when you're 30 yrs.

Me: Tata??

Dad: You and your brother will leave me alone here and start your own families. Qiniso wants to leave already. He's also like a son to me.

My heart broke down. The minute I heard him say that. I didn't want my dad to be lonely but it was going to happen either way.

Me: We will visit dad.

Dad: You can get married if my grandchildren will stay here with me.

Me: But –

Dad: No buts. Goodnight my Princess.

He walked up to me and kissed my forehead. I sulked, he chuckled and he left. I took off my clothes and I went to take a shower.

After showering. I prepared myself for bed. My phone. I took it. Themba was calling. I answered.

Me: Themba.

Themba: I am sorry for telling your dad just like that.

Me: It's cool.

Themba: How is he?

Me: He doesn't want me to get married because we will leave him alone since Andile is leaving in Johannesburg and soon he'll be getting married too. And Qiniso wants to leave too.

Themba: Eish. But he has to let go.

Me: He said. I can get married only if his grandchildren stays with him.

Themba: Hhayi Hhayi! No child of mine will stay with their grandparents. We should raise our children ourselves.

Me: I don't know hey but Andile is coming back tomorrow. We will talk with him.

Themba: Okay. If you come back we will go and see my parents right?

Me: I said go alone.

Themba: Hawu bbe. I thought you have forgiven me.

Me: I have but I want you to go alone.

Themba: Please. MaDhlomo.

Me: Hhay okay. I am sleepy now. Goodnight.

Themba: Goodnight. I love you.

Me: I love you more than more.

He laughed and we hung up the call. I fell asleep immediately.

The following day I woke up. Andile was making a lot of noise. He was doing it intentionally just to wake me up. I looked at the time. It was 10am. I had missed calls from Themba and Samkelo. I ignored them a little because I wanted to sleep. I took toilet paper and I created balls. I placed them on my ears just to avoid the noise. He decided to come inside my room.

Andile: Hhayi! Wake up Thandeka!

Me: Andile No!

Andile: Please!

Me: No! I will wake up later. I want to sleep.

My phone rang. Samkelo was calling. I took out the tissue and I picked up.

Me: BD. [Baby daddy]

Sam: BM. {Baby Mama} [We both laughed]

Me: What's up? Uright?

"Hurry up than Samkelo. She's doing it again" His stepmother yelled from the background.

I held shuffling sounds like Samkelo was running. Then I heard. "Papapapapa....

Dadadadadada" sounds. It was Alondwe making them. I smiled to myself. It was so precious.

She stopped and she screamed. Samkelo spoke to me.

Me:[laughing] That was lovely.

Sam: Yes. I wanted you to hear that she said sounds closed to dad before mom.

Me:[laughing] Oh please! She's nine months. She's not closed to talking. And babies say those sounds randomly.

Sam: She's ten months today. It's the 1st of July. Your birthday month.

Me:[smiling] Yeah hey she's ten months but that doesn't mean she can talk.

Sam: She will soon. She's clever like her father of course!

Me: Hello?? How about her mother?

Sam: She's too forward like her mother. And she talks too much like you.

Me: You really want her to talk already?

Sam: She is talking. She said papa meaning dad. Not mom. She loves dad a lot.

Me: [laughing] You have wild imagination hey! You fantasize.

Sam: You're jealous. [Laughing] Uyakugqobha mos u- Alondwe ukuthi mama!

Me: Mxm! Uyaphapha le ngwenya le.

Sam: [laughing] You want to cry? Sorry man bbe. Ngizomncenga ke so that she can say

mama next time.

Me: You better! Or else I will cut your tongue.

We laughed at the same time.

Sam: Uyagula wena. Have a nice day than BM.

Me: Thanks you too. BD.

We laughed and hung up the call. Andile was looking at me all the time.

Me: [hitting him with a pillow] Uyazithanda izindaba!

We laughed and I chased him out of my room because I wanted to sleep...

Later I woke up. I had dozens of missed calls from Themba. Yho! My bbe Maybe he cried. I decided to call him back. He answered immediately.

Themba: I was getting worried.

Me: You thought that I died?

Themba: Yes. I wanted to cry.

Me: I will blame that on hormones because you hardly cry.

Themba: A man doesn't cry unless it's critical.

Me: That reminds me. Bbe you must take a critical illness insurance.

Themba: Why?

Me: Your work bbe just in case –

Themba: You worry too much. Nothing will happen.

Me: Don't say that.

Themba: Bbe can we talk about that some other time. I beg you.

Me: Okay!!

Themba: No need to scream. How is my little man doing?

Me: You didn't ask me that first.

Themba: You two. I am sorry.

Me: We're fine daddy. How are you?

Themba: I miss you otherwise I am good.

Me: I miss you too. Noma weyisa nje.

Themba:[laughing] Sometimes you get on my nerves bro. These baby wants us to break up.

Me: [laughing] He got it wrong because we're not breaking up. In fact nothing will break us.

Themba: Yes. I am bored here.

Me: Where are you?

Themba: I am at the hotel.

Me: Themba!!! Why? And work?

Themba: I wanted to sleep. I will go to work tomorrow. I was calling you thinking that you'll come here.

Me: Sorry I was out of it.

Themba: Let me get ready so that I can leave. I love you.

Me: I love you too bbe.

We hung up the call and I stood up. I took a shower, brushed my teeth, lotion and I cleaned up my room. After doing that I wore my simple pink maternity dress. I wore Themba's sleepers since he didn't go back with them. I went to the kitchen and eat. The house was quiet. I started cooking supper early. After cooking I watched movies.

Later Andile and Shemah came back. They were all lovey dovey. I stood up and hugged sister in law.

Shemah: How are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Shemah: I am fine. It's good to see you happy. The last time I saw you. You were going nuts.

Me: I thought I was loosing my other piece.

They laughed. We sat down and I bond with my sister in law. Qiniso and dad came back. They all sat down and greeted. Andile introduced Shemah to dad. He loved her. Actually nobody didn't. She was a lovely woman.

Dad: Did your sister tell you that she's getting married?

Andile: Yes she did.

Dad: And you see no problem with that?

Andile: If she's ready dad than why would you stop her. You must support her.

Dad: Do you realize that you will leave me alone. Qiniso wants to move out too.

Andile: You must come and live with me than dad because I can't live here.

Dad: And leave my job? And your girlfriend won't mind?

Shemah: No I would love to. And I don't live with Patrick [I smiled] full time.

Andile: You just made Joy happy by calling me Patrick.

Me: It's your name duh! [They laughed]

Andile: So dad?

Dad: Hhayi. I will have to apply for a job as soon as I get a job I can live with you son.

Me: Meaning I am getting married dad?

Dad:[looking down] Yes Princess.

I smiled and I jumped to him. I held him tight and I kissed his cheek.

Qini: That means I am also going month end.

Me: Hawu why so early?

Qini: The other job offer I got. I was supposed to start beginning of August.

Me: That's nice. Where?

Qini: Limpopo.

Us: Wow! Congratulations.

We stood up and hugged him. Except for dad because he knew.

Qini: Yeah hey. If it wasn't for your father I wasn't going to make it this far.

Us: Ncooah.

We laughed as Qiniso shed one tear. I was near him so I wiped his tear.

Me: This mean you will marry a mad woman.

They all laughed.

Dad: So when are you planning on getting married?

Me: Valentine's day next year.

Them: Hawu!!!

Me: What?

Andile: Early so?

Me: Yes! I want to be Mrs Smith soon.

They laughed.

Andile: Did you tell Samkelo about the engagement?

Me: Uhm. No. I must tell him.

Dad: Yes you must tell him. You must decide where will Alondwe stay because you're getting married.

Andile: Yeah.

Me: She will stay with me. Themba likes my daughter.

Dad: That you must discuss with him. And your grandmother wants to see you two tomorrow.

Us: Yoh!

[Thanks to the hot sun I got a break.]

The following morning we woke up and we prepared ourselves for going to see our grandmother at Engwelezane township. Andile was going to drive us there. I wore black

leggings and a blue maternity. I loved blue colour the time I was carrying EJ. After breakfast we drove to Engwelezane. Shemah was with us.

Andile: I hope and pray that she won't insult us Brah. That women can be rude.

Me: She will. Worse part we never visit her.

Andile: Yoh! We're bad grandchildren.

We laughed. We continued talking about our grandmother. Shemah was laughing at our stupid conversation.

Within a blink of an eye. We were at Engwelezane township B section. We drove through. Granny was watching 1Gospel channel. She looked at us and she shook her head. We sat down.

Us: Sawubona gogo.

Gogo: Umithi futhi wena? [You're pregnant again]

I looked down and I played with my fingers.

Andile: How are you gogo?

Gogo: Kawa you hoho? [I wanted to laugh as she mimicked Andile's voice.] Like you care!

Me: We do care MaMvelase. [She smiled a little]

Gogo: You're the old one Cashephi –

I laughed really hard that my tummy was sore. Andile didn't like that name. He hated it. He was irritated because I was laughing at him. I stood up and I went outside. I laughed some more that I had tears in my eyes. I tried to calm down and I went back inside. I sat down.

Gogo: Usuyagwinya yini mntan'omntanami?

Me: No gogo but I was laughing at Andile.

Andile: There's nothing funny!

Me: I am sorry Cashi! [I laughed again]

Gogo: Hleziphi! Hhaybo!

Andile laughed at me too. Lord knows how I hated that name. Shemah was looking at us with a confused look. She didn't understand the names since she was Nigerian.

Gogo: Hhayi. Bantwana baka Mfaniseni! Are you crazy?

Us: No!

Gogo: Good! Cashephi [I held my laughter] How can you let your sister fall pregnant twice?

Andile: I can't control her makhulu. It's her life.

Gogo: Hhayi. I don't condone this behavior but at least you're getting married. Your father told me. When will I see umkhwenyana?

Me: You want to see him?

Gogo: Yes. He must come here and see me with you.

Me: I will tell him gogo.

Gogo: Good! Makoti kaCashephi how are you baby girl? [I smiled]

Shemah: I am fine granny. How are you?

Gogo: I am fine. You're beautiful. [Shemah blushed] We Cashephi. Muhle impela usufuna sife kodwa? [She's beautiful Andile but do you want us to die]

Andile: Cha gogo. Why?

Gogo: [whispering] Bayathakatha laba Bantu bokufika. [The foreigners use witchcraft]

Andile and I laughed really hard.

Andile: No gogo don't worry.

Gogo: Okay. I am so happy so see you my grandchildren. You have grown up. [We smiled] When last did you visit your Xhosa grandmother?

Andile and I looked at each other. The last time we saw her was a year after our Mother's funeral. I was young back than.

Gogo: You don't love us! She called me a few days back. She wants to see you. Don't do this cruel thing of forgetting about us my grandchildren.

Us: We're sorry gogo.

She nodded. She forced us to spend the night with her. We didn't mind. Our uncle and his wife came back. They were happy to see us. Our cousins were on holidays in rural areas. We spend the night with gogo.

She told me to come and sleep with her. She wanted to give me some marriage advices.

Though it was early for that but I didn't mind. We were in bed talking freely.

Gogo: Your dad thinks that you're young to get married. He is scared that you're leaving him or maybe you will divorce if you get tired but I trust you that you will hold your marriage together.

Me: But what if I fail gogo?

Gogo: You won't fail if you can stop being pig headed.

Me: Gogo?

Gogo: It's the truth. You're just like your grandfather. But for him it was better because he was a man and I knew how keep up with his stubbornness. But a man mntanami. He needs respect not a woman who thinks she knows it all. And a woman who wants to rule. You must be humble and know that not everyone in his family will love you. My mother in law hated me but I never disrespected her not even once. The only thing that makes a marriage work is when you as a wife knows your place and you give your husband a right to his position of being the head of the house. It shouldn't be your word last every time. Uzobe umenza isyoyo sendoda. And satisfy him sexually. [I giggled] Yeah. You wouldn't be pregnant if you don't know what sex is.

Me: But gogo right now he doesn't want to have sex with me.

Gogo: That's because you're pregnant. Men are different and so as pregnancies. Your grandfather never had sex with me with all my sons pregnancies. But my girls he wanted to make love to me now and then.

Me: But it's hurt gogo.

Gogo: I know baby. You just have to be ready because it will be painful when you give birth.

Me: Yoh! Gogo!

Gogo: You have grown up now. You will be strong woman just like your mother only if you can change your grandfather's stubbornness.

Me: Hawu!

Gogo: Serious. You will be alright don't be scared.

Me: Thank you gogo.

Gogo: If things get sour and hard just know that I am phone call away. I will give you advices that your mother would've given you.

Me: I will do that gogo.

She kissed my cheek and I giggled. She continued talking until we fell asleep.

The following morning we drove back home after gogo told us to be good children, look after our father and not to forget them. Dad booked tickets for us and the following day we were going to Eastern Cape to visit our mother's mom.

We arrived eLusikisiki. Shemah didn't come with us and Andile was going to leave the following day. I was going to spend the rest of the week with them. Uncle Lunathi was coming for us. He was my mother's younger brother. We placed our bags down.

Me: Yoh! This place is so rural.

Andile: Yes. And you will stay here for the whole week.

Me: Woah! Can you burry me already!

We shared a laugh. Uncle Lunathi came. He was driving a white van. He came to us and he greeted us. He looked at me.

Lunathi: Hhayi. You decided to visit us with a big tummy?

Me: Malume please. You knew right?

Lunathi: I knew what? Patrick pack your bags in the car.

He nodded and I tried to assist him.

Lunathi: Umithi wena. [You're pregnant] Leave those bags. Your brother will carry them for you. Where is the father of the baby?

Me: Malume can we discuss that at home.

People were starring at us because Uncle Lunathi was loud. I went to the car and I sat on the front seat. We all sat there and he drove us home. There were three separate houses. One big house and two other houses.

My phone rang before we could get inside the house. I didn't go through. I answered it.

Themba was calling.

Me: Smith.

Themba: Being with your dad makes you forget about me?

Me: No. I am not even at home. Not even Kzn.

Themba: Where are you exactly?

Me: Hhaybo cool down. I am at my grandmother's house. Eastern Cape.

Themba: And you didn't bother yourself to tell me because?

Me: Would you please calm down! I was going to tell you.

Themba: When? What if something happened to you and the baby? What was I going to say. Because I didn't even know where you were?

Me: Stop being dramatic Themba!

I heard my grandmother whispering. He was asking Andile that who is Themba. Andile told her that he was my fiancé. I walked away a short distance from them.

Themba: I am not being dramatic, I am just concern about you and my child.

He was shouting and I got irritated. I shouted back at him.

Me: I said we're fine! You don't like peace do you?

Themba: Don't ask me that shit of a question. You saw it was best for you to go without telling me? Now you are asking me about peace what peace?

Me: Yazi yini wena! Awungiyeka. Uyanghlanyela phela manje!! You want me – [You know what! Leave me alone. You're mad]

Granny: [shouting] Joy!!! [I got a fright] Isn't that your future husband you're talking to, like you're talking to a two year old boy??

Me: It's him Makhulu but –

Granny: No buts! How can you disrespect your fiancé by shouting at him? Don't you know that a woman does not shout back at her husband no matter what the situation says? The Bible says that not me!

Me: [looking down] I am sorry Makhulu.

Granny: You're saying sorry to a wrong person. I looked at my phone and Themba was still on call. I placed my phone on my ear and I spoke to him.

Me:[clearing throat] I am sorry for shouting at you.

Themba: Okay. I will talk to you later.

Me: Okay.

We hung up the call. My grandmother looked at me and she clicked her tongue. She walked inside the house. I looked at Andile and he shrugged his shoulders. We both went inside.

We sat down and uncle Lunathi's wife gave us food and drinks. We thanked her.

Granny: I am happy to see you both my children.

Us: We are happy too makhulu.

Granny: I am not proud of what you did Joy. How old is your fiancé?

Me:[looking down] He's 24yrs old Makhulu.

Granny: And you?

Me: I am turning 20yrs in a few days.

Lunathi: What did she do mama?

Granny: She was...[she told him everything]

Lunathi: A woman should know her place. There's no man who wants a wife or girlfriend who disrespect him.

Me: But –

Andile: For once Thandeka just listen and stop explaining your actions even when you are wrong. What you did is wrong. Even me as your brother I don't expect you to talk to me like that. how much more your soon to be husband.

Lunathi: What is his surname?

Me: Smith.

Lunathi: Once you're a Smith don't think about coming back to your father's house. You will stay with your husband whether it's hot or cold. No divorce can solve your problems. Do you understand?

Me: Yebo.

Them: Good!

Me: Can I go and lie down.

Granny nodded. She showed me the room I was going to use. I tried to sleep while digesting the words they gave me. Was I seriously ready for a lifetime commitment? But I wanted to be with Themba for the rest of my life. The part of "it won't be always about happiness" scared me because I wanted to be happy waya waya. I was tired of fights and arguments. I finally managed to sleep in between my thoughts.

Andile left the following day. I was left with granny, uncle Lunathi, his wife, my two cousins. The rest of the family was on vacation. Basically I was spending more time with gogo. She was teaching me a lot of things, she even taught me how prepare Xhosa traditional meals and everything that I needed to know. It was so funny sometimes but I did learn a lot and my uncle's wife too she was there giving me advices on how to keep my husband happy. I saw myself growing and I was willing to try and drop my shitty attitude. After a week I went back home. I spent the second week alone during the day I was bored as fuck. Themba used to call at least three times a day or more. After school vacation I was going with him and visit his parents.

So it was Sunday during the day after church. I was waiting for Samkelo to bring back Alondwe. Thobile was back. I was beginning to feel sleepy until my phone beeped. I took it and read the text. Samkelo had sent it telling me to come out. I stood up and I fixed myself. I looked at my ring and I thought about taking it off because I wasn't ready to tell him. I then decided that I wasn't going to take it off. I put my hand on my pocket. I walked out. He was playing with Alondwe outside the car. They looked cute together.

Me: Anisebahle! [Complementing]

Sam: Thank you mommy.

He turned around and he kissed my cheek. Alondwe looked at me and smiled.

Sam: Are you gonna take her or?

Me: Please hold her. I will call Thobile to get her. I want to talk to you. [I texted her]

Sam: Okay.

She came out after a few seconds. She tried to take Alondwe from Samkelo. Alondwe cried. She didn't want to let go of her father.

Me: You can leave her than Thobile.

She left her. I opened up my arms for Alondwe she smiled but she didn't want me to take her away from her father.

Me: Your daughter Samkelo. She doesn't recognize me.

Sam: She does but she loves daddy more than you I told you that.

He kissed her cheeks. Alondwe giggled. I cleared my throat.

Sam: Sorry you wanted to say?

Me: Uhm. I wanted to tell you that I am getting married next year.

Sam: Uyahlanya! [You're mad!]

Me: What exactly do you mean?

Sam: You can't get married Thandeka!

Me: Excuse me?

Sam: I don't want you to get married.

Me: Why not?

Sam: I love you and you know that.

Me: Samkelo our love for each other will always be there. We shared something special and we both ruined it because I can't be the only person to be hold liable for what happened to us. But we have moved on. So please just accept that because I have accepted it.

Sam: You moved on too fast after me!

Me: Too fast? I spent the whole month of February crying over you. I tried everything to reach out to you but you blocked me everywhere. What was I supposed to do? Fly to Johannesburg? Maybe if I knew where you live I was going to do it because I was desperately in love with you and I needed you the most but you were not there. I might have pushed you away but Hhayi nawe wayibaxa Brah. Themba rescued me from loosing myself and my brains actually because I was highly desperate. I am in love with him and I want to marry him.

Sam:[walking away] Go and marry him.

I followed him because he was leaving with my daughter. He buckled her on her seat. And he closed the door.

Me: Why are you taking my daughter Samkelo?

Sam: You're getting married so she must get used to staying with my mom or dad.

Me: Are you crazy? My daughter belongs with me! I am her mother.

Sam: She doesn't leave with you and just in case you have forgotten we paid the damages for her and we paid the price to represent cows for ukumlobola u – Alondwe meaning she rightfully belongs to her father's family so Alondwe belongs with me not you! It was just my mercy to give you my daughter. So go to your boy and leave us alone. And worst part she doesn't even wants you.

He quickly stepped inside the car and drove off. I ran to the house crying. I went straight to my room and I locked myself up. I cried until I couldn't. I had hiccups from crying. It was so painful to hear Samkelo telling me that my daughter doesn't want me. Maybe he was right? I am a bad mother after all but I didn't want to loose my first born. I fell asleep.

Later I was woken up by dad knocking on the door. I went to open the door. He walked in. We sat on the bed.

Dad: Where is Alondwe?

Me: Samkelo left with her. I told him about my wedding and he got mad.

Dad: He still loves you?

Me: Yes he does. He doesn't want me to have my child tata ndiyithini mna lonto?

Dad: He is mad. Where will the child stay because his mother is married now and she stays eMthunzini.

Me: No dad we have to go and get my daughter. I am also entitled to be a mother to her. She can be a Ndunakazi by traditional right and lawful right but I am her mother too.

Dad: Yes but by tradition the child belongs with them because they did not only paid damages but bamlobola futhi umntwana so that she can be rightfully a Ndunakazi. She belongs to them.

I didn't say anything for a long time.

Me: Can I be alone dad?

Dad: You have to eat baby. We can get a lawyer and file for joint custody of the child.

Me: Really?

Dad: Yes but you must make sure that your fiancé has a clear record or a clean past because they do background check on everyone who is going to be involved in the child's life. If someone has some past demons than chances are small to get the custody we rather not try. Because Samkelo might end up saying he wants sole custody and he will get it.

Me: [crying] Can I sleep?

Dad: You have to eat and you must come to the hospital tomorrow for a check up. Doctor Biyela will do it.

Me: I will eat later tata not now.

He nodded. He kissed my forehead and he left. He closed the door behind him. Themba had his own shady past and if we were to go to court chances are they were going to be able to dig up his dirty past. I had nothing to use against Samkelo besides the fact that he tried to steal Alondwe away from me but it wasn't enough. I just broke down and cried. The pain was too much for me. My phone rang. Themba was calling. I didn't answer the phone. I ignored it and I fell asleep.

The following day. I drove to Samkelo's place but he wasn't there. The neighbor told me that he left with his daughter. I drove back home. I called his mother. She picked up.

His mom: What do you want after breaking my son's heart like this?

Me: I want my daughter.

His mom: You're going to be a mother again soon so you might as well forget about Alondwe.

Me: I can't forget about Alondwe not after everything I went through with her and she's my first born. I can't forget about her.

His mom: Well sorry dear. I have to go my husband needs me.

Me: Where is Samkelo?

His mom: Why don't you call him?

Me: His phone is off.

His mom: Well I don't know bye.

She hung up the call. I sat on the car and cried until I couldn't. I remembered my appointment with the Doctor. I drove to the hospital. I waited and I went through when it was my turn. The baby was fine except for my BP level. It was high. I had to try and keep calm. I drove back home. Andile called. I answered.

Andile: Sisi are you alright?

Me:[crying] No! He finally won Andile. He wanted to take my daughter from the beginning now he got a chance and he took her away from me. How can he be so cruel towards me?

Andile: He loves you Thandeka and it's hard for him to accept that you're getting married.

Me: Then why is he using my daughter to hurt me Andile?

Andile: I am sorry sisi.

Me::Do you know where he is?

Andile: He said Alondwe will stay with his father in Cape Town.

I couldn't take it anymore. I just dropped the call and cried louder.

A week passed. On Friday Dad, Andile and my uncle Lunathi went to Cape Town so that we can negotiate with the Ndunakazi family. I was there too. We were sitting on the lounge. Samkelo, his stepmother, his mother, his father, his two uncles and their wives were there. Before we started talking Alondwe cried from her room I guess. Samkelo stood up and he went to take her. His mother told him to give Alondwe to me. I opened my arms and she also opened her arms for me to take her.

I was sitting down on the mat. Samkelo gave me her bottle and porridge. I fed her and I gave her formula. She sucked the milk out of the bottle, straight to her tummy.

Sam's dad: We hear that you are getting married mama ka Alondwe.

I nodded and I continued on looking at my daughter. She was finishing off the milk. She was so adorable and she was starting to be more like me when I was a baby. She had some other features of Samkelo but she was like me.

Dad: Yes. But that doesn't mean the child must be kept away from her. It's her first born.

Sam's dad: Dhlomo you know that the child belongs to us?

Dad: Yes I know. All we're asking for is for your son and the family to allow my daughter to be able to see her daughter.

Sam's uncle: Bhuti let the boy talk for himself, He is the father of the child.

Sam: Her mother is going to be a mother soon and she won't have time for Alondwe so she must just leave my daughter alone and focus on her new found family.

Sam's mom: The child will want to know why you didn't choose to marry her father and chose the second man who came around.

Me: So that is the plan Samkelo you gonna poison my child against me?

Sam: No but we will tell her the truth. If you agreed to marry me that time we asked you, all this was going to be avoided but you chose the other guy. I won't give you my daughter Thandeka you might as well leave right now.

Me: You study in Johannesburg you won't be staying here.

Sam: I managed to get transfer so I will stay here with my family and my child. And study in UCT.

Alondwe let out a very loud giggle. I looked at her. She was brushing my tummy and the baby was kicking inside. She laughed and looked at me. I smiled. Everyone in the house laughed. I kissed her forehead. She smiled. EJ stopped kicking. She started crying.

Sam's mom: She was going to love her brother

Others: Yeah.

I stood up and I asked where her room was. They showed me. I went to her room with her. It was beautiful. There was a chair there so I sat down with her. I pressed my tummy and EJ started moving. I took Alondwe's hand and placed it on my tummy. She stopped crying. She giggled. I tickled her so that she can forget about the moving baby. She laughed really hard and I stopped. I took her toys and we sat on the double bed that was on her room. I played with her. She was eating her toys instead of playing with them. We played until she was tired, she was singing "lalalalala" those sounds babies make when they are sleepy. Samkelo came inside the room.

Sam: Your family is leaving.

Me: You refused right?

Sam: Thandeka I can't –

Me:[with tears] I hate you. Samkelo ngiyakuzonda!!

Sam: That hurts hearing it from you.

I kissed my baby "I love you baby." I stood up and I went to the door.

Sam: I will always love you Thandeka.

Me: Mxm! Fuck you! Nxx!

I left the room. I walked passed everyone who was on the lounge. Dad tried to stop me by calling my name but I didn't stop. I went outside.

Andile followed me.

Andile: Thandeka come back.

Me: Are they going to give me a chance to be with my daughter?

Andile: No. Samkelo doesn't want to. They said the decision was his to make.

Me: Okay let's go.

Andile: Come back they wanted us to pray and have something they prepared for us.

Me: Asizanga ngobuhlobo obuhle la so please let's go. I don't want their food nor prayer.

Andile: Don't be rude.

Me: Why don't you go and dine with them and leave me alone.

Uncle: She's right let's go. There's nothing to rejoice about here.

Me: Thanks malume.

Dad came out and told us to leave. I wasn't going back to school yet. The following day I was going with Themba to meet his family. and Andile was going back to Johannesburg. Uncle Lunathi was going back to Eastern cape. Dad was going back to KZN.

Dad: I am sorry baby we tried though.

Me: It's Okay dad. Thank you.

Andile: Just drop this whole marriage thing.

Dad: Andile! Let her do what she wants. One day her daughter will know the truth whether she understands or not but my baby tried her best. She can't marry that boy because of the baby. She will marry the person she loves.

Me: Goodbye guys. Let me make my way to the house.

Dad: Tell that boy to treat you right okay?

Me: Yes dad. Call me when you arrive at home.

Dad: I will baby.

Me: Thank you to you all.

I hugged them and they left. I called Themba and he said he was going to be where I was within a few minutes. I waited for him outside the house. He arrived. He got off the car. He looked at me and I looked away. He gave me a tight hug. He kissed my forehead. He opened the door for me and I stepped inside the car. He did the same. He looked at me once more and he made me face him. He kissed me. We broke the kiss and he started the engine.

Me: They refused. Samkelo don't want me to see her. He said I chose you over her.

Themba: I am sorry bbe. Do you think we should stop getting married?

Me: And satisfy Samkelo's desires? No! If he wants to use my daughter against me it's cool. He must do that.

He squeezed my hand.

Me: Did you buy groceries that I told you to buy?

Themba: Yes.

I nodded, he didn't let go of my hand. I tried to contain my tears. We drove straight to his house.

We arrived in the house. It was clean. I looked around. The house wasn't empty like before.

Me: You bought the piano?

Themba: Just for you.

I smiled and I hugged him tightly.

Me: Thank you. It's beautiful. Do you mind playing for me while I cook?

Themba: Anything for you my love.

I went to our room upstairs and I wore my gown and his slippers. I went back downstairs. He was already playing his own sounds. I went to him and I hugged him from behind. I kissed his cheek.

Me: I love you.

Themba: I love you too bbe.

I went to the kitchen and I started cooking. Themba played the piano until I finished cooking. He was playing emotional sounds, I went to him and I gave him a massage on the shoulders. He sniffed. I stopped and I sat with him on the chair. He was crying. I held his hand.

Me: Bbe are you alright?

Themba: [he smiled faintly] I love you Thandeka with all my heart and soul. You mean the world to me and I want to make you happy. Thank you for being here with me.

Me: I love you too.

We hugged each other for the longest time.

Themba: Let me try.

Me: Try what?

Themba: Making love to you now.

Me: Bbe you don't have to.

Themba: I want to. I need to.

I smiled and he held my hand. I wiped his tears and we went upstairs....

After our session we laid on our backs and tried to catch our breaths. Themba kissed my cheek. I smiled. I took my phone.

Me: That wasn't too hard.

Themba: Yeah. Hey I guess I was being dramatic.

Me: [laughing] Let me play this for you.

Themba: What?

Me: I recorded everything that we spoke there.

Themba: That's clever.

Me: At least one day I will try and explain myself to her maybe.

I played it for him and he listened. He laughed when Alondwe started giggling.

Themba: Why is she giggling?

Me: Ethan Junior was kicking. Alondwe had her hands on my tummy.

Themba: That's sweet. She even cried?

Me: Yes. EJ had stopped kicking that time.

Themba: Alondwe loves you boy.

Themba said brushing my tummy. I pulled the covers and covered my body. He saw that and his mood changed from smiley face to sour face.

Themba: You don't have to do that.

Me: No it's fine. I just –

Themba: I don't mind really.

Me: You don't have to force it too. Let's go and eat. I am hungry.

I tried to change the subject because I was uncomfortable with talking about my body and all that phase we went through about sex. I took my gown and I wore it under the covers.

Themba was looking at me.

Me: Wear your clothes and stop staring at me bbe please.

Themba: I don't want you to be shy.

Me: I am not, serious.

He nodded and wore his clothes. We stood up and I wore my panties. We went to the bathroom to wash our hands. We went downstairs and I dished up the food for us. We prayed and ate.

After eating we washed the dishes. I went to our bathroom and I took a shower. Themba was watching TV downstairs. I finished and I lotion my body. I wore my pyjamas and put my gown on. I took a pair of scissors and I went to Themba downstairs. I took a cushion and I sat down in between his legs. I gave him the scissors.

Me: Take off that weave bbe and please don't cut my hair off or there will be war.

Themba: If it's a mistake?

Me: No Themba don't talk about mistakes here just take off the weave.

Themba: Why are you taking it off. My mom will think you don't have style you know.

Me:[laughing] I don't care. I will cover my hair bbe. She won't notice.

Themba: You told me that you washed your weave a day before yesterday.

Me: Yes I did but it's boring now. I miss my hair.

He laughed and I told him what to do and what not to do. He took off my weave and unplaited my snoopy. He finished and he assisted me stand up. He cleaned up the place and we went back upstairs. I sat on the bed and I turned on the TV.

Themba: Bbe please come and guard me. I am scared to bath alone.

Me: Themba Hhaybo!

Themba: Please Bbe!

I sulked and stood up. He smiled and he held my hand. I sat down on the chair that was on the bathroom. I watched him taking off his clothes. He went inside the shower.

Me: Close the door bbe.

Themba: No I want you to look at me.

Me: [brushing my tummy] Boy please don't be like daddy. I think he's crazy.

Themba: Crazy in love with your mama boy.

Me: Unezimanga ubaba wakho yoh! Close your eyes baby please.

Themba:[laughing] Bbe you will poison my son with bad things.

Me: You're shifting the blame on me now?

Themba: Yes! I should.

We laughed. I stood up and closed the door. He opened it and I let him be. He finished and he mop the floor. We brushed our teeth and we went back to the bedroom. He gave me his lotion.

Themba: Please moisturize my body Mrs Smith.

Me: My arms are painful bbe.

Themba: Mine too bbe please.

I pouted and I took the lotion. I moisturized his whole body. He was smiling like a child who just received a candy. I finished and he gave me his pyjamas. I made him wear his top and he wore his pants himself. We switched off the lights and we got in under our blankets. We cuddled each other until we fell asleep.

The following morning we woke up and prepared ourselves for going over to his parents house. They lived in City bowl. Themba's house was at Northern suburbs. I wore a long blue dress, with black sandals and I put on a black doek. I put on a white coat. I took my handbag, Themba was already waiting for me downstairs. I went to him. He looked at me and smiled.

Me: What?

Themba: How far are you baby?

Me: I am six months.

Themba: You look lovely. Boy looks like he's ready to come out. Your tummy is cute though

Me: [laughing] Your baby better not be fat.

We laughed and stepped inside the car. We drove straight to his parents house. He looked so nervous and he was sweating. I kept on wiping his sweats off. It was cold but he was sweating. He was cute though. We arrived at a big mansion. The house was big damn and it was beautiful. Themba buzzed the gate. A woman answered.

Her: Smith Residents how can I assist you?

Themba: Uhm\_\_Uhm\_\_

Me: We're here to see Mrs Smith.

Her: Who are you?

Me: An old family friend.

Her: Okay. You can come through.

The gate opened and Themba didn't drive through.

Me: Bbe?

Themba:....

Me: Bbe please drive through we are here.

I waved my hand across his face. He snapped out of it and he cleared his throat. He drove through. The gate closed. He parked the car and he squeezed my hand.

Me: It will be alright bbe don't worry.

He nodded and he kissed me. He was shaking a little. We broke the kiss and we stepped out of the car. I wiped his face and his hands. I kissed him once more and we walked up to the door. We knocked and the helper opened the door. I saw her by the uniform.

Her: You can come in. Mrs Smith is on the lounge. I will lead you.

We nodded and I held his hand still. We walked to the lounge. A coloured woman was watching some Afrikaans drama. She looked up at us and her body automatically froze. I looked at Themba. He had tears on his eyes. The helper ran towards her and she took the hand fan. She blew her up. She blinked more than twice and she wailed hard.

Helper: Madam what's wrong?

The woman cried harder. The helper kneeled down and tried to calm her down. I gave Themba the tissue and he wiped his tears. He looked at me.

Themba:[clears throat] Should we go?

Me: No! Bbe we're already here. We can't just leave.

Themba: Than why can't she just stop crying?

Me: She's shocked! She's your mom?

Themba: Yes.

Me: Sisi please give her some water.

The helper called another helper to get water. She came in running with a glass of water.

They gave her water and she drank the water. She tried to speak.

Mrs Smith: Please\_\_Sit down.

We sat down. And she dismissed her helpers.

Mrs Smith: Ethan my boy. [She cried]

Themba didn't say anything. Than two men came inside the house. They were laughing. I looked at them and they were wearing like people who were playing golf. The other man who was taller looked at us and his eyes rolled back. The next minute he was on the floor

His mother quickly ran to him. And tried to blew him up using a hand fan. The other man ran to the kitchen. I stood up quickly and I tried to help but Themba stopped me. I looked at him in disbelief. I gave him the look.

Themba: Sit down.

Me: That's your father Themba.

Themba: So?

Me: We have to help him.

Themba: Sit down now! I don't want to loose my son over a man who neglected me. Let's go Thandeka coming here was a mistake.

Me: We're not going anywhere unless they chase us out Themba.

Mrs Smith: Ethan please baby don't go. Please stay. I am begging you.

The other man came back with ice cubes. And water. They placed the ice cubes on the salivary glands. He opened his eyes. Themba grabbed me by my arm. They all sat down.

Themba: I won't say this twice. I said let's go.

Me: I am not marrying you if you don't want to fix your relationship between you and your parents!

His dad: [speaking weakly] You won't marry him even if he does.

Themba: You see? I am trying to protect you. This man will never accept you. Not while his dirty friend is alive.

His mom: But I will accept her as my daughter in-law. Please don't go my son.

Me: Bbe please. I don't care if he does or not. I am going to marry him not you.

The other man: That won't happen.

Me: We're not here to discuss my marriage! We're here so that he can reconcile with his parents so please just leave our marriage out of this whole thing. I will be outside if you need me Themba.

Themba: You're leaving me now?

Me: No bbe but you're here for your parents. I was here to make sure that you do the right

thing. So please do that right thing. For our son and please put your ego aside.

He nodded. I kissed his cheek. He gave me the car keys.

His mom: Why don't you rest on his old room. You might be tired?

Themba: I still have my room? [She nodded]

Me: No I will be fine in the car.

His dad: Seat down young woman.

I sat down quickly. His voice had full authority.

His mom: Where have you been? Ethan.

Themba: Where you last saw me. [He was rude]

Me: Themba. Please cool down.

His dad: Son what happened?

Themba: [sarcastic laugh] You dropped me off that what happened! You chose alcohol over me. You didn't care about me. I was your only child that you had after Brooklyn died. I suffered a lot to become the man that I am today. You didn't even tried to look for me.

His mom: Ava's father told us that you died.

I looked at him and he looked away.

Me: Don't tell me that she's talking about the Ava that almost killed me.

Themba: Bbe calm down. [I looked away]

His dad: How come are you still alive?

Themba: That Gardner lied. I didn't die. Emma and I were together.

His mom: Emma? Brooklyn's friend?

Themba: Yes. The old man lied and you didn't even dig further because you don't care about me. You never did! Did you make the funeral service for me?

They looked at each other and they looked away. Themba looked at them.

The other man: No they didn't.

Themba: Oh. I bet you thought dogs buried me?

His mom: Kayla didn't want us to burry you.

Me: Who is Kayla? [Themba looked down]

Just than a beautiful coloured girl walked inside the lounge. She was busy on her phone. She stopped and looked at us. She had tears on her eyes. Themba looked at her and he looked away. Mrs Smith stood up and tried to comfort the girl.

His mom: Kayla sit down baby.

The other man: My daughter your husband is home like you said he will return please sit down.

I was confused as hell. The girl slowly sat down and I looked at Themba. He was looking down.

Kayla: Hello Ethan.

Themba: Hey Kayla.

And they started speaking Afrikaans. I didn't hear a damn thing. I stood up and Themba tried to stop me by holding my hand.

Themba: Where are you going?

Me: Let go of my hand please!

He did, and I walked out of the house.

I left them. I went to sit on the car. I slide the seat and I closed my eyes. I didn't want to think the worst. I wanted to call one of his friends and ask him about this Kayla woman but I decided against it. I saw the helper outside. She looked a little bit old. Maybe she was on her early 60s. She was drinking coffee or tea. She was sitting on the chair around the pool. I stepped out of the car and I went to her. I sat next to her. She smiled and I smiled back.

Me: Molo mama.

Her: Molo mntanami. You must be the girl who came with Ethan. The young maids told me.

Me: Yes. How are you?

Her: I am fine ntombami and you?

Me: I am fine. Mama can I ask you a question? Her: Yes.

Me: Who is Kayla?

Her: Oh mntanami. What are you to Ethan first before I answer your question?

Me: I am his friend. We work together. He asked me to come here with him.

Her: Oh Hhayi. I can tell you. Kayla is Ethan's wife in waiting.

Me: [clearing my throat] I don't understand.

Her: They were friends when they grow up. Their friendship started in preschool. She is the reason to why Ethan loved school. Kayla was the only friend that Ethan had until his sister died and his parents were broke. They drank alcohol and abused him. Ethan was taken away. He was 12yrs old. Kayla was 11yrs old. They both cried a lot that day. Ethan promised Kayla that one day he will come back for her and Kayla never left this house since than. She moved in here as she said she was waiting for her friend til today. She grew up here. When Ethan's father was back on his feet the two families negotiated. Kayla was 16yrs old and she believed that Ethan was going to come back one day though his parents thought he died. Her parents wanted their daughter back because there was no sign of Ethan coming back. Then they decided that Ethan's father must pay Lobolo for Kayla on behalf of Ethan. So Kayla is Ethan's bride in waiting. But please don't tell anyone that I told you all this.

I nodded quickly and wiped my tears away. The woman looked at me.

Her: Why are you crying?

Me: No! I am just touched that's all.

I took out a few hundreds on my coat's pocket and I gave it to her.

Her: No dear you don't have to pay.

Me: No I am not paying. Buy yourself a nice winter gift.

Her: Oh. Thanks.

I nodded and she took the money

I went back to the car and I cried silently until I fell asleep. I woke up later. It was dark outside but the light was on, outside the house. Themba woke me up. I stepped out of the car. His eyes were red and puffy.

Themba: I am sorry for letting you sleep here all day.

Me: It's cool. So how did it go?

Themba: I love you Thandeka.

He hugged me tightly. And I hugged him back.

Me: Okay so?

Themba: The past is in the past. I didn't realized that I have missed my mother this much. I laughed faintly.

Themba: Bbe are you alright?

Me: Yes I am fine. So are we leaving?

Themba: No I want us to sleep here tonight.

Me: Oh. You can sleep here but please drive me to your house. I won't sleep here.

Themba: Thandeka??

Me: Let's not argue about it just do what I am asking you to do.

He nodded and we stepped inside the car.

His father came out. He came to us.

His Dad: I thought you said you're not leaving.

Themba: I will come back. I am taking her to my house.

His Dad: You have a house?

Themba: Yes.

His Dad: Okay. Why don't she drive herself there?

Themba: She's pregnant Dad.

His Dad: Pregnant not sick. What if she tells you not to come back here. Zulu girls can be persuasive sometimes.

Me: Just give me the keys Themba I will drive myself to the house.

Themba: No Thandeka.

His Dad: Just give her the keys.

Themba gave me the keys and he stepped out of the car. I changed seats. I started the car.

Themba walked back inside the house. His father made a phone call looking at me. He gave me one strong evil eye. The gate opened and I drove out of the premises. While I was driving I noticed that a car was following me..

I was scared as hell because they were following me and it was obvious. They turned on every turn that I took. I started crying and praying. I was shaking a little. I looked around then I saw the police van parked at the other side of the road. I also parked my car right in front of the police van. I stepped out of the car and I went to them. They were eating inside the car. I knocked on the window and they opened the door.

Pman: How can we help you, young lady?

Me: I need help there is a black BMW following me. I am scared now. I don't know what to do.

P.man: Where is that BMW?

I looked around the car was no longer around. I panicked because I knew that the Police officers were going to think that I am fooling them. I started crying.

Me: It might have left. I am so scared can you please follow me to the house at least.

P.man: You live alone?

Me: I don't live here. I am from KZN. I came here with my boyfriend to meet his parents. I couldn't sleep there so I told him that I will sleep in his house.

P.man: If there is a car following you that means they will come at the house and attack you while you're alone. Where is that house?

Me: Northern suburbs. They can break in on the suburbs neighborhood?

Pman2: This is Cape Town dear not KZN. Khuzwayo drive the car for her I will follow you behind.

P.man: I think she must check in on a hotel.

Me: I will have to take my things at the house first so that I can go back home tomorrow.

The other police officer stepped out of the car. I gave him the car keys. I directed him to the house and he drove. The other police officer was following us behind.

We arrived at the house. They walked with me inside. I packed all my clothes and everything that belonged to me. I went back to them.

Me: Will you please drive me to the hotel because I have to leave the car here and the keys.

P.man: How will your boyfriend get inside the house?

Me: He has his keys to the house and the remote control to the gate.

P.man: You're lucky that I am in the good mood and you're pregnant otherwise I wasn't going to help you because you should've stick with your boyfriend!

Me: Thank you.

They nodded and we left. I left the car keys and I locked the house. They drove me to the hotel. We arrived and I stepped out of the car.

Me: Thank you so much officers.

P.man2: Be safe. And go straight home tomorrow. This place is dangerous if you're not used to it.

Pman: We don't want to find you dead. Be safe.

Me: Thank you.

Pman: Go we want to see you going inside.

I nodded and I walked away. I went inside the hotel. I checked in and I was shown my room. I sat on my bed and sighed. I took out my phone and I had no missed calls nor texts from Themba.

I decided to call my father. He picked up.

Me: Tata.

Dad: My angel how are you?

Me: I am fine dad and you?

Dad: I am fine. The house is empty without Alondwe.

Me: I know but all will be alright dad.

Dad: Yeah. I am leaving next week.

Me: Leaving?

Dad: I am going to stay with Andile remember?

Me: Oh.. So what will happen to the house.

Dad: Your grandmother and the family will move in, on Wednesday. We're selling the house they had Engwelezane township.

Me: Oh. So for holidays I will be staying with you and Andile? Or gogo?

Dad: Whoever you want to stay with but I want you with me. You're my daughter.

Me: [laughing] okay dad goodnight.

Dad: Goodnight Princes

I hung up the call. I called Themba, his phone rang but he didn't answer. I tried more than twice but still there was no answer. I went to the bathroom and showered. I changed into warm pyjamas. I prayed and I fell asleep.

In the morning I woke up and I took a warm shower. I went to my bag and I checked my ticket. And I took both tickets by mistake. Themba and I were supposed to leave the following day but it was obvious that he wasn't leaving. I sent him a text about the tickets. I wore blue leggings and a white maternity top. I wore white Chuck Taylor. I put on doek because my hair was bad. I took my bags. I prayed and I went to check out. I asked for the cab number. They gave me one. I called the cab and within a few minutes it was at the hotel. I stepped inside and the driver drove. I paid him and I stepped out of the car. I looked for my ticket and I found them. I took the route that sent me back to KZN.

My phone beeped reporting that Andile deposited cash on my account. Samkelo was still preparing food for us.

Me:[shouting] Stop Baby daddy. Let's go to Gateway if you don't mind.

Sam: [shouting back] Okay I don't mind. Let me clean up here first.

Me: Okay!

I put Alondwe on the couch and I took the wrapped up gift. I opened it. It was the largest box of Feror Roche [don't mind the spelling] chocolates. I smiled. He knew that they were my favorite chocolates.

Sam: Will you ever stop loving those?

Me: Never in a million years. Let me go and take a quick shower so that we can go. I want to do shopping for my baby girl so that you can go back home with it.

Sam: Okay.

I went to the bathroom and I took a shower. I brushed my teeth and I went back to my room to lotion. I wore black jeans with an open waist since I was pregnant. Themba bought them for me when I was carrying Alondwe. I wore a blue vest and blue long neck jersey. I wore brown boots. I wore a white fluffy barret. I took my bag and my cards. I packed everything. I fixed my bed, opened the window and I went to the lounge. Samkelo had given Alondwe chocolate.

Me: Samkelo! They baby will be hyper active!

Sam: How?

Me: NC! NC! You need parenting classes. Sweets make them hyper.

Sam: OH! So that's why she is always on a high note after eating sweets.

Me: Weeeh! Let me change her.

I took her and I walked with her to my room. Samkelo gave me her clothes and I wiped her clean. I gave her a nappy change. And I put her on warm clothes. We packed a few things for her. Her daddy took her and I took the bags. We left using my car. I sat with Alondwe at the back and Samkelo drove the car.

We arrived at the mall, Samkelo carried Alondwe and we went to Mr Price. I bought clothes and shoes for my baby. We went to Edgars and I bought dresses only for her. We bought the other things for her and we went to pack them on the car. We went to steers for lunch.

Samkelo was paying for food. We sat down. I took Alondwe and I gave her fried chips because she wanted to mess my food.

Sam: Those chips won't make her hyper?

Me:[laughing] No Brah! You seriously need to go for parenting classes.

Sam: Did you go?

Me: Yes. Themba paid for them and we used to go together sometimes.

Sam: Oh.

Me: Uhm.. I am sorry.

Sam: No it's Okay but Thandeka are you sure you want to marry him?

Me: Uhm yes I am.

Sam: Okay. But I know that one day you'll end up with me. I don't know how but you belong to me and you know that.

I didn't answer him and we ate in silence. After eating Alondwe was sleeping. Samkelo took her and we went back to the car. It was late and it was starting to get dark outside since it was winter. He drove us straight home. My dad called along the way he was wishing me a happy birthday.

We arrived in my apartment. Samkelo placed Alondwe on my bed.

Sam: How will she bath because you have a shower only?

Me: She will use my son's bathing tub. It's on top of my ward drop.

Sam: I will bath her for you because unomkhaba.

I laughed and I left him to it. I cooked dinner for us though I wasn't sure if he was leaving or not. I just cooked. After some time he came back to me.

Sam: I am taking a shower on your shower don't enter the room unless I allow you to.

Me: Mxm. You're here to say that?

Sam: Yes. I don't want you to find me naked.

I laughed and he left. I finished cooking and he came back smelling fresh.

Me: Are you leaving?

Sam: Do you want me to leave?

Me: Where are you going to when you leave us here?

Sam: Hotel or the bnb next door.

Me: Sleep here.

Sam: With you and Alondwe on the bed, because I can't take the couch.

Me: Okay. Alondwe will be between us anyway.

Sam: Okay.

I stood up and I went to shower too. I lotion and wore my pyjamas. I went back to him. He was eating on the lounge. He had dished up for me. I ate too. He washed the dishes. I took the blanket and we sat on the couch. We watched movies. I rested my head on his shoulder.

Sam: I am sorry for all that pain I put you through I was just hurt and angry.

Me: I understand but you shouldn't have used Alondwe against me.

Sam: I am sorry. I am no longer using her against you. She will stay at home but she will visit you during school holidays.

Me: Really?

Sam: Yes. Without you there wasn't going to be Alondwe. You loved her first and I want her to know you.

Me: Thanks.

Sam: No, thanks for giving me such a precious gift. And for changing my life for better. I know true love exist because of you. And our daughter is the symbol of our love.

Me: And our schemes. [We laughed] "I will pull out bbe you won't get pregnant" [I mimicked his voice]

Sam: [laughing] I thought I got this game.

Me: And BAM!!! Alondwe appeared!

We laughed.

Sam: You snapped at me the day I was giving you a massage and I wanted to cry but I am man. I don't cry.

Me: There's no thing like that! Men do cry just that not like us. Let's go and sleep Brah. I am tired.

We switched off the TV and we went to sleep.

My phone rang around 1am. I took it and Themba was calling. I didn't answer. He called more than twice. I didn't answer.

Sam:[sleepy voice] Are you going to answer that?

Me: No I won't.

Sam: Okay.

There was a beep. I took my phone and I read the text. "I am at your door please open. My spare key to your door is in my apartment. Please bbe I need to see you" I quickly stepped out of my bed. I woke Samkelo up.

Me: Samkelo. Please go and sleep on my couch now. Themba is at the door.

Sam: No I won't do that. He will think what he wants to think.

Me: No! Please Brah.

Sam: Kiss me first.

Me: Samkelo No!

Sam: I am sleeping then.

I clicked my tongue and I grabbed him by his neck and I kissed him. He kissed me back intensely. It felt so fucking good. We broke the kiss and we took the pillow, blankets and sheet. We prepared the couch fast and he slept on it. I went to my room to fix Alondwe.

Themba called again. I answered the phone. And pretended to be asleep.

Me: The\_\_mba?

Themba: Bbe please open up I am at the door.

Me: Okay.

I took my gown, I put it on and dragged my feet to the door. Samkelo giggled under the blankets.

Me: Shut up you ass!

I smiled and I opened the door. I let out a long yawn. He snuggled himself in my arms. I hugged him back. We backed away from each other and he turned on the lights. He saw someone on the couch.

Themba: Who is that?

Me: It's Samkelo.

Themba: What??

Me: He came with Alondwe as my birthday gift.

Themba: Oh. I am sorry I wasn't here but Happy belated birthday.

He gave me two gifts.

Themba: For last year and this year.

Me: Oh Thanks.

I hugged him.

Themba: I will see you tomorrow then since you have company. Kiss baby Alondwe for me

Me: Okay I will.

He kissed my forehead and tummy. He left. I closed the door and locked. I walked back to my room.

Sam: Can I come back?

Me: No! This man will come back in the morning with his own key and he'll find you in my bed. I don't think so.

He sulked and slept on the couch.

The following morning Alondwe and her father were leaving. We woke up in the morning and I assisted them get ready. I was sad. Samkelo was moisturizing his body. I was fixing Alondwe. Alondwe was crying and I didn't know why she was crying because she was full. And she just had a bath.

Me: Alondwe!!! Ukhalelani kanti?? [Why are you crying]

Sam: Hey, Hey there's no need to shout at her.

I sat down and cried. I was so sad I didn't want my daughter to leave. Samkelo finished fixing Alondwe up. He sat next to me with her. He was on his clothes. He held me closer to him, his other arm had Alondwe.

Me: Why? Why is my life so complicated? I wish things were different Samkelo. I just –

Sam: Shhh don't cry. All will be alright in time.

Me: How do you know Samkelo?

Sam: Because I am old now. Do you remember when we grow up if someone says “ngimdala ukunawe?” [I am older than you]

Me: Yes. And one will answer “umdala udale bani” [You're old? You created who?]

We laughed and Alondwe laughed after us.

Sam: Mina ngidale u- Alondwe so ngimdala. [I created Alondwe so I am old] So believe me when I say it will be alright because I am old and indlela ibuzwa kwabadala right?.

I laughed hard and Alondwe assisted me. She laughed too. Someone cleared his throat. We looked at the door and it was Themba.

I stood up.

Themba: I am sorry to interrupt.

Sam: You interrupted nothing Brah. Alondwe and daddy were on their out right my Angel?

He tickled her and she giggled.

Me: Let me take her. I will wait for the cab with you.

Sam: Okay.

He gave me Alondwe. I took her and Samkelo took their bags. And the clothes I bought for her. I packed them for her.

Me: I will come back Themba.

He nodded and we left. We waited for the cab and we were just talking about random stuff until the cab arrived. I kissed Alondwe all over the face. She giggled. Samkelo packed their bags. He placed Alondwe on the seat and he hugged me. He kissed my cheek and he stepped inside the car. They left. I looked at the cab until it disappeared.

I walked back to my flat. Themba was eating simba chips on my lounge. I closed the door behind me.

Themba: Are you going to school today?

Me: No I will go tomorrow.

Themba: Okay. Come and sit down with me.

I went to sit next to him. He held my hand and he kissed me. I kissed him back. We kissed passionately. We broke it after some time.

Themba: I love you.

Me: I love you too.

Themba: I am sorry for letting you come back alone that day. The excitement was too much.

Me: That's nice.

Themba: Thanks to you because if you didn't encourage me to go home I wasn't going to get a chance to reconcile with my family.

Me: Okay. Who is Kayla?

Themba: Oh uhm her. She's my childhood friend. We were friends since preschool.

Me: Okay that's nice.

Themba: Uhm. Bbe?

Me: Yeah.

Themba: I want to take a 21 days leave at work.

Me: Oh Why?

Themba: I want to take that time and spend time with my parents. Maybe you can also join me during weekends I will pay for the tickets.

Me: [sarcastic laugh] He! He! You are taking a 21 days leave just to spend time with your parents baba Ka Ethan Junior?

Themba: Yes. And I would like you to join me during weekends. I will pay for transport.

Me: If you want to go just go alone and leave me behind. I still have a baby to worry about. I am not talking about Alondwe I am talking about my unborn son. I don't want to die with him so go to your dearest family and leave us behind.

Themba: What do you mean you don't want to die Thandeka? Who is going to kill you?

Me: The Themba I know wasn't going to let me drive alone. At the place that I hardly know and at night. The guy who used to drive me home spend hours driving so that I can be safe now he gives me the car keys like he's giving me chocolates. You might as well marry your childhood friend and leave me alone Brah. You've shown me who's important to you.

Themba: You're the one who persuaded me to fix my relationship with my parents.

Me: I didn't say neglect me. I said fix the relationship not to neglect me and our child.

Themba: I am not neglecting you.

Me: Okay. Have a safe trip.

I stood up and I took off the engagement ring. I took his hand and I placed it on his hand. I fold the hand. A tear escaped my eye.

Me: Please close the door behind you. I mean lock the door on your way out.

Themba: What is the meaning of this Thandeka?

Me: Themba you're a good guy neh and I know that. I can see that. You have your issues and your demons from the past. Nobody is perfect. You promised me that you'll work on them but I never heard you telling me that you have found Doctors and ask for my recommendations. You want me to take your hand and show you the therapist's office? Like I held your hand and forced you to walk inside your father's house? I won't do that. I am tired of fixing people and they'll give me shit in the end. Isizulu sithi eyomile iyaziyela so decide what you want to do but for now let me decide for you. Leave my apartment now.

Themba: You want to go back to Samkelo?

Me: I am not going back to Samkelo. I am giving you a chance to fix all this thing you call the shady past. If you want your Kayla just go to her and come back to me when you're ready to tell me the truth not only "the childhood friend" theory. Please leave I want to sleep.

Themba: I love you Thandeka don't do this.

Me: I love you too Themba. Send my love to father in-law dearest. Tell him I love him. I went to my room and locked the door. I threw myself on my bed. I held my pillow tightly. I didn't want to cry. I have cried enough. I ended up falling asleep. I was woken up by my phone ringing. It was Thobelani's roommate. Huh? Come to think of it. Thobelani never wished me a happy birthday and he never showed up like he promised to. I answered the phone.

Me: Hello.

His Rmate: You have to come to the hospital. It's bad. Your friend was involved in a car accident. We are at Addington Hospital.

Me: No! No! Please tell me he'll be fine!

His Rmate: I am also clueless. I thought I must tell you because he was supposed to see you yesterday.

Me: I'll be there in a few minutes.

I stood up immediately and I went to the bathroom. I washed my face and brushed my teeth. I changed my clothes. I wore purple leggings and winter white coat. I put on black boots and my fluffy Barret. I took my handbag and my car keys. I walked out of my room. Themba was sleeping on my couch. I closed the door behind me and I went to my car. I drove straight to the hospital.

I arrived at the hospital and I saw Thobelani's roommate. I went to him.

Me: So what is going on?

Him: I am still waiting for visitors hours.

Me: Did you call his mother?

Him: I called her. She was so hurt but she can't afford to come here and see him.

Me: Eish.

We sat on the benches and waited until it was visiting hours. I walked out of the hospital and I went to spar. I bought fruits, yoghurt and juice for him. I went back to the hospital. People were starting to go in. I also walked up to his ward. I saw him and he was not good. He had cement on his leg, bandages on his head and scars on his upper body. He was top less. He was trying to speak but weakly.

Me: My friend what happened?

Thobe: I went to Olwethu's boyfriend party. He invited me. He said he wanted to prove that am I really over Olwethu. For the sake of peace I went there. I borrowed a car to one of the guys that I know. At the party I didn't drink too much. I only drank two ciders and I ate a lot of meat because I didn't want to cause any accident but when I was going back to res. The breaks of the car were not working. The car is damaged not in a way that it can't be fixed but this guy wants his car back and I don't know where will I get that kind of cash to fix that car.

Me: Bustards!!! I know they did this. Was Themba there on the party?

Thobe: No he wasn't there but his other friends were there and other people.

Me: Nxx!! Anyway how are you feeling?

Thobe: I am in pains my friend. Happy belated birthday. I am sorry I couldn't make it.

Me: Stop worrying yourselves about birthdays. If you can estimate how much will it cost to fix the car that got damaged?

Thobe: About R20 000 or more. I am so busted

Me: I have to think of a way that my father won't see the kind of money that I used in my trust fund.

Thobe: Why?

Me: Give me the guy's number. I will talk to him about his car. I will get it fixed for you.

Thobe: No I can't expect you to do that. It's too much.

Me: Brah. You don't want me to tell you how much I have in my trust fund so that you can

allow me to fix the car. I have enough that I won't realize that I took some cash.

Thobe: I don't know what to say Thandeka.

Me: Just get better and prove that son of the bitch wrong. And come back to your friend. I have missed you.

Roommate: Can I be your friend too?

We laughed. Thobelani was even struggling to laugh because of pain.

Me: He is my only friend and I believe he is enough for me.

Thobe: Thanks skhokho.

Me: Sho ntwana.

Thobe: And then? Where is that huge rock?

Me: I gave it back to him.

Thobe: Why?

Me: He still needs to fix his issues before marrying me.

Thobe: Mmm okay.

Me: Let me go than. Please get better soon Brah. I need your ass alive not in here.

We laughed and I stood up. I kissed his forehead.

Me: I will see you tomorrow.

Thobe: Okay thanks.

I smiled, he gave me the number of the guy and I walked away.

I tried to be strong for him but it wasn't nice seeing him like that. It hurt and I was angry because this whole thing had Bheki written all over it. I went to my car and I took my phone.

I called the guy of the car. He picked up.

Him: Senzo hello.

Me: Hey it's Thandeka here. Can we talk about fixing your car? I am Thobelani's friend.

Senzo: My father has taken care of the expenses so you can pay the money on his account.

Me: Please email the copy of the amount that he paid so that I can see if it's legit and email me his account number.

Senzo: You don't trust me?

Me: I don't know you so yes I don't trust you.

Senzo: Just text me your email address now. I will scan the slip now and send it to you.

Me: Okay.

I hung up and I text him my email address. I called Qiniso in the meantime. He answered.

Me: Hey bhuti.

Qini: Hey how are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Qini: I am fine.

Me: Can you please do me a little favor?

Qini: Okay?

Me: If dad come back from work. Please just take his phone and delete the message from my trust fund account. I want to withdraw the large sum of money and I don't want him to find out because he'll shout at me. I know he doesn't use his phone when he's working.

Qini: Okay I will do that.

Me: Thanks you're the best.

He chuckled and I hung up. Senzo emailed the slip and his father's account number along with his cellphone number. I drove straight to the bank and I deposited the money. After that I called the man. And he confirmed that the cash came through and he gave me a whole lot of the lecture about reckless driving.

After that I drove straight to my apartment and I found Themba cooking. My engagement ring was on top of the table with some papers. I sat down and I took the papers. I read them.

They were talking about his appointments with the therapist and the amount of money he

paid. All those kind of details.

Themba:[sitting down] You're back?

Me: Yes. I was at the hospital. I didn't want to wake you up.

Themba: What happened? Is the baby alright?

Me: He is fine. I went there to see Thobelani he was involved in a car accident.

Themba: I am sorry to hear that Bbe. But is he doing fine?

Me: Argh. He'll be fine man. Though it's not that good but he'll be fine.

Themba: And with a supportive friend like you he'll be fine. [I smiled] uhm. I went to Durban North. I woke up and you were not around so I figured I must Google someone who can help me and I found one.

Me: That's good. I am proud of your pretty little face. You took the first step.

Themba: Thanks to you. And I love you.

Me: I love you too.

Themba: Please keep the ring. Even if you're not wearing it.

Me: Oh okay.

He took it and gave it to me. I put it inside my bag. He kissed my cheek. I looked at his appointments.

Me: Why are you going to start going on September.

Themba: That's because I am going home on August remember?

Me: Oh The 21 days thing. I remember.

Themba: But I would've been happy if you can also c –

Me: You know that food smells very nice. Why don't you dish up for me and EJ because we're seriously hungry.

Themba: Oh. Uhm. Okay.

He stood up and walked away. I went to my room and I changed. I wore my pyjamas and my gown and I went back to eat...

Themba was spending the night with us. He was trying shame but something was not right with him. It's like he was hiding something away from me. And he kept on checking his phone now and then. I didn't want to be that kind of nag so I let him be. We were sitting on the lounge watching generations. My phone rang and I took it. Dad was calling. I answered.

Me: My Daddy?

Dad: Don't "my Keki" me here! Care to explain to me that how on earth can you spend R35 000? What did you do with that kind of money Thandeka.

Me: Eish! Uhm. I – I ran over a man's car and it got damaged. You know fixing a car is expensive so I had to fix it. The cost were R35 000. I am sorry. [Themba looked at me with a shocked look on his face]

Dad: What did I say about reckless driving Thandeka? Do you want to die?

Me: Of course not. No! I don't want to die. I am sorry dad.

Dad: Why didn't you tell me instead of using the money from your trust fund?

Me: I didn't want you to shout at me.

Dad: Please be careful on the road and it's time you stop driving. Use cabs instead of driving yourself okay?

Me: Yes dad.

Dad: And one more thing. Do not re-apply for NSFAS for next year. You will pay for your studies using your trust fund. There are other students who really need that money and right now you don't because I gave you back all your accounts.

Me: I will do that father.

Dad: Good. Take care of yourself.

Me: I will. You too old man.

We hung up the call.

Just when I was putting it down. Qiniso called. I answered.

Me: You're late!

Qini: Sorry Brah. He sent me to buy something to eat and when I came back he was on his phone. So it was too late.

Me: Okay dude. It's okay. He shouted already but you know my brains work fast sometimes.

Qini:[laughing] Yah hey. Goodnight. My Ex.

Me: [laughing] Goodnight my Ex! Yoh! I forgot about that. Brah you were my boyfriend konje?

Qini: Yes. Do you remember when I left you that day you were kissing Samkelo?

Me: Yoh! Yoh! Don't remind me. My dad beat me hard for bunking school with Samkelo and we got suspended. It was hell lot of drama.

Qini: You lost your legs.

Me: Hahaha hheyi! Story of my life. In fact my love life.

Qini: Toxic love!

Me: [laughing] Hhaybo! That's my high school sweetheart. And you were my home sweetheart.

Qini: House husband.

We laughed and hung up the call. I clicked my tongue in between laughs. Themba cleared his throat. I got a fright. I had long forgotten that he was with me.

Me: You scared me.

Themba: Sorry. You ran over someone's car?

Me: I lied obviously. I used the money for other things.

Themba: R35 000? What did you do with it?

Me: The bible says if the right hand is offering the left hand must not know. So you don't have to know too.

Themba: Oh Okay.

He continued with his phone. I stood and I went to my room. I prepared my books for school the following day.....

>>>>>>>

I went back to school and I focused on my studies. Themba was busy with his work because he was going to take leave. Basically we had no time for each other but we used to call each other or see each once or twice a week. There was a distance between us and I actually didn't care. I was getting there with my Afrikaans lessons. I understood a few words. Themba paid damages for the baby but I stopped him from paying lobola for me. He still had issues to fix before we get married. That's if we do get married.

It was Mid AUGUST. Thobelani was out of the hospital. I never confronted Bheki about what happened with Thobelani and I told him to do the same. My family was alright. Qiniso left KZN and dad was living with Andile in Johannesburg. Alondwe was 11 months and she was trying to take a few steps using objects. I was 7 months pregnant and I was huge. My ass and curves were no longer medium sized but they were huge. But I wasn't ugly like the past months.

It was a Saturday I was studying for my test week. I was eating a lot junk while studying. There was a knock on the door. I stood up and I attended it. It was Themba and his friends. I let them in. They last saw me on my birthday so they were shocked to see me.

Me: Yeah. You guys! You don't have to give me creepy looks I know that I am fat.

They laughed and sat down.

Me: Can I get you something?

Brandon: No. These junk is fine.

Me: No! Don't touch it. That one is for me.

Bheki: Why are you feeding little champ so much junk?

Themba: She'll never answer that question nor stop eating it.

Me: Argh! Suit yourselves just don't eat all of it

Emma: I can eat some sour warms.

I smiled and sat next to her. We ate them together while others took the other stuff.

Emma: Anyway we are here to discuss real stuff. How could you allow your fiancé to take 21 days leave just spend time with his family?

Me: What was I supposed to do Emma. It's what he wanted.

Bheki: You wanted him to reconcile with them not that he must leave your pregnant ass and stay with them for 21 days come on.

Brandon: Unless there's more to it than what you told us Ethan?

Themba: There's nothing more.

Emma: Then what you're doing is bullshit! We won't hide the truth. It's just crap. You'll leave your fiancée for your parents who neglected you for 12yrs come on dude.

Me: I don't think I am his fiancée not unless he tells me the truth about Kayla.

Bheki: Who is Kayla now?

Emma: Kayla is his preschool friend that he used to talk about.

Brandon: Oh. So Ethan what's going on?

Themba: Okay. My dad paid lobola on my behalf. That if I come back home I will marry Kayla. But I didn't know about it.

Bheki: But you told us that your parents thought you were dead.

Themba: Them not her. She waited for me for 12 years. And she believed that I was going to come back.

Emma:[sarcastic laugh] Brandon bbe I love you but if you were to disappear for 12 years. I can move on. Come on. This girl is crazy.

Themba: She was hurt when I left and she loves me.

Bheki: Mxm. You were only 12 years old! And just so you have forgotten. You need to tell her that if it wasn't for Thandeka she was going to wait more years.

Brandon: Yeah. So if Thandeka didn't hold your hand and forced you to go home. she was going to wait until when? Until she turns 70 yrs? Even Ruth from the Bible moved on. So Kayla must wait! She never tried to look for you but she has the nerve and the patience of waiting? No bro come on don't hurt the woman who has given you the meaning of love just for a childhood friend who did nothing wait for you? Come on don't be a fool.

Themba: What must I do then?

We all looked at him.

Me: Do what suits your dick, now please leave me alone Themba.

Bheki: You're crazy man. Your dad believed Ava's father and he never tried to look for you.

Brandon: That is out of line Bheki.

Emma: No! It's high time he tell his fiancée the truth.

Me: I don't understand.

Bheki: Themba speak!

Themba: The Gardner who raped Emma and made me watch everything is Ava's father. We all didn't know. I saw his picture on Ava's locket. I asked her about him and she told me what I knew.

Me: What is it that you knew?

Emma: [looking at her hands] We killed that man. Ethan was still living in the home and we bought poison. Me, Brandon and Bheki. Ethan was going to spill the poison on his tea. Or any drink.

Themba: I tried but I couldn't get ahold of the tea or any drink. The Gardner liked my

mentor. Miss Jili. So after my session with my mentor she bought me juice and food. I took the juice back to the home. I spilt the poison on the juice and I gave it to him. I told him that it was the present from Miss Jili but he must drink the juice at home. He was more than happy. He took the juice with him and the following day he was found dead in his house. The Doctors found food poisoning but they didn't know that how he got the poison. His wife was the suspect because they were having problems of him cheating but they didn't find enough evidence to arrest the wife.

Me: [sniffing] Does this Ava know that you killed her father?

Themba: No she doesn't.

Me: The time you told me to deposit the flat money on her account. You knew about her father?

Themba: Yes. I knew. And I don't regret a single thing about killing that man he deserved it.

Emma: He was a dog. A coward who couldn't face our parents but he used us to revenge them. I hate him for everything that he did to me. He deserves to rot in hell!

She was crying. I held her tight and brushed her back.

Me: You have great things to live for. You have a man who loves you and soon you'll be his wife.

Brandon: She can be my wife only if you can agree to be her maid of honor. You're keeping us from getting married.

Me: Argh! Don't be silly. I am still pregnant.

Emma: If we get married on December. You'll be my maid of honor?

Me: Yes I will be.

Emma: Thank you.

We hugged each other. She wiped her tears off.

Bheki: Okay. Back to you man. What is going to happen?

Themba: I have to go home and fix this.

Emma: For 21 days?

Brandon: There's nothing hard there. Kayla's father must pay back the money. You're not marrying the woman. So?

Themba: It won't be that easy.

Bheki: You told us that you're going to get some therapy when are you going to do that?

Themba: When I come back.

Emma: Therapy won't work if you don't know why you're doing it. The first step is to realise that you have a problem and that you need help. Then you can go for therapy. If you go because Thandeka said so, it won't work. It will be waste of money and time.

Themba: I know my problem.

Me: What is your problem Themba?

Themba: I have anger issues. And I don't know the other way of solving things besides violence.

Bheki: I bet I also need that therapy.

Me: In fact all of you need the therapy. You Bheki. Why did you try to kill my friend?

Them: What?

Bheki: Eish I am sorry. I saw him as threat and I wanted to remove him.

Brandon: What friend?

Bheki: Olwethu's ex.

Me: I would like to know how were you planning on killing me? Since there's a moment of speaking the truth.

They looked at each other.

Themba: You promised that you won't talk about that.

Me: I said I won't use it against you.

Brandon: I think it's better if we tell you after you have given birth.

Me: Mmm okay.

Bheki: But I am sorry about your friend.

Me: I think you have to say that to him.

Bheki: Okay. I think we should go guys because it's clear Themba's mind is made up he's going home and there's nothing we can do about it.

Emma: Yah hey.

Themba: Guys don't be like that.

Me: No it's cool you can go. Thanks for coming by guys.

Them: Cool.

They stood up and hugged me. I opened the door for them. Themba held my hand. I looked at him.

Themba: I will see you after 21 days.

Me: Just go brah. I want to close the door.

Themba: Why does it feel like you're chasing me away?

Me: Maybe I am chasing you away so you better leave me alone.

Themba: Don't tell me to leave you alone Thandeka. I still love you and our son.

Me: I am hungry so I want to eat and continue with studying. Bye Themba.

He tried to lean over for a kiss but I backed away.

Me: The clock is ticking go and pack your bags for your trip.

Themba: But –

Me: You will close the door when you are ready to go.

I left him there and I went to the kitchen and I started cooking...

Days went by, the 21 days passed but Themba didn't come back. I didn't ask him anything because we hardly speak. Studying kept me busy and I had a lot of assignments to do. I had finished writing my tests and it was campus vacation already for third term. It was on the first week of September. I was eight months pregnant and I was due the following month. Alondwe was a year old. I wasn't with her on her birthday but her grandparents, father and uncle Andile threw her a party. She was able to say "Mama" and "Baba" A proud mom hey? Yes! It was a Thursday night. I was going home on a Friday night. I was in my bed eating sour worms. "Mmm. I hope you can also taste the goodness of these worms little man. They are -" my phone rang while I was still talking to my boy. Andile was calling. I answered the phone.

Me: Pat.

Andile: Yewena! When are you coming home?

Me: Tomorrow. I booked the ticket today.

Andile: When?

Me: 9pm. Is Alondwe at home yet?

Andile: She's been asking "Phi mama?" Since morning.

Me: [laughing] Haha. I bet Samkelo has been forcing her to talk. He wanted her to talk while she was still a few months old. I am not surprised if she can talk.

Andile: She's adorable and she's bffs with her khuyu. (Mkhulu) [Grandfather]

Me: My little Princess. I will see her Saturday morning.

Andile: I miss you ntwana yami so please come back.

Me: I will come back. I miss you too. Goodnight skhokho. Kiss my Princess for me.

Andile: I will sisi.

We hung up the call and I finished up my worms. After that I fell asleep immediately.

The following morning I was woken up by a knock of people who were going to organise my bedroom for me so that it can accommodate my son. I had to hire them because Themba was

not around. I had bought everything that I needed for EJ. I used my money of course.

Thobelani assisted me with shopping. He was back on his two feet.

Me: I don't know how you will organise the room but you can do your magic.

Guy: You're expecting a boy?

Me: Yes.

Girl: You don't want us to paint the walls?

Me: No don't paint the walls. They are just fine as they are. Here is the furniture for my son if you need anything I will be in the kitchen eating.

They laughed and they started working. I ate my food while I browse through Facebook.

My phone rang, Hope was calling and I answered.

Me: Before you shout and swear at me. I just want to say I am sorry.

Hope: Duh? Please! How are you?

Me: Okay I am kicking and you?

Hope: I am fine. It's finally happening!

Me: What??

Hope: My wedding. I am getting married on the 30th of November and I need you to be my bridesmaid.

Me: You'll have one maid?

Hope: I don't have friends so just two. It will be you and my sister. Then it will be my maid of honor.

Me: I will have to work out then. Because I am fat. [We laughed]

Hope: Okay. How is Ethan?

Me: He is fine dear.

Hope: I am sorry I couldn't come for the baby shower because I was kind of scared.

Me: Uhm. There was no baby shower dear.

Hope: Why not?

Me: Nobody cared enough to do a baby shower for Little Ethan.

Hope: I am so sorry to hear that.

Me: It's cool. I will come and visit after my holidays. I bet Nathan misses me.

Hope: He does a lot.

Me: Okay we will talk again. Thanks for the phone call.

Hope: Okay bye.

We dropped the call. I couldn't hold my tears. I cried. The pain was too much. Themba was hurting me and the fun part was that, I was still in love with him. If he was to come back to his senses I was going to give him another chance but No! He doesn't care.

Guy: Mam are you fine?

Me: [wiping my tears] Yes I am fine. Everything is going in order?

Guy: Yes. We are almost done.

Me: Okay.

He went back to work. I ate some more and tried to forget about my problems. After about two hours they were done and my room looked so beautiful. I took out my card and I paid for everything. I tipped them with cash because they even cleaned my flat because I couldn't do it. After they left I prepared myself for going home to my daughter and my family. I took a shower and I tried to rest.

Later I was woken up by a knock on the door. I checked the time it was 6oclock. I wore my gown and I went to open the door. "Surprise" that was Hope and her family. They had blue balloons and babies stuff. She was with her fiancé and her son.

Me: Hope!

Hope: I wanted to make you smile! And boom I brought the baby shower here though it's a mini thing from my family.

Me: Wow thanks please come in.

The came in and they sat on the couch. I did the same.

Hope: This is my fiancé John. And John this the lovely lady Trinity I have been telling you about. She's more like a friend to me.

Me: Nice to meet you John.

John: Nice to meet you too Trinity.

Me: Nathan boy how are you?

Nathan: Aunty I am three years old now and you didn't come to my birthday party.

Me: Oh boy I am so sorry. I will come next year okay?

Nathan: Okay can we eat now mom?

Hope: Oh okay. We brought food with us.

I stood up and I took out the eating utensils and they came to the dining table. We dine together and it was very fun. My son couldn't stop kicking

. After that John and Hope transported the things they bought for my baby. One can say I had a very proper baby shower with a lot of guests but No. It was just two people who bought things like they were bought by more then ten people. They had to leave because I had a 9pm bus to catch.

Me: Thank you so much you made my day. And I am sure that my little one can feel the vibe.

[They laughed]

Hope: Okay. Have a safe trip.

Me: Thank you goodnight.

Them: Goodnight.

I didn't have time to pack his things. I just wore my blue dress and a brown coat with white sandals. I had my black Afro B on my head. And it made me look beautiful. I had to take a suitcase with me because I had no clothes in Johannesburg. The cab arrived and it drove me straight to Durban station. Where I took my bus to Johannesburg.

I arrived in Johannesburg and I took a cab to my brother's house. I paid and got off. I called Andile. He didn't pick up. I was kind of scared because it was dark outside. The time was around 4am. I called him again. He answered.

Andile: [sleepy voice] Joy.

Me: I am at the gate please come and open.

Andile: Okay.

Within a few minutes the gate opened up. I dragged my suitcase inside the house. Andile was stretching and yawning.

Me: Bhuti wami.

Andile: Sisi. Will I be able to hug you with such a big bump?

Me: Mxm!

Andile: Are you sure you're not carrying twins?

Me: Fusegi!

He laughed and hugged me. He took my suitcase and he lead me to my room.

Me: Where is Alondwe?

Andile: She's sleeping with her grandfather.

Me: Yoh! Okay. Let me sleep.

Andile: Okay. Remind me tomorrow to get you the keys to the house and the remote control of the gate.

Me: Okay.

He left and I dozed off immediately.

I was woken up by my phone. It was ringing. I picked up. Themba was calling.

Me: Themba?

Themba's voice: "I said bring back my phone. I want to go!"

Kayla's voice: "You're not getting this phone back. And you're not leaving me again for that girl. You love her because she's young?"

Themba: "I love her because she means everything to me"

Kayla: "But you're here right now. You're not there with her?"

Themba: "Kayla bring back my phone now!"

Kayla: "You can't just break my virginity and after that you go back to your precious little fiancée. And leave me here"

Themba: "You asked for it. I didn't get under your panties because I wanted to"

Kayla: "Does precious little fiancée knows that the very first day she brought you here. You slept on my bed and you broke my virginity? Does she know?"

Themba: "She doesn't know and I dare you tell her. I will kill your ass I tell you!"

Mrs Smith joining in: "Enough! Enough both of you. Kayla what is wrong with you?"

Kayla: "I just want him to do the right thing and marry me"

Mrs Smith: "My son already has a fiancée. Who is carrying my grandson. I told you that you need to move on or you will get hurt. You asked for it now you just have to live with it"

Kayla: "I thought you like me."

Mrs Smith: "I was feeling pity for you because clearly your mind didn't function well. And you Ethan where is my daughter in-law? You promised me that you will bring her here to spend a weekend with me before you leave"

Mr Smith joining in: "I don't want that girl here. Kayla is my daughter in-law"

Mrs Smith "Ethan where is she?"

Themba: "She refused to come mama"

Mrs Smith: "I don't blame her! Tsk!"

Mr Smith: "I don't want her here!!"

I dropped the call. Themba called again or should I say Kayla since it looked like she was the one holding the phone. I didn't answer it. I placed it aside. And it all made sense. The guilt that Themba had was because he had sex with Kayla. I tried not to cry but I couldn't it was all my fault. I was just stupid to force him to reconcile with his family. I cried until I fell asleep.

I woke later and I wore my gown. I took my bathing stuff and I went to the bathroom. I took a shower. After showering, I went back to my room. I wore my white maternity dress and my slippers. I went to the kitchen. Thobile was feeding Alondwe. She travels with her everywhere. Samkelo and I didn't want Alondwe to have another nanny.

Thobile: Alondwe nangu umama. [Here's your mama.]

Alondwe: Phi mama? [Where's mom?]

She pointed my direction and Alondwe looked at me. She smiled and did the baby scream. She kicked her legs off and raised her arms up. Her nanny put her down and she ran towards my direction screaming "mama! Mama!" She held my legs tightly. I couldn't bend over and pick her up. Thobile stood up and she gave her to me. I kissed her face all over. She giggled. She had a locket on her hand.

Me: What is this?

Thobi: It's her locket. Her father gave it to her. Open it.

I opened the locket. On the other side it had my picture and on the other side it had Samkelo's picture. It was beautiful.

Me: Yoh! Ubaba wakho uyazithanda izinto zabelungu. But this is beautiful.

Thobi : Yes it is.

Me: Why is she not wearing it because it small and it will fit her.

Thobi: She likes carrying it around like that. At times she'll open it and kiss both of you. Her father told her to do that.

Me: Hhayi. You'll grow up too fast baby your father is making you do things that are not your age. But uthanda ubaba no mama.

I kissed her all over her face and she giggled. I finished up feeding her and I fed myself and EJ. Later we went to the mall with my daughter and Thobile. I wanted to do a little shopping. My dad and Andile were both at work.

We shopped around and we went to eat afterwards. Alondwe was sleeping. My phone rang. It was on my bag. I took it, it was an unknown number. I answered the call.

Me: Thandeka hello.

Mrs Smith: Hey dear. It's Ethan's mother. How are you?

Me: I am fine mam and you?

Mrs: Please don't call me like that. Just call me mama at least.

Me: Oh. Okay.

Mrs Smith: I thought you were going to come and visit. I wanted to say thank you for being such a wonderful woman to my son and for you to persuade him to come and see us. I am very grateful.

Me: It's my pleasure.

Mrs Smith: So how is my grandson?

Me: He's fine.

Mrs Smith: Please. If you have time come and visit me.

Me: I would love to but I can't. If you need to see us. You can come and visit us where I live. I can't come to Cape Town. It's not safe for me and my son.

Mrs Smith: What's wrong? What happened?

Me: I think you should ask your husband.

Mrs Smith: That dirty man! I swear nowadays I will just cut off his throat. I will do that.

Me: Okay. I have to go.

Mrs Smith: Okay baby. Send my love to your family and your daughter.

Me: Okay I will bye.

Mrs Smith: Bye.

I continued with eating.

Thobi: That was your mother in law?

Me: Uhm\_\_\_ yes.

I wasn't sure whether she was my mother in law or not. I wished things were different though Themba's father didn't like me but I wished Themba and I were still together in that way that we were before. I wanted things to work out for us because I was in love with him. It was stupid of me to love him even after everything that he did to me but we don't choose who we fall in love with and we don't choose when must the love stop. Kayla was also another problem that I had no power to face because Themba's father was on her corner. It was so complicated. After eating we paid and we went back home. I took Alondwe and we went to sleep in my room.

Later I woke up Alondwe was not next to me. I stood up and I wore my gown. I went to them on the lounge. They were playing doll house. I sat down and played with them.

Alondwe: Mama?

Me: Alondwe wamama.

Alondwe: i [she gave me her locket and I put it on her neck. I kissed her and she smiled]

I took the doll and we played together.

Alondwe: Phi baba? [Where's dad?]

Me: Uyothenga uswidi [he went to buy sweets]

She smiled and we continued playing.

My phone rang it was Themba. I answered.

Me: Hello.

Themba: Hi. I am at your place but you're not around?

Me: I am at home

Themba: Empangeni??

Me: We no longer live Empangeni Themba.

Themba: Oh. Johannesburg I am sorry I forgot. When are you coming back?

Me: I am coming back next week Monday.

Themba: Okay. How are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Themba: We need to talk but when you come back. I can't talk over the phone.

Me: You left me for the whole month you never explained yourself and you come back here you say you want to talk? Talk about what? And don't say you're sorry. I have heard enough "I am sorry" coming from you.

Themba: You know all my mistakes and flaws but above it all Thandeka I love you. And I want to be a better man for you and our son.

Me: Talk is cheap. Let me see that by actions because clearly you do all this things because you know that you have your fool baby mama right?

Themba: BBE. It's not like that. I didn't mean to hurt you. You know that I love you with all my heart and soul.

Me: And there is also a space reserved for Kayla?

Themba: I don't love her.

Me: I am not Rihanna I don't love the way you lie. And I seriously don't like the way it hurts!

I hung up the call.

Time flew by and the week was over. Spending time with my family made me feel better and alive. Though I couldn't do everything I wanted to do with my daughter because my bump was big. I tried to enjoy what I was able to do with her like playing with doll, sleeping with her, reading stories and building blocks. My father was also happy to have Alondwe around and me of course. Themba tried to call everyday just find out how I was doing. It was Sunday and I was leaving. I was with Samkelo outside the house.

Me: I will miss my Princess. Hamba ke uye kubaba. [Go to dad]

She opened her arms for her daddy to take and he did. He kissed her forehead and he tickled her tummy. Alondwe laughed.

Sam: My pride.

Alondwe: Mama! Mama!

She opened her arms for me to take her. I took her from her father.

Me: Awuzazi ufunani yazi wena [You don't know what you want]

Alondwe: Mhm Mhm [shaking her head] Baba! Baba!

Sam: Uyadela Alondwe.

Samkelo took her from my arms. She smiled and she was about to call my name again. I stopped her.

Me: Hhayi Alondwe! Udlala ngathi hawu!

She cried. And she buried her face on her father's shoulder.

Me: Get in the car with her otherwise you guys won't leave. U-Alondwe uyahlupha Samkelo.

Sam: Daddy's little girl nje. Don't cry baby. Thandeka Hhayi Hhayi. You're making my angel cry now.

Me: Mxm. The driver is waiting for you. My bus is leaving at 9am so just give me a lift.

Sam: Okay.

We stepped inside the cab. Thobile took the front seat. Alondwe cried until she fell asleep.

They dropped me off first and they left. I went to my bus. At 9am sharp the bus headed to Durban.

After about 7/9 hours I was in Durban. I took a cab to my flat. The time was about 5pm. I paid and I walked up to my flat. The door wasn't locked. I went inside and looked around my flat was clean. The mess I left was not around. There was a nice smell coming from the kitchen's side. I knew that it was either Thobelani or Themba who was inside my flat. I went to the kitchen and Themba was cooking.

Me: Hi.

Themba:[turning back] Hey. You're back.

He came towards me and he gave me a hug.

Themba: I bet you're tired.

Me: You have no idea.

Themba: Come let me wash your feet.

Me: Oh okay.

He took my handbag and he held my hand. He walked with me to the lounge. He made me sit down. He went to my room and he came back with my washing basin. He mixed salt, cold and hot water. He sat down and washed my feet. He was doing it in a very good way and I was enjoying every moment of it. I was slowly dozing off, but he started a conversation.

Themba: How is your family and Alondwe?

Me: They are fine and yours?

Themba: They are alright. Why didn't you tell me that my dad tried to kill you.

Me: Huh?

Themba: My mother told me.

Me: I didn't tell her that.

Themba: Yeah. But you gave her a clue and she asked my father about what he did and he told her.

Me: Oh.

Themba: I am sorry I wasn't there to protect you.

Me: I said I am fed up with your "I am sorry"

Themba: I am not saying it to you. I am saying it to my son.

Me: Oh okay.

He dried my feet and he used baby oil to massage them. I closed my eyes and I let what he was doing flow all over my body because it was so good. He finished and he placed my feet on the couch and he put more cushions on my back.

Themba: Must I dish up the food for you?

Me: Yes I am hungry as –

Themba: Hell.

I looked down and smiled. He went to the kitchen. He came back with two plates of food. He gave me one and sat on the single couch. He prayed and we started eating.

Me: I hope you didn't pour the love portion on this food.

Themba:[laughing] I added korobela.

I laughed really hard. I even choked, Themba quickly passed the glass of juice and I drank it

Me: Thanks. I will beat your ass up when the power of that korobela ends.

Themba: I will go for self-defense classes.

Me: EJ will help me to fight you off.

Themba: I rest my case then.

We laughed and we finished up eating. He took the dishes and he washed them.

He came back with a tub of ice cream. He sat down on the same couch with me. He gave me the tub of ice cream and he placed my feet on his lap. I ate my ice cream.

Themba: Bbe?

Me: Hm?

Themba: I did something wrong and I deeply apologize for doing it.

Me: What did you do?

Themba: The night that you left. I had sex with Kayla.

I dug out ice cream with my right hand and I threw it on his chest. Though I knew it but if felt so new when he told me.

Themba: Thandeka!

He took the ice cream ball and he placed it on the tray that was on top of the coffee table.

Me: Did you enjoy it?

Themba: She was a virgin.

I dug out another ball and I threw it on his face this time around.

Themba: I gave you the ice cream so that you can eat it not to throw it on me!!

Me: I am trying to share with you. You must be grateful. Eat that ice cream Themba!

Themba: Tsk!!!

He actually took the ice cream ball and ate it.

Me: Did you use protection?

Themba: Yes I did.

Me: Where did you get it?

Themba: I asked my dad.

Me: You're lying Themba.

Themba: I am serious bbe. We can even go for testing. HIV and STIs. Bbe I am serious.

Me: How many times did you have sex with her? And why?

Themba: Once. She wanted me to break her virginity.

Me: And you felt honored. So are you going to marry her?

Themba: No. Bbe I want to marry you. I want you to be my wife.

Me: You used her?

Themba: She asked me to do it and I did it. I know I was wrong and please try and find it in your heart to forgive me please Thandeka. I love you. And I don't want to loose you.

Me: Please take me to bed. I want to sleep.

Themba: We're still talking.

Me: Talking about it won't change the fact that you did it so please take me to bed.

He took off his T-shirt and he cleaned the ice cream off his face. He unzipped my dress and he took it off.

Themba: You will sleep naked or you will wear your pyjamas?

Me: I will sleep like this.

Themba: Okay.

He held my hand and he walked with me to my room. He opened the bed covers and I stepped inside the bed. He pulled the bed covers up. He kneeled down and kissed my forehead and my tummy.

Themba: Goodnight you two. I love you.

I closed my eyes. He went back to the lounge.

>>>>>>>>

Two weeks later. I had forgiven Themba, but things were not the same between us but we were trying. I was getting close to his mother and she was a wonderful woman. Themba was trying and he started attending his therapy sessions. His friends were also seeing their therapists. They were all trying to deal with their past demons. I didn't stop going for my Afrikaans lessons. I was also learning how to paint during weekends. My studies were going well. It was Saturday morning. Themba and I just had our breakfast. We were sitting on the lounge eating sour worms. The day was the 3rd of October. There was a knock on the door.

Me: Are you expecting a visitor?

Themba: No.

He stood up and went to open the door.

Themba: Mama?

Mrs Smith: I am not here for you! Now move!

She pushed Themba off and she came to me. She kissed my cheek and sat down.

Mrs Smith: How are you baby?

Me: I am fine mama and you?

Mrs Smith: I am fine dear how is my grandson?

Themba: Does dad knows that you're here?

Mrs Smith: No. He doesn't.

Themba: If he finds out?

Mrs Smith: Ethan please. I don't care. I couldn't miss my grandson's birth day. Any time his mother will bring him to this earth and I want to witness that. So you must drink wine and take a chill pill.

We laughed and I suddenly felt something happening in my tummy. I screamed.

Both Themba and his mom: Are you alright?

Me: Uhm. Yes.. Ooooh! No! I am not alright!

Mrs Smith: Ethan the car keys. And the baby's bags.

Me: [crying] Aaaaah! My waters just broke mama. I am scared.

Mrs Smith: Ethan bring a clean dress.

He came back quickly. I changed the dress and his mom took the bags. Themba held my hand and we walked out. When we reached the door. I held the frame and I squeezed Themba's hand very hard. He groaned.

Themba: Thandeka!!

Mrs Smith: Stop complaining and shouting move Ethan!

Me: No! No! I want to see down. No! Themba!

I dug my teeth on his arm. Ngamluma and he groaned even louder. His mom pushed my butts so that I could move. I let go of Themba's arm and I tried to move.

Themba: Bbe breath in and out. In and out!

Me: Awuuuu! Aaaaah.

I pinched his ear and he screamed.

Mrs Smith: Hho uxolo mfana wami.

I let go of his ear and we walked to the car. I sat at the backseat and Themba drove the car. I was breathing in and out. I tried hard to bear the pain but it was too much. In no time we were at City hospital. They took me to the labor ward and I waited half an hour. My baby was ready to come out. Themba was holding my hand and his mom was also there.

Doc: Push mama.

Me: [squeezing Themba's hand tight] Aaaaaa!

Doc: Push.

Me: Aaaa. Kubuhlungu Doctor [it's painful]

Doc: Next time you must remember to have regular sex while you're pregnant. It does help.

Me: Theeeembaaa Aaaaah! This is your fault!!

Themba: OUCH!! I am sorry. Stop pinching me.

Mrs Smith: Stop complaining Ethan! Doctor help her.

Doc: She needs to push. Or we will do a C-section

Mrs Smith: Bloody stupid Doctors. Move!

Doc: Mam No!

Me: Moooveee man!

He moved away and Mrs Smith stood in front of my legs. She told me to push and she used her fingers to pave the way for my son to come out.

Mrs Smith: Ethan. Try and push the baby down, up there on her tummy.

Themba: Okay.

He did that and I held the sheets tightly as I pushed.

Mrs Smith: The head is here. Push once more.

I pushed once more and she told me to stop. My baby was out. I heard him screaming and they cut the cord. He cried. The nurses clapped hands for Mrs Smith. The Doctor was impressed. They gave me my son and he was so pretty. I looked at Themba and I smiled weakly. He kissed my forehead.

Themba: Thank you. You've made me a father.

Me: Hello baby. [He stuck out his tongue]

Mrs Smith: Aaaaah. I am grandmother.

Themba: Ethan Junior Uyathandwa Smith.

Me: Those are the names?

Themba: Yes?

Me: Mm... ETHAN JUNIOR UYATHANDWA.

#### Chapter : 4

The following day we were still at the hospital. Uyathandwa was sleeping. I was reading a magazine. My father, Andile and Thobelani came through. I smiled when I saw them.

Me: Yoh! Hey guys. I didn't expect to see you.

Dad: But here we are. Where is my grandson?

Me: Dad? You don't even ask how your daughter is?

Andile: Give dad a break.

We laughed. He went to see Uyathandwa. He smiled and he picked him up.

Dad: His name?

Me: Ethan Junior Uyathandwa.

Dad: Uyathandwa? It's a girl kanti?

Me: No.

Dad: Hhayi who gave him that name?

Me: His father.

Dad: Weee please don't be gay boy.

We all laughed.

Thobe: He's cute.

Andile: Yeah. Not ugly like his mother.

Me: Mxm uyaphapha. Did you bring food with you guys. I am hungry.

Dad: You're no longer pregnant so no food for you.

Me: Hawu. Baba? That doesn't mean I must not eat. Please.

Andile: Call baby daddy. We bought things for my nephew only. I am an uncle again. To a coloured little one this time around.

They laughed. I didn't. Andile uyaphapha mos.

Me: Don't start.

Andile: [laughing] I am sorry.

Dad: They are all beautiful like their grandfather.

Andile & I: Weeeee!

Andile: Me dad not you. You're old.

Dad: I was a charmer once.

We laughed. Just then Themba and his mother came inside.

Them: Molweni

Us: Molo.

Themba: How are you?

Dad: We're fine boy though you're making us old. This must be your mother?

Themba: Yes. Mom this is Thandeka's father.

Mrs Smith: Nice to meet you.

Dad: Nice to meet you too. Themba my daughter is hungry.

Themba: [chuckles] Luckily I brought food with me. [He gave me takeaways]

Me: Thanks. I knew you wouldn't fail me.

Mrs Smith: Actually I reminded him.

They laughed.

Me: Themba?

Themba: I am sorry but I was in a hurry because I wanted to see my son.

Dad: When are you paying lobola for my daughter?

Me: Dad?

Mrs Smith: It's a good question.

Themba: She refused when I wanted to send people to pay lobola for her.

Dad: Are you having second thoughts Thandeka?

Me: No dad. He will come but not now.

Andile: I thought you're getting married next year?

Me: Yes we are. Can the topic be about the baby.

Mrs Smith: It is about the baby Makoti because when you two are getting married you're giving your son a secured home but you must be ready for it.

Me: We will talk about it with Themba first then we can let you know.

Mrs Smith: At least.

Dad: We will be waiting. We are going back home tonight. You will give us the key to your flat so that we can pack the things we bought for my grandson.

Me: Okay dad. Thanks.

I took out the key and I gave it to him. He gave Uyathandwa to his granny. And they left.

Themba's mother sat down with the baby.

Mrs Smith: You have to fix all this mess between you two.

Me: But mama he has a wife.

Themba: Kayla is not my wife.

Mrs Smith: According to your father she is and I doubt that he will accept Thandeka.

Me: You see?

Mrs Smith: But that won't stop you two from getting married. You have extended family Ethan.

Themba: I thought you all don't get along.

Mrs Smith: After we lost you. We realized that life is too short so we fixed the relationship we had with both my family and your father's family. So if your father's family doesn't support you. My family will and I will too. But uMakhulu wakho wants to see her great grandson.

Themba: She's still alive?

Mrs Smith: Yes. I told her everything and she wants to see you, your wife to be and your son. You can go when you are ready.

Themba: Thandeka?

Me: Where? Cape Town?

Themba: No Eastern Cape? Right mama?

Mrs Smith: Yes.

Me: We can go after my exam. My last paper is on the 16th of November.

Mrs Smith: I will go back home. Beginning of December. So while you're studying. I will

look after the baby.

Me: Thanks but your husband?

Mrs Smith: Don't worry about him.

Themba: Thanks mom.

Mrs Smith: Anything to make my son happy.

Themba smiled and looked at me. I smiled and looked down.

>>>>>>>>>>

ONE MONTH LATER. It was mid November. I was busy with my final exams. Uyathandwa was not living with me because I had to study. He was living with his father and his grandmother. I don't know the lies she told her husband. But I was happy that she was taking care of my son. We had found the nanny. She was about 45 years old. She was going to start working the following year. Themba's friends and his colleagues bought gifts for our son. He had a lot of baby things even toys. We told his father about the baby but he didn't care all he wanted was Themba to get married with Kayla. At the moment we had no Kayla drama because she was in Australia on business purposes. Apparently she was a qualified Chartered Accountant. But I still didn't understand how her mind worked since she waited 12 years for Themba. But anyway people are different.

It was Thursday after my last paper. Themba had packed everything for us because the following day we were going to visit his grandmother. After my paper I went to his flat. His mom was with Uyathandwa. Themba was at work. I sat on the couch with them.

Me: Hello granny Smith.

Mrs Smith: [laughing] Hey my daughter. Are you ready for tomorrow?

Me: I am nervous. What if they don't like me.

Mrs Smith: Grandma Smith will like you believe me.

Me: Okay. Let me go and cook before his daddy comes back.

I kissed his forehead and I went to the kitchen to cook. Themba came back while I was still cooking. He came to me.

Themba: My love.

Me: Bbe.

We kissed each other intensely. We broke the kiss when his mother cleared her throat.

Mrs Smith: I hope you won't do that in front of my grandson.

Themba: Awu mama. So I can't show my woman love because of him?

Mrs Smith: You can but privately. Take him Ethan I want to shower.

Themba took the baby and his mom left.

Themba: So how was your last paper?

Me: Quite tricky but I believe I will pass.

Themba: Okay. So are you ready for tomorrow?

Me: Eish bbe I think I am.

Themba: Don't be nervous. I love you.

Me: I love you too.

He kissed my cheek and sat on the chair with Uyathandwa. They watched me cook....

After dinner, I went to take a shower. I went to bed early. I left Themba and his mother. They were still watching TV. Uyathandwa was with them and he wasn't sleeping. I was slowly drifting off then Themba joined me. He cuddled me. He thought I was sleeping and I also pretended like I was. His mother came inside our room. She spoke to Themba. They were both speaking Afrikaans. But I could hear what they were talking about because I knew Afrikaans. [I will write in English though]

Mrs Smith: Ethan Junior will sleep here today.

Themba: If he cries at night I will bring him back to you mama.

Mrs Smith: No don't even try. His mother is here tonight. She will wake up.

Themba: But mama my wife is tired.

Mrs Smith: You two were not tired when you made this baby so you better be not tired when it comes to looking after him.

Themba laughed. I wanted to laugh too but I tried to contain it.

Mrs Smith: Are you ready for tomorrow?

Themba: I am kind of scared. What if they don't accept her or they don't like her.

Mrs Smith: Don't be afraid. Grandma Smith saw her picture. I sent it to her. She liked her and the fact that Trinity persuaded you to come home made her to like her even more.

Themba: How come do you know her second name but I don't?

Mrs Smith: [laughing] I am a good mother that's why.

Themba: I thought her friend Hope was making it up.

Mrs Smith: You're a bad husband already. Treat her right my boy. This girl loves you and I doubt you'll find someone like her.

Themba: I will do my best mom. Thank you for everything.

Mrs Smith: Anything to make my only son happy. Goodnight my baby.

Themba: Goodnight mom.

She left.

I turned back and I looked at my son. His eyes were wondering about.

Themba: I thought you were sleeping.

Me: I was sleeping but I woke up when I thought someone was drowning. All I heard was hereher Ek hiri hier blabla.

Themba: [laughing] You want me to teach you Afrikaans?

Me: No bbe I am fine. I don't want to drown.

Themba: Your mother boy. She is too forward. Sy is te vorentoe

Me: Themba musa ukuthuka umntanami. [Don't insult my baby]

Themba: We're gossiping about you.

Me: Mxm. You'll make my baby gay.

We laughed really hard.

Mrs Smith: [from the bedroom] CAN YOU TWO PLEASE SLEEP!!

Us: Yes mom!

We both giggled and kissed each other.

Themba: [whispering] Bbe?

Me: Hm?

Themba: Please put your ring back.

Me: Go and take it in my bag.

Themba: Okay.

He stood up and checked it in my bag. He took it and he came towards me and he kneeled down before me.

Themba: Thandeka Dhlomo will you do me the honor of being my wife?

Me: What do you mean? Bbe?

Themba: Hawu Bbe? Will you marry me?

Me: Yes! I will marry you Smith.

He put the ring on my finger and he kissed me. Themba: I am the luckiest man on planet earth

Me: [giggles] But bbe this rock is huge.

Themba: You deserve it and everyone must see ukuthi indoda yakho inemali.

We laughed.

Mrs Smith: HHAYBO THEMBA!!

Themba: I am sorry mama. We're sleeping now.

We giggled and he stepped inside the covers.

Themba:[whispering] I love you.

Me:[whispering back] I love you too.

I made Uyathandwa sleep on his stomach and I brushed his back until we fell asleep.

I was woken up by Uyathandwa. He was crying. I wanted to scream. I didn't want to wake up because I was sleeping. I sat up straight and I took him. I shook his father.

Me: Themba?

Themba: Hm?

Me: The baby is crying. Go and take his bottle.

Themba: Hhayi. Iyahlupha nale ngane!

He stood up and he went to take his bottle. He came back and he handed it over to me. I took it and I gave it to Uyathandwa. I held it for him and he sucked the milk out. Themba went back to sleep. I stopped giving Uyathandwa his milk because he wasn't drinking it anymore. I made him burp and I tried to make him sleep but he was wide awake. He didn't want to sleep.

Me: Themba?

Themba: Hm?

Me: Uyathandwa doesn't want to sleep. Take him please.

Themba: Put him down and sleep. He will sleep on his own.

I put him down and I tried to sleep. After a few minutes he cried again. I didn't take him because I wanted his father to take him but he didn't.

Themba: Thandeka? Take the baby he is crying. Awumzwa?

Me: He is your son too Themba. Take him.

Themba: No bbe. You're the mother. Take him.

I took him and I placed him on my chest he didn't stop crying.

Themba: Bbe go and sit on the lounge with him please.

Me: Hhayi cha. Ngazala ngedwa inkosi!

I stood up and I went to sit on the couch. I gave Uyathandwa his mouth nipple and he sucked it. I watched some music videos.

We woke up when his granny was shaking me. Mrs Smith: Why are you sleeping here?

Me: Themba said we must sleep here because he wanted to sleep.

Mrs Smith: Next time don't do it. He must look after him too. Bring him to me. I will bath him. Go and wake Ethan up so that you two can take a bath. We must not be late.

Me: Okay.

I gave her the baby and I went to Themba's bedroom. I removed the blankets away from him. He woke up.

Me: Morning. Wake up and take a shower.

Themba: Morning where is EJ.

Me: Angimazi.

Themba: Okay bbe I am sorry about last night but I was tired and sleepy.

Me: Okay.

I went out of his room and I went to shower. He joined me and we showered together. We finished, we brushed our teeth and we went back to his room to lotion. I wore a long grey dress and a black cardigan. I put on a black doek and black sandals. I went to make a quick breakfast for everyone. We had breakfast and the cab arrived. We took everything we packed and we left. The cab dropped us off at the airport. Themba paid and we went to the line. We then took a plane to Eastern Cape.

We landed in Eastern Cape and Themba's uncle was waiting for us. He came to us and he hugged Themba. And he did the hand shake with us.

Buzwe: Gqibelo boy you have grown up.

I looked at his mother and she smiled and mumbled "His grandpa gave him that name"

Themba: We're trying.

Buzwe: This must be your bride?

Themba: Yes it's her.

Buzwe: She's beautiful. I am Buzwe. I am your husband's younger uncle. His father is the first born and I am the last born.

Me: It's nice to meet you. I am Thandeka Dhlomo. I am the last born too. [They laughed]

Buzwe: And you're going to marry a last born.

We laughed. And I nodded.

Buzwe: Emily are you alright?

Mrs Smith: Yes Buzwe thanks.

Buzwe: Okay let's go. I don't think umama can wait long enough to meet you.

We laughed and he led us to his Hyundai truck. Mrs Smith and I sat on the front seat.

Themba sat at the back with our bags. Uncle Buzwe drove us to their area at Umtata. We arrived at their home and they had a big yard with about three to four houses. And two huts. Uncle Buzwe led us to grandma Smith's house. I had Uyathandwa on my arms. Grandma Smith was on her lounge drinking tea but the sun was hot. She stood up and hugged Themba tightly. She even cried, she then backed away from him and she gave him one hard slap. We were all shocked.

Grandma: Not even me? Gqibelo? Just to tell me that you're alive!

Themba: I was scared Makhulu.

Grandma: You knew I loved you. Regardless of what was happening between your parents and the rest of the family.

Themba: I am sorry.

Grandma: You're a man now. You're giving us a wife. A proper wife. Makoti thank you for bringing this boy home. You're MaDhlomo right?

Me: Ewe Makhulu.

Grandma: Uyathetha?

Me: Yes. My mother was Xhosa. I can understand the language.

Grandma: Okay. Let me see our little Smith.

I gave her my son and we all sat down.

Grandma: You must be happy Emily.

Mrs Smith: You have no idea Mama.

Grandma: The baby is adorable. I give you two my blessings. You will get married and nothing will stop you.

Us: Thank you Makhulu.

Buzwe: You also have my blessings and support.

Us: Thank you.

Grandma: [talking to Uyathandwa] Molo Lelethu.

Themba and I looked at each other and we smiled. We held each other's hands and we let go.

Grandma Smith looked at us.

Grandma: This is beautiful Emily.

Mrs Smith: Yes it is.

Themba: You gave him a beautiful name.

Grandma: What? You thought I was going to say he is Jongintaba?

We all laughed and just then a man came in.

Man: Stop! My big brother said I must stop this whole madness. This girl and her baby. They are not welcomed here.

Grandma: Thanduxolo! Go and tell him that they are going nowhere. This is my house!

Thanduxolo: I suggest that she leaves now! Because our brother and our real wife they are on their way here. To stop this madness!

The whole went silent...

Me: Themba I have to go now. I can't stay here please. I will die.

Themba: You won't die bbe please. I will fight for our relationship. I won't marry Kayla.

Thanduxolo: You should listen to her.

Me: Your father will murder me. Grandma Smith please give me my son.

Mrs Smith: Grandma please give her the baby so that she can go. My husband can kill them.

Grandma: We will fight for them.

Mrs Smith: Joseph doesn't fight with words please grandma.

I stood up and I took my son. I took my bag.

Buzwe: I will take them for you.

I let him take the bags. Themba stood up.

Me: What are you doing?

Themba: You brought me here. I won't stay here without you. You're my life Thandeka.

Me: I should've listened to you Themba. I shouldn't have let you come here. But bbe I can't die. I have two kids and my family. You'll be fine Themba let us go.

Themba: No! Please!

I cried and I went to the door but it was too late Joseph was at the door already. He was with Kayla. Kayla was wearing like a super woman. I wanted to laugh but there was no time to laugh. Joseph pushed us back inside the house.

Me: Please let me go.

Joe: You will go my way and I will make sure that everyone here will never find you nor see you.

Themba: I am not going to marry Kayla dad forget it.

Kayla: You can't just break my virginity and leave me like that. You will marry me. I waited for 12 years to see that day. The day where I will walk down the aisle.

Grandma: That is bipolar disorder talking. You will never see that day baby.

Joe: Ma shut up! Please.

He took out his gun. And pointed it to me. Everyone screamed. Uyathandwa woke up and cried. My tears went dry.

Joe: Now come and take this woman and her child away.

Themba: Dad don't do this. Leave Thandeka alone. You're taking my son away from me?

Joe: Kayla will give you Children.

Grandma: How can she do that with a bipolar disorder brains??

Joe: Mama! Please.

Grandma Smith cried. Mrs Smith cried too. The guy took my son away. The other guy came to me and pointed me with a gun and he told me not to scream or else he was going to blow my brains. Themba tried to fight with him. We were all screaming and telling him to stop because the guy was holding a gun. But with his stubbornness he didn't stop. They pulled the trigger and shot Buzwe on his arm. He groaned. Two guys came in and held Themba. The other guy grabbed me and put the gun on my waist.

Joe: You want to die now son?

Themba: I hate you Joseph.

Joe: You don't mean that I am your father. Now move it!

I moved forward to the door.

Themba: THANDEKA!!

I turned back and looked at him.

Me: Themba!

Themba: I will find you. It may not be soon but I promise I will find you.

Me: I will wait for you.

Themba: I will always love you. Anything may happen but always remember that I love you. You and our son are the only important people in my life.

Me: We love you too. Forever and always.

Tears streamed down on his cheeks and I couldn't hold my tears back.

Joe: That's a dream. Go!

We walked out of the house and I stepped inside their van. The kind of car that crooks use in movies. The one with no windows. They gave me my son because he was crying. I looked for his bottle and I gave it to him.

Me: Where are you taking me?

Guy: We're crossing the border mam.

Themba's father came to us. And he looked at me. I looked at him with anger.

Joe: If you ever try to contact my son. I will come to you and I will kill you. You and this little boy here. Give me your phone!

I took the phone and I gave it to him. He opened it and took out my sim card. He crashed it. Then he gave my phone to one of his guys.

Guy: iPhone boss?

Joe: Yes that's your earliest Christmas gift. Enjoy your new life in America. You will see that I am not that bad after all. I have everything under control for you.

He closed the door and he left.

Guy: Miss I can give you back your phone.

Me: Give me my memory card back.

He gave me my memory card and the other guy gave me a brown envelope with my important documents like passports, ID, my school documents and all those things. They drove to the airport. Uyathandwa fell asleep. We joined about three flights with two of the guys who were going to help me settle down in America.

I think about a day passed we were still going up and down with suitcases and my son. They threatened me so that I could focus. We finally made it to America. They had guys who greeted them and they were going to drive me to the new place I was going to live in. The other two guys had to go back to South Africa.

Guy: I am Mark and you're?

Me: I am Thandeka. Or should I say Trinity since I am no longer in South Africa.

Mark: You'll be fine. We will help you settle down here.

Me: Will you be fine without your family and the love of your life?

Mark: I am sorry.

Me: Whatever!

Guy2: I am Marcus.

I nodded. They were both black Americans. And they were quite cute. They drove me to my new apartment. It was in Cleveland, Ohio. In America. I was living in those ghetto neighborhood but it was not that bad. My apartment had three bedrooms and bathrooms, and the rest of the space was an open space apartment a kitchen, and lounge. It was fully furnished.

Mark: I hope you will be fine.

I looked at him and he raised his hands up. They took my things and put them on the master bedroom. I put my son on the bed because he was fast asleep.

Mark: When will you start working?

Me: Working?

Mark: I guess they didn't tell you. I am your boss and you will be working for me as an Architect in my construction company.

Me: I haven't finish my Diploma.

Mark: You will do it both. I will show you around once you are comfortable with the place

and once you have mourned your loss.

I nodded and I sat on the bed. I buried my hands on my face.

Mark: I will come back later and check up on you.

I raised my head and I nodded. They both left. I went to close the door and I locked it. I went back to my bed and I took off my shoes. I crawled in next to my son and I held him tightly.

Me: This is not over my baby. Daddy will come for us. It can even take a year or two but he will come. And I will wait for him. We will both wait for him.....

I woke up. When Uyathandwa was crying. I stood up and I went to the bathroom. I washed my face. I went back to him and I took him. I looked for the bag with his food and I found it. I went to make his formula for him. I put the bottle on the ice cold water. I gave him water because there was nothing he was going to eat. There was a knock on the door. I checked first before opening the door. It was Mark. I opened the door.

Mark: Hey I brought you groceries.

Me: I didn't ask you to bring them.

Mark: You don't have to bite me. I am just trying to help.

Me: How do you know Joseph Smith?

We walked to the kitchen and he unpacked the groceries. I sat down with my son.

Mark: As you know that Joseph is a dangerous gangster.

Me: Excuse me? That old man is a gangster?

Mark: Oh you didn't know?

Me: Of course not. I didn't know.

Mark: I am sorry about that but we used to do some business together. He is kind of an old friend but not really a friend.

Me: Business partner perhaps?

Mark: Yes. Kind of.

Me: Do you know why he doesn't want me to marry his son?

Mark: He is trying to save his ass.

Me: How?

Mark: Kayla's father was also part of the gang when they grow up. They had to battle for the position of being a leader. Joseph set Kayla's father up and he was arrested for 11 years.

When he came back his daughter was already friends with Joseph's son they did everything to separate them but they couldn't. Kayla's father started stealing from Joseph.

Me: And that's why they were broke and Themba had to leave?

Mark: Yes. Joseph tried to do damage control after loosing his son. After a few years they made a covenant that when Ethan comes back he must marry his daughter. Joseph paid lobola for him.

Me: But he thought Themba was dead.

Mark: He was lying. He knew he was alive but he didn't want him to come back home and marry Kayla.

Me: But he likes Kayla!

Mark: He doesn't like her. Just that he has no choice or else he will die and his family will die. Kayla has bipolar disorder.

Me: What??

Mark: Yes so her father was just trying to make his daughter happy because she loves Ethan. And he is afraid that no man will want to marry her because of her condition.

Me: [crying] How do you know all this?

Mark: As I said he used to be my friend.

Me: I have to go back home.

Mark: Do you want to die already?

Me: No. But that old man will drop dead anytime soon so I will just wait for that day.

Mark: You'll be fine just focus on your son and making your dreams come true. Though it won't be the same without everyone else.

Me: Yeah I know. Please give me his bottle.

He passed the bottle and I took out the mouth nipple on his mouth. I gave him the bottle before he started crying.

Mark: Are you hungry? I can cook for you.

Me: Are you being paid to be nice?

Mark: No. I am being a gentleman.

Me: Oh I see. Can you please borrow me a phone? I want to call my father at least.

Mark: I bought you a phone but I don't think it's a good idea to call your family.

Me: I will tell dad that I am on vacation.

He took out the phone and he started it for me. It was a Samsung smartphone. He bought airtime for me using internet banking. I made an international call. His phone rang. He picked up.

Dad: Hello.

Me: Dad it's Thandeka.

Dad: Thandeka? When are you coming back home? We're waiting for you and Alondwe has been asking for you.

Me: Dad I have to tell you something.

Mark looked at me with questioning eyes. He had a little fear written on his eyes and all over his face. I knew that he wasn't telling me everything about his relationship with Joseph. I gave him a "relax look".

Me: I am on an unplanned vacation. I will come back January. Please don't be mad.

Dad: And what do I tell your daughter?

Me: I will call her when I settled down. I am sorry dad.

Dad: This Smith boy is making you crazy. How could you just pack your bags and leave.

Andile:[at the background] Is that Thandeka? Let me talk to her.

I heard shuffling sounds on the background.

Andile: When are you coming back home because you're done with exams?

Me: I will come back Bhuti.

Andile: You're mad Thandeka! Come back home! Your daughter is here.

Me: I am sorry Andile.

I hung up the call, I switched my phone off and I cried. Mark came close and he hugged me. I sobbed on his arms and Uyathandwa cried. We backed away from each other. The bottle was no longer on his mouth so I fixed him up and he sucked his milk out of the bottle. Mark finished up cooking. I went to bath my baby. I looked at him and I couldn't help but cry. I couldn't imagine the disappointment that Alondwe was going to go through without seeing me. Uyathandwa was going to grow without his father. It was painful but I was trying to protect everyone. After bathing him. I made him sleep and we had dinner with Mark. After dinner I went to sleep and Mark left.

November and December passed I didn't go out just to explore the city. Mark did everything for me and he was quite supportive. I wasn't ready to start working and he understood. I didn't try to contact Themba. I wasn't ready to speak to Alondwe so I wasn't using my phone. I spend all this days in doors with my son and Mark sometimes. I was always praying and hoping that Themba was going to come around but he didn't. I was miserable and unhappy. I tried to be strong for my son but it was hard. Everyday I would think about Themba and my family. And that made it impossible for me to start a new life. The new year began and there was no hope that I was going to get my happily ever after..

It was the 3rd of February. Uyathandwa was turning 4 months. I woke up in the morning and I went to shower. I brushed my teeth and I lotioned. I wore my white matching underwear suit. I didn't feel like wearing anything that day. I made breakfast for myself and I cooked porridge for Uyathandwa. And I made formula. He woke up and cried. I went to him.

Me: Lelethu! Uvukile! Lelethu kaMakhulu.

I took him and I bathed him before giving him food.

Me: You're 4 months old now. Your daddy was going to be proud to see that you can sit. He screamed and splashed water all over the floor. He even splashed it on me. I shouted his name out loud.

Me: UYATHANDWA!!! HHAYI MAN!!

He looked at me and he cried. I remembered Alondwe when I first shouted at her for splashing water around. She also cried. I felt like crying but I was done crying. It was time for me to try and suck it up. And accept that only if Themba's father can die then I can go back to South Africa. I carried my son to my room and I dried his body. He was still crying. I moisturized his body and I put him on comfortable clothes. I went to the kitchen and I fed him his porridge. He stopped crying and he ate his food. I gave him his formula. After he ate. I ate my food too. I stood up and I took my phone. I put Uyathandwa on my bed and I laid on my back next to him. I charged my phone and I switched it on. I had voice messages from my dad and Andile. I decided to call dad first. He picked up immediately like he was waiting for my call.

Dad: You better tell me that you're on your way back home because your boyfriend is back.

Me: No dad. I am sorry but I will stay longer. I found this amazing opportunity to work and study. I will finish off my diploma here while I work practically.

Dad: Thandeka!! You're trying to tell me that you will stay overseas for a whole year?

Me: Yes dad but I will come back.

Dad: What about your daughter?

Me: Alondwe carries my picture everywhere she won't forget about me.

Dad: At least talk to her father and let him know. Please.

Me: Okay. Please send me his number.

Dad: Okay. I love you mntanami and what you're doing is really hurting me but I can't drag you out of that country because I don't know why would you just change within a blink of an eye.

Me: I am sorry dad.

Dad: Hhayi!!! Your grandmother is sick.

Me: Which one dad?

Dad: Your mother's mom. It's diabetes.

Me: Yoh! Tata. I hope she will be alright. Please send my love to the rest of the family.

Dad: Okay. Send my love to my grandson. He must not come back here speaking that American dirty language.

Me:[laughing] Yoh! Tata please send the number. I love you. Khehla.

He laughed and hung up. I looked at Uyathandwa and he was sleeping.

My phone beeped. Dad had sent me Samkelo's number. I wasted no time and I called him right away. He picked up when I was about to hang up.

Sam: Samkelo Ndunakazi hello?

Me: Uhm Hi? It's Thandeka.

Sam: Nx! Wena!

Me: Samkelo listen!

Sam: Listen to what? Your lies? Why would you hurt my child like this Thandeka? What did she do to you?

Me:[crying] I didn't to hurt her intentionally but I am trying to protect her against everything



from his family. Mark always told me that “He’s trying. He’s alright. Don’t worry about him” and I held on to those words. But deep down in my heart I knew that he was going to come for us one day. I knew nothing about his life because, even on social networking sites he wasn’t available.

It was the end of May. Uyathandwa was 7 months. He was able to crawl. That made him a dirty child because his nanny didn’t have a very clean space but it was not that bad. She didn’t want to look after him in my apartment she wanted me to bring him to her. It was a Thursday afternoon and I had finished drawing up a plan for a building that the company was going to build. Mark requested to walk inside my tiny office by knocking.

Me: Come in.

He came in and sat on the chair. He looked at me as I was wrapping up the drawing.

Mark: You’re so good with your work.

Me: That what happens when you do something that you love.

Mark: You’re done with that?

Me: Yes. Tomorrow I will have to make the plastic model of the building.

Mark: You won’t use cardboards this time?

I laughed and stood up. I wore my coat and I took my bag.

Me: No I won’t. Please let’s go.

Mark: I would like us to go for a drink first somewhere around the city.

Me: My son? I don’t want that woman to throw tantrum at me.

Mark: I spoke to her.

Me: Player! Player! And your wife?

Mark: Are you kidding me? I am 22 for goodness sake. You know I don’t have a wife.

Me: Yah! Yah! Welcome to America where a 22year old owns a construction company. I bet in South Africa a 22 year old is working on his degree or still dreaming about working on a degree.

Mark: We’re living the American dream dear.

We laughed and walked out of my office. We went to his car. We stepped inside and he drove to a restaurant in town. We found a table for two and we ordered. And ordered drinks while waiting for our food.

Me: Thank you for everything man. If you weren’t this patient with me maybe I wasn’t going to make it man.

Mark: I told you that I am sweet.

We both laughed.

Me: Not sweet like my Ethan though.

Mark:[he smiled] Okay maybe not like him. But can we not talk about him tonight. Let’s just enjoy this beautiful day and a beautiful moment.

Me: Okay. I guess that won’t hurt.

We laughed and we talked about a lot of things. Mark was a very nice guy. What I liked the most about him was that he was a very patient man. And he was goal driven. After our precious moment together, we drove back to my place. We went to the nanny first.

Uyathandwa was fast asleep. Mark picked him up and I took his bag. We said our goodnights to Cassandra and we went to my place. He put him to bed for me.

Me: Thank you.

Mark: I guess I will see you tomorrow?

Me: Yes tomorrow.

Mark: I had a great time tonight.

Me: I had a wonderful time too. Thank you.

He gave me a hug and he kissed my cheek. He left. I sighed and I closed the door. I went to

take a shower and I joined my baby in bed..

Mark and I began to tour Uyathandwa around the city. He was such a bubbly baby and he was cute as fuck. My little coloured. 1st of September Alondwe turned 2yrs. I was still living in Cleveland Ohio. Sometimes I couldn't speak to Alondwe because of the time. For an example if it was 09:02am in South Africa in Cleveland it was 02:02am. On her birthday I asked my brother to buy her a gift on my behalf. I didn't celebrate my birthday.

On the 3rd of October. Uyathandwa was turning 1year old. I woke up in the morning and I looked at him. He was sleeping so peaceful. My heart broke because his father and I had planned to throw him a huge birthday party on his first birthday but it didn't happen. I took my phone and I looked at our pictures together. I cried. I missed him, all the good times together, the sad time even his anger. I missed everything about him. Life wasn't the same without him. I tried to be happy just for my son but deep down. I wasn't happy. I was lonely and I was hurting big time. I had attempted to call him before but I couldn't because I was scared. I didn't know if I was going to call him. Only to find that maybe he was with his family or even worse his father. I got the message clearly that if I try to contact him, my family's life was going to be on the line. I wasn't going to risk that because of one phone call. Mark and I took Uyathandwa out to celebrate his birthday. He was happy and he ate everything that he wanted that day. I used to tell him stories about his father. I didn't even know whether he understood or not but I wanted him to know that Themba was his father not Mark.

The year ended and I didn't go back to South Africa. My family wasn't pleased at all. I had to make up a lie about being swamped up with a lot of work. I told my father that I was going to study a degree in Architecture. That was my reason not to come back home. They didn't understand at all but there was nothing they could do about it because it was my decision.

The NEW YEAR began. I graduated. I got my Diploma. I was a qualified Architect. I got promoted at work and I got a raise. I registered for another year so that I can do a degree. I was proud of myself. Mark suggested that I put Uyathandwa in a daycare so that he can get used to other kids and try to make friends. He was trying to talk and putting him on a daycare was going to help because he was going to learn. He was speaking English of course.

My second year in America was just a year nothing interesting happened beside the fact that the work load and my schoolwork was a bit too much for me but I was big girl hey I sucked it up and tried to make it work. Mark and I became close more then before. There was a little chemistry between us but I didn't want it to turn into something because I still had hope that Themba was going to come for us. I didn't know when or how but I knew he was going to come. Honestly speaking I had developed feelings for Mark but I was so against them. I tried not to show him. But there was always something whenever our eyes met. That year on my 22nd birthday he took me out. There was a musical concert going on and we had a lot of fun. On his 24th birthday we went to Toni Braxton's live concert. The woman was my favorite artist and I recall that I cried almost on every song that she sang that night. I was still in contact with my family. Specially my daughter though she used to ask every time that when am I coming back home. Because she was just a kid I used to make silly excuses that would make her laugh.

Alondwe turned 3yrs and still I wasn't there on her birthday. Samkelo sent me pictures and the video that he made for me of that day. It was beautiful they had Teletubbies theme.

Alondwe's favorit character was laa laa. Everyone was calling her laa laa she was no longer Alondwe. And she loved her new name because even when I spoke to her on the phone. I would say "Alondwe" she would say "Ngiwu laa laa Mina mamami" [I am laa laa mom] I was a proud but miserable mother.

On the 3rd of October my boy was turning 2yrs. He was a very talkative boy. I wasn't going

to work that day because Uyathandwa wanted us to go to the beach. I woke him up in the morning. I had a cake written "Happy 2nd Birthday EJ" He screamed.

Me: Uyathandwa wake up!

EJ: No! I don't wanna wake up today mama you promised that we will sleep.

Me: No I didn't. Open your eyes please.

He smiled and opened his eyes. I sang happy birthday for him. He screamed and he jumped out of bed acting up like he was John Cena. He jumped up and down.

EJ: It's my birthday! Oh! it's my birthday! Oh lalala it's my birthday!

He hugged my legs tightly.

EJ: Thank you mommy. Daddy is coming today right? You said he will come on my second birthday because he was not there on my first birthday.

My throat went dry for second and I never thought he was going to remember that. I sat down on the bed. I placed the cake on my lap.

Me: Uhm. Remember I told you that daddy lives far away. In another country?

EJ: Yes and you said he was gonna come with an aeroplane. And we will live together.

Me: Yes boy but there is a storm in South Africa. The aeroplane can't fly. If they fly they will crash.

EJ: So daddy isn't coming? [His face changed]

Me: No boy. He is not coming. But he will definitely come next year.

He dug his hands on the cake and he messed it up. He was crying and shouting "You lied mama, You lied! Daddy doesn't love me!" I removed the cake from my lap and he hit my chest with his dirty hands. I tried to hold him and he cried on my arms.

Me: He loves you boy. We both love you. He will come. Don't cry. We will go to the beach today and have fun.

EJ: I don't want to go to the beach without daddy. Max [his friend] went to the beach with his daddy. I want my daddy too.

I didn't know what to say I just cried. I carried him to the kitchen and I made him drink allegex. After a few minutes he was fast asleep. I put him down and I cleaned up the mess he created. I took the cake and my phone. I placed the cake on the kitchen counter. I took a deep breath and I dialed Themba's number. I was hoping and praying that the number that I knew was working and luckily it was working. His phone rang and he picked up.

Themba: Themba speaking hello?

Me:.....

Themba: Hello??

I couldn't speak I just hung up the call and I switched off my phone. I cried. Hearing his voice was so heartbreaking. I cried until I couldn't. There was a knock on the door. I went to open and Mark came in with a lot of toys. I smiled and he kissed my cheek.

Mark: Morning where is the birthday boy?

Me: He is sleeping. He had a daddy breakdown and he cried a lot. I made him sleep using allegex.

Mark: That's child abuse. You look like you were crying are you alright?

I looked at him without a word. And he looked at me too. I cleared my throat and I closed the door.

Me: I am fine. Thanks for buying him the gifts.

Mark: Anything to make his birthday special.

I smiled and looked at him again. He slowly came close to my face and we kissed each other. My heart was beating pretty fast and the kiss was just amazing. He started unbuttoning my pyjamas top. I stopped him.

Me: Stop! I can't!

Mark: What's wrong Trinity. I can see that you love me and I love you.

Me: I am still in love with EJ's father. And I –

Mark: Oh please. Don't tell me that you believe the shit that he will come for you!

Me: I know he will. I know!

Mark: The man is married for crying out loud. He is never coming for you. He's trying to start his own family and you-

Me: Stop! Stop! That's not true. Themba loves me. He wouldn't do that. Not to me!

Mark: Well he is. You just have to wake up and smell the coffee. The man won't come here for you two!! Tell EJ that I said Happy birthday. Bye.

He went to the door and he slammed it shut behind him. I sat down and cried. I couldn't believe it. I was hurt and angry. I took my phone and I switched it on. I called him again. I didn't care about anything. I just wanted to know the truth. His phone rang and he picked up.

Themba: Whoever you're you better talk this time around. I am trying to sleep here!

Me: Is it true that you're married?

Themba: And who are you? How is my marriage your concern?

Me: Just answer the question damnit!

Themba: I won't unless you tell me who you're!

A voice from the background "Bbe can you please tell whoever that person is to leave us alone. I am trying to sleep here please. You know how tired this baby makes me. so please"

She sounded like Kayla but I was not too sure because her voice was so grown.

Themba: [to the woman] I am sorry my love. I have to attend this call. Let me walk out at least.

I heard shuffling sounds. I wanted to hung up the call but I didn't.

Themba: Yah! Speak!

Me: How could you do this to me? To us. How could you? You bastard!

He didn't answer me for a long time.

Me: So you can't talk now?

Themba:[whispering] Thandeka??

Me: Fuck you! Fuck you Themba! Tsk! Mark was right. You will never come for us!!

Themba: Thandeka –

I hung up the call and I switched off my phone. I cuddled my legs on the couch and I cried. I cried so hard.

EJ: [on my back] Mama why are crying?

I sniffed and wiped my tears away. I looked at him and smiled.

Me: Hey boy. Come and we will open your gifts

He ran up to the couch and picked up the box. EJ: They are from daddy?

Me: No boy but they are from Uncle Mark.

EJ: Why didn't daddy sent me gifts. I want gifts from him mommy.

He threw the box away and it hit the wall. My son had his father's temper and it didn't sit well with me. He cried and I held him tight.

Me: I am sorry baby. I am so sorry.

I told myself that I was going to finish up my Degree and after that I will just go back home. After all Themba was married and he was starting his own family. And clearly he didn't need Uyathandwa and I. My son was sad because of this "daddy" issue but I tried to make him happy. Mark kept his distance from us. I only saw him when I went to work. I had decided that I was going back home at the end of October. I changed my mind about my degree. I was going to give it up. I wrote my resignation letter and I packed it in my bag. The following morning Uyathandwa and I prepared ourselves for the new day. After I was done with everything. I called Uyathandwa because we were using a bus as transport. He was brushing his teeth.

Me: EJ we're going to be late. Come!

EJ: I am done!

He ran towards the door and as expected he had a toothpaste on his shirt.

Me: I always tell you to let me help you with brushing your teeth.

EJ: I am old mama.

Me: You don't act old. Come and change.

I changed his shirt and I made him wear another shirt. I held his hand and he yanked it out of my hand. I looked at him.

EJ: Little boys hold their mother's hands. I am old.

Me: Cars are older. You don't want to have one leg because of a car accident?

EJ: No! No! Please carry me mama.

I smiled and I carried him. I put our bags on my other shoulder. I locked up and we went to the bus stop. The bus came and we stepped inside. I dropped him off with other kids from his daycare. The bus proceeded. I stepped out of the bus on my stop. And I went to work place. During my lunch break, I went to Mark's office. I knocked on the door and he told me to come in. I sat down.

Mark: How can I help you?

Me: I am here to hand in my resignation letter.

Mark: What? Why are you resigning?

Me: I am going to live in London now. I am tired of this city. At least London has some sense of royalty unlike USA.

Mark: Are you leaving because of what happened between us?

Me: No. I just realized that I don't want to raise my son here anymore. And this whole father thing is treating him bad maybe if we can just change location. He will forget.

Mark: Maybe. I am sorry for bursting out like that on you that day. I didn't mean it.

Me: It's Okay Mark you were angry. I understand.

Mark: I wish you all the best in London and please do visit us.

Me: I will definitely. I will leave some of my things please take them to charity.

Mark: Okay. But what about your degree?

Me: I will just stick to my Diploma. I have to go

Mark: Okay.

I nodded and I stood up. I went to the door and Mark stopped me.

Me: Yes?

Mark: You're such a wonderful soul. I love you.

Me: You're a wonderful man too. And I love you too but I can't pursue a relationship right now. I am too broken.

Mark: I understand. Good luck once more.

I smiled and I nodded. I went to my office and I packed my personal belongings. I left what belonged to the company. I didn't want to tell Mark the truth about where was I really going. After a week. Uyathandwa and I were ready to leave. He was excited about getting on a plane but he didn't know that we were going to a country where his father was. The clothes we were leaving was on the boxes. I took our two suitcases. I dropped off the key to the landlady and we waited for our cab.

EJ: Flying on the air feels good mommy?

Me: Yes boy.

EJ: What if I want to use the toilet?

Me: The plane has the toilet boy.

EJ: [laughing] The urine goes out and fly too? Oh! Mommy the rain is the urine of people who travels using a plane?

Me:[laughing] No boy. The rain comes from God not from people.

He laughed and our cab came. He held my hand first and we walked to the cab. He was too excited about flying. Along the way he fell asleep and I had to wake him up so that he can see the plane. Even his walk had excitement. He couldn't close his mouth. He was complementing the beauty of the plane inside. When I told him that we had another plane to take. He wanted to fly with happiness.

After those loooong hours we finally arrived in Johannesburg.

EJ: We going on the last plane mom?

Me: No boy. We're going to see grandfather and uncle Andile.

EJ: But I want to go and fly again.

He sat down and cried. People were looking at him. Some were laughing at him.

Me: We will fly again but not now Uyathandwa. Get up!

EJ: No! I want to fly now!

He cried. Wabhuquza phansi. I let him be until he stopped. He folded his arms in front of his chest.

Me: I am gonna spank you now! Get up!

He shook his head "NO!". I held his hand and I tried to make him get up but he didn't. The security came to me and offered to help.

Security: Let me hold him for you.

Me: Thank you.

He tried to hold him but Uyathandwa kicked him. The security didn't stop. He picked him up and we walked to the cab. I found one and he buckled him inside the cab. I gave him a few hundreds and I thanked him. Uyathandwa was crying.

The cab drove straight to Andile's house. We arrived and I took out the suitcases. I gave the driver his money.

Me: Uyathandwa. Step off.

EJ: I want to fly.

Me: I will leave you here then and I will tell this guy to go and eat you.

He looked at me and he cried. He stepped out of the car. I closed the door.

Driver: Mam?

Me: Yes?

Driver: Am I that ugly that you can tell your son that I will eat him?

Me: [I wanted to laugh] What? No!

Driver: But he cried?

Me: He's just being a kid.

Driver: Please don't do it again.

Me: Okay I am sorry.

He nodded and drove off. I dragged the suitcases and Uyathandwa followed me. He was still crying.

I buzzed the gate. I had a lot of keys with me. I wasn't going to know which was which. And the remote control of the gate was at my flat. The lady answered.

Lady: Dhlomo residents how can I assist?

Me: It's Thandeka Dhlomo. Please open up.

Lady: Chineke! Eh! You welcome sisi.

Then the gate swung open.

Me: Go inside Uyathandwa.

He slowly walked inside and I walked inside too. Shemah came running to us. She hugged me first. We backed away from each other.

Shemah: Eh! Thandeka. It's good to see you.

Me: It's nice to see you too. I can see that you and Andile are going make me an aunt. [She was pregnant]

She laughed and greeted Uyathandwa but he didn't respond. He walked inside the house.

Me: I am sorry about that. He is angry. He wants to fly.

Shemah: He'll be fine.

She took my suitcase and we walked inside the house. The house was upgraded then before.

It was more lovely. There was wedding pictures of Andile and Shemah.

Me: You guys didn't tell me that you're getting married?

Shemah: I am sorry but we knew that you wasn't going to come.

Me: Oh.

Andile: [coming from his room] Who is –

He looked at me and I smiled but he didn't.

Me: Not even a hug?

Andile: At least you didn't come back with another baby.

I looked at him in disbelief. I didn't expect that from him.

Shemah: Patrick please be nice.

Andile: Why should I be nice? She left for two years and I am supposed to be nice!?!?!?

Uyathandwa came to me and held my leg.

EJ: Mommy let's go back home.

Me: No baby we're home.

Andile: Who said this is your home? This is my house not your father's house.

Me: Andile my son can hear you.

Andile: I don't care! Tsk! I don't want you in my house.

Me: Me or him?

Andile: Both of you!

EJ: Mama let's go.

Me: Okay. I am sorry Andile. Please give me my suitcase Shemah.

She gave me my suitcase.

Me: Go Uyathandwa.

Dad: [on the door] Don't go. Andile what's wrong with you? Why are you being like this towards your sister?

Andile: I have every right to be like this towards her. She thinks she can just exit our lives and come back whenever it suits her. No. I won't tolerate that. She must go back where she comes from. This is my house and I don't want her here.

Dad: You can't –

Me: It's Okay dad. I will go. It's his house after all. Nothing you say will change his mind. I will see you tomorrow maybe.

Andile went back to his room. Dad came towards me and he hugged me tightly. For a long time. I felt so welcomed and secured.

Dad: Do you have money to check in a hotel?

Me: Yes. What happened to my flat?

Dad: Nothing. It's still yours. Your cousin was using it but he's done with his studies this year.

Me: My baby's things?

Dad: They are still there.

Me: Okay. I must look for a job. So I will go to Durban and I will take it from there.

Dad: But don't go back soon. I want to spend time with him.

Me: Okay. I will ask Alondwe too. I will fly to Durban with them.

EJ: We will fly? Mama?

Me: Yes boy but not today. This is your grandfather.

EJ: The old one?

Dad nodded and smiled. He picked him up.

Dad: Let me get your car keys. I took your car.

Me: Thank you.

He went to his room, he came back and gave me the car keys. Shemah assisted me pack my suitcases.

Dad: last week I was driving it. I think the petrol is still enough. Here is some cash.

Me: Serious dad I am sorted.

Dad: Okay. Goodbye young man.

EJ: Goodbye grandpa.

He insisted so I took the money. Uyathandwa stepped inside the front seat and I stepped inside mine. We drove to the nearest hotel...

I drove to the mall first. I parked outside.

Me: Uyathandwa what do you want to eat?

EJ: Uhm...Uhm...Uhhh.

Me: Uyathandwa! I don't have the whole day. Please talk boy.

EJ: I am still thinking mama.

I took my phone out while he was still thinking. I took the old sim card out and I crashed it. I threw it away.

EJ: Beef burger and pizza. Grape juice, Fritos and ultra mel delight. Uhm. Yeah.

Me: Are you serious?

EJ: Yes mom. Please.

I nodded and we stepped out of the car. We walked inside the mall. He held my hand. He wasn't familiar with the place. He didn't walk around like he used to at Cleveland. I ordered the pizza and we went to buy everything he wanted because the pizza was going to be ready after an hour or so. He added a few snacks. I let him be. I bought a new Vodacom sim card. I was still young to buy MTN. Lol I am kidding. After that we went to pay. We went to steers for his burger and finally the pizza. He carried the steers takeaway and we walked to the car. We stepped inside the car.

Me: Where do you want to sleep today? Hotel or BnB?

EJ: What is the difference mom?

Me: Which name sounds nice to you?

He smiled widely and repeated what I said.

EJ: BnB mama.

I smiled and I took out my phone. I started it and I loaded airtime. I bought data bundles and I googled the suitable BnB for us. I found one and we drove straight to it. We arrived and checked in. They assisted us with our bags and they showed us our room. We went through. Uyathandwa jumped on his burger and he opened it.

Me: A.a go and wash your hands first.

He reluctantly stood up and he ran to the bathroom. He washed his hands and he came back.

He sat down and ate. I ate the pizza.

EJ: Mama?

Me: Hm?

EJ: That uncle doesn't like us?

Me: Uhm.. He does baby.

EJ: But why did he shout at us?

Me: He was angry but don't worry about him. Eat your food okay?

He nodded and ate his food. He finished it and he ate one slice of pizza. He drank his juice and he was full. I put the rest of the food away. There was a bar fridge. I carried him to the bathroom and I bathed him. I assisted him brush his teeth and we went back to the bedroom to lotion. He wore his pyjamas. I put him to bed and he watched TV while I went to take a

shower. I did all the necessities and I joined him to bed. He was fast asleep. I switched off the TV. I kissed his forehead and I fixed him up. I took my phone and called Samkelo. He picked up.

Sam: Samkelo Hello?

Me: How are you?

Sam: I am fine and you?

Me: I am fine. It's Thandeka.

Sam: Mxm I can hear your voice. Alondwe is sleeping.

Me: Can I spend the rest of the holidays with her.

Sam: My daughter is not coming to America!

Me: I am not in America! You ass!

Sam: You're back??

Me: Yes. I am back.

Sam: Wow. Alondwe will be happy. I will bring her the day after tomorrow.

Me: Okay thanks. You're the best.

Sam: Yeah I know.

Me: Mxm. Ngiyakudlalisa.

Sam: I know you meant it.

Me:[laughing] Goodnight.

Sam: Goodnight.

I hung up the call and I placed my phone away. I cuddled my son and I slowly drifted off to sleep.

The following day was a rainy day. We didn't go out. We stayed in doors. We watched TV and ate the snacks that we bought. Later dad asked where I was I told him. He visited us with takeaways. Uyathandwa was happy to see him. He loved to have men around him that how bad he wanted to know his father. They bonded with grandfather. Uyathandwa was telling him stories about America, his day care, his friends, his nanny and Mark. Later he was sleepy so I had to put him to bed. I sat on the couch with dad.

Dad: He is so talkative. Just like you.

Me: Hhaybo dad?

Dad: You were talkative when you were a baby. And you were too clever for your age.

Me: Uyathandwa is also clever. And he doesn't forget. What you promised him. You must make sure you that you keep your promise or else he'll breakdown.

Dad: He is so grown. The last time I saw him. He was so tiny. His sister has grown too. But Alondwe is not talkative like him. But she's clever. She's more like Andile but her father's side says she behaves like her father.

Me: I can't wait to see her. How is Andile?

Dad: He's fine. He will come around.

Me: But he took it the wrong way he wasn't supposed to shout at me in front of my kid.

Dad: He was hurting baby. How are your in-laws?

Me: My in-laws?

Dad: Yes. You're practically a Smith now.

Me: I don't understand.

Dad: They paid lobola for you. How come you don't know that. And you're still wearing the engagement ring.

Me: Excuse me? Tata! How can people pay lobola for me without my presence or my knowledge? And I didn't want to take it off again.

Dad: Hawu. But they told us that your husband said you knew that he was going to send people on the 24th of November before you two left.

Me: Who was negotiating?

Dad: His uncle Buzwe, His uncle Bonani and his two friends.

Me: Brandon and Bheki?

Dad: Yes.

Me: I think I have to tell you the real truth.

Dad: About?

Me: I wasn't on vacation. I was...[I told him every single details.]

Dad: Tell me you're joking.

Me: I am not joking and please tata don't breath a word to anyone about this please.

Dad: I won't. Oh my Lord. The poor boy.

Me: Tata??? [I looked at him]

Dad: No. Thandeka. He grew up in a cruel manner. While his parents were both alive and now he had to marry that girl just to save his cruel father. This is also hard on him as much as it is hard on you my baby.

Me: Hhayi my dad will amaze you! He moved on with his life and he's starting a family. Yet tata you feel sorry for him.

Dad: Thandeka. You don't know what happened after you left. Maybe he had to buy time. What you need to do is to hear his side of the story.

Me: And what about his father?

Dad: You can have the police back up on that but mntanami uyakthanda lo mfana.

Me: Dad did you spend his lobola money?

Dad: Hhayi! Thandeka. I wasn't going to do such a thing. The money is there as it is. I didn't even use a cent. You will use it for your wedding expenses.

Me: Hhe my father. What makes you think I will marry him?

Dad: Awu Thandeka. At least talk to him and find out what happened. His father is evil qha. He was trying to save himself using his son of which is wrong. But think about it baby. I have to go home now. But wena ungu Makoti wakwa Smith. They paid the bride price. I didn't refuse because I knew it what you wanted and the whole family knew that. No makhulu bakho. Both of them know about this

Me: Hhayi Okay dad. What is done is done.

He stood up and hugged me.

Dad: I am happy that you're back home.

Me: It's good to be home. Goodnight dad.

Dad: Goodnight.

He left and I locked up the door. I joined my son in bed. I looked at my ring and it never crossed my mind that I have to take it off. And I wasn't going to take it off. Somehow it helped me to keep men away from me because I can be weak sometimes. I wasn't going to contact Themba. I loved my life too much to die young. Gangsters has police friends so I wasn't going to risk anything.

The following day. We woke up and prepared ourselves for Alondwe. They were going to come to us because I didn't want the "I want to fly" drama. I had given Samkelo the address and the room number. We were watching cartoons with Uyathandwa.

EJ: Mom?

Me: Hm?

EJ: My half sister is beautiful?

Me: Yes she is. Do you remember what does half sister means? [He nodded] What does it mean?

EJ: It means that my father is not her father. But we have a same mother.

Me:[kissing his cheek] Clever boy.

He laughed and he showed me the other cheek. I kissed it too. He giggled loudly.

EJ: My father will come on my 3rd birthday right mom?

Me: Uhm. [He smiled] Yes boy. He will come.

He laughed and jumped up and down on the couch. I smiled at him. I wanted him to know that Samkelo is not his father because I didn't want him to break down in front of Samkelo and Alondwe...

There was a knock on the door. I stood up and I went to open. My daughter was there on the door. I closed my eyes and opened them again. Tears streamed down my eyes. She was so grown up and beautiful.

Alondwe: Mamami?

Me: Laa laa

I kneeled down and hugged her tightly. I didn't want to let go.

Sam: That's enough phela Thandeka.

I gave him a dead stare. I let go and kissed her all over the face. She giggled.

Me: Uyaphila baby? [Are you fine?]

Alondwe: Yes wena?

Me: Ngyaphila. Come and meet your brother.

I held her hand and we walked up to Uyathandwa. He smiled.

Me: Stand up Uyathandwa! Where are your gentleman manners.

He giggled and stood up. He came towards us. They both looked at each other and smiled.

They looked at me and I smiled at them. I mumbled "hug her" to Uyathandwa. He opened his arms and they hugged each other.

They let go and we sat down.

Alondwe: Ngu Alondwe Mina.

Me: Language barrier Samkelo.

Sam: Laa Laa?

Aloe: Daddy?

Sam: Your brother can't hear you when you speak Zulu. Speak to him like you speak with your teacher and your school mates.

She smiled and nodded. And she spoke the baby English. [They were both speaking the baby English but I will write it formal. EJ's English was different because he grew up speaking it only]

Aloe: My name is Alondwe Ndunakazi but you can call me Laa Laa.

EJ: I am Ethan Junior Smith [he couldn't pronounce his Zulu name] But you can call me EJ. Mom said you're beautiful.

Me: What do you say Uyathandwa?

EJ: I say she's beautiful too. Is this your daddy?

"Oh Lord here we go again" I wanted to stop him from talking but I couldn't.

Aloe: Yes this my daddy? Where is your daddy?

I looked at Samkelo and he looked at me. I wanted to cry but I held my tears back.

EJ: I don't know. But you know what?

Aloe: Hm?

EJ: I think your daddy is cool.

Aloe: What does cool mean?

Sam: Your son Thandeka? American language

Me: Give him a break. Let's leave them and we will talk on the balcony.

He nodded. I stood up and I went to one of our suitcases. I took out the plastic bag with toys.

I placed it on the table. They didn't notice that because they were busy discussing daddy topic. Samkelo and I sat on the balcony chairs

Sam: Your son is adorable.

Me: Thanks.

Sam: If they were not siblings. I would have said he must be my son in-law.

Me: Argh! Ungcolile wena!

We both laughed.

Sam: You know that his father is married right?

Me: Yes I know that. How do you know?

Sam: They live in Cape Town with his wife. I usually see them sometimes.

Me: Oh that's nice.

Sam: What happened Thandeka?

Me: It's complicated but in short his father didn't like me so he forced me to leave. That's all I can say.

Sam: Yoh! That's sad. And that old man is dangerous. I don't like him. Your son's stepmother is pregnant.

Me: Please don't call her like that. Uyathandwa doesn't have a stepmother.

Sam: But it's reality. Oh wait? They don't know that you're back?

Me: No they don't know and I don't want them to know.

Sam: But your boy needs his father.

Me: Mxm. I will probably tell him next year that he's dead. I don't want him near my son. I don't want my baby to die.

Sam: Yeah neh! It's hard. You're trying to protect him but he wants his father and he is serious. You see American kids?

Me: Fusegi yazi wena! What must I do? Uyathandwa has the brains that are out of this planet. He's way too clever and his anger Brah. Sam: Ngane ye coloured mos. American influence. How can you take your child and live in that kind of city. In that city a 5 year old talks like a 10 year old. Look at your son. He talks like he's 4yrs old. And Laa Laa doesn't talk too much.

Me: At least she knows English.

Sam: You weren't supposed to take him to daycare at his age. Kids there talk too much so I don't blame him. I am sure they fed him the daddy crap.

Me: Mxm give my son a break! How is life?

Sam: Life is LIFE. I am starting my training next year. I am glad that you're back.

Me: That's good. I am happy too hey. Tomorrow we will fly to Durban.

Sam: Laa Laa is scared of the plane.

Me: Yoh! I will give her allegex so that she can sleep. Uyathandwa is so looking forward to it and I can't spend hours on the bus with two kids. The plane is fast.

Sam: Okay. Let me go back home. My flight leaves in an hour. But why are you still wearing the engagement ring?

Me: I don't know Brah. But I don't feel like taking it off.

Sam: Mmm. Okay.

We stood up and he gave me a hug. He kissed my cheek and we went back to the kids. They were eating Fritos. While watching cartoons.

Sam: Laa Laa?

Aloe: Daddy?

Sam: I am leaving now. You will spend your holidays with your mom and your brother.

Aloe: You won't come and visit us?

Sam: You want me to come? [She nodded] Hey champ? Do you want me to come and visit you guys during Christmas holidays?

EJ: Yes please. We will go and play soccer at the beach?

Aloe: My daddy won't play soccer with you.

EJ: [sad face] Why?

Aloe: He's not your dad-

Me: Yah yah. We will wait for your visit Samkelo.

Sam: I am sorry Thandeka.

He hugged me tightly because I had tears gushing out of my eyes.

Me: This is not fair. It's not fair Samkelo. My baby is too young to go through all this pain.

Sam: Hey don't worry. He will come around. Remember you have to protect him against the evil out there. The Oupa is not a good person. Be strong for him Thandeka.

I nodded and we let go of each other. He wiped my tears and he kissed my forehead.

Sam: You two look after your mommy Okay?

They both nodded. Samkelo kissed his daughter. Fist pump with Uyathandwa and he left. I sat down with them.

EJ: I am sorry mommy.

Me: For what baby?

EJ: For talking about daddy.

Me: No baby It's fine. Let's eat.

He nodded and we ate the Fritos. During the day they both fell asleep. And I joined them.

The following day we were ready to go. My father was going to send someone to bring my car because I didn't want to hire a car while I had one. As planned. I gave Alondwe allegex.

Dad was driving us to the airport. Alondwe fell asleep along the way. Uyathandwa was too happy and he didn't even sleep. We arrived at the airport. I carried Alondwe and dad assisted us with bags. We made it to the line. Dad gave me a white Envelope.

Me: What is this?

Dad: Your graduation present. We were both not there that day but there is a gift for you. I know you love gifts. It's From me and special someone.

Me:[giggles] Thank you Daddy. I will open it on the plane.

Dad: Okay baby. Boy goodbye.

He hugged his legs tightly.

EJ: Goodbye grandpa.

Dad left and we went through. I asked for help and they helped me with my bags. We sat down on our seats. Alondwe was in my arms. I opened the envelope and it had a letter. It was not my father's handwriting. It was written:

" My daughter Joy.

By the time you read this. You must know that your dad and I, we are proud of you. You have graduated from university. You must be wondering how did I plan this? Though your father didn't want to believe it but I knew that my time in this world was over. I had to live something for you and your brother. From my heart. I bought you a house in Durban as your graduation present. You won't be reading this if you haven't graduate. I want you to live there and always know that I am your guardian angel. I am watching over you.

Love: You mother "

The letter had her lips with red lipstick. But it was old. The colour was not clear. I had tears in my eyes. I looked at Uyathandwa and he was talking to an old man who was on another seat. I wiped my tears and I took out the other things that were inside the envelope. There were keys inside. The deed of the house stating that the house is mine. It had my mother's signature as she was the one who transferred the house to me. And there was another paper with the details of the house and the person I had to contact about the house. I was breath taken away. My mouth was just dry. I didn't expect such from my mother. I always thought she didn't leave anything tangible for us beside her true love but I was definitely wrong. I wanted to call my dad but I couldn't because I was in a plane.

After a few hours we were in Durban. Uyathandwa said his goodbyes to his old man friend. I tried to wake Alondwe up but she was totally out of it. We took a cab straight to my flat. The driver assisted us. And I paid. I put Alondwe on the couch and I went to my room to change

the bed covers. Nothing much had changed on my flat besides the couches on the lounge and the wall colour. Uyathandwa wanted to sleep too so I put him on the the bed with his sister. I called my father.

Dad: You arrived safe?

Me: Yes. I don't know what to say about the gift. Thanks dad.

Dad: It's Okay baby. We're proud of you guys.

Me: Thanks. So I wasn't going to get the house if I didn't graduate?

Dad:[laughing] No my daughter.

Me: Umama though! It's a lovely gift though.

Dad: You will contact that person whenever you're ready.

Me: Okay. Send my love to Shemah and her husband.

Dad: Okay baby.

We hung up the call and I rested on my couch.

Two days later. My kids and I were walking around the mall in Musgrave center. Alondwe wanted to eat Nandos so I took them there. They were walking in front of me. They were holding each other's hands. We arrived in Nandos and we ordered. We washed our hands and we waited for our order.

Aloe: Please take pictures of us mommy.

I smiled and I took out my phone. I took pictures of them. They were posing for the camera. "I think my eyes are deceiving me or I am dreaming. Thandeka?" A voice said and I looked up. My good Lord! I closed my eyes and took a deep breath.

Me: Emma. You guys have grown up.

I stood up and hugged them. They were quite puzzled to see me or rather shocked.

Bheki: When did you come back?

Me: Last week.

Brandon: And you didn't even tried to contact us? Why?

Me: You guys know how I left.

Emma: Yeah but still.

Bheki: Can we sit on the bigger table?

I nodded. I took my phone from my kids.

EJ: Mommy we were still looking at the pictures.

Me: For once my son stop complaining.

He sulked and we changed the tables. We all sat down. Emma had a baby girl on her arms. She was beautiful.

Me: How old is she?

Emma: Seven months. That Ethan's son and your daughter?

Me: Yes.

Bheki: They are pretty. Did you tell him that you're back?

Me: No I didn't.

Brandon: Ethan deserves to know that you're back.

EJ: That's my name. I am Ethan too.

Me: We're not talking to you right?

EJ: I am sorry mommy.

Me: Good.

Bheki: Your father is Ethan too.

Me: Bheki!!

EJ: You know my daddy? Can you please take me to him. I want to see him and play soccer on the beach with him.

Bheki: I will –

Me: Laa Laa! Uyathandwa! Stand up we're leaving now.

Aloe: But mommy we haven't eat.

Me: We will eat at home. Stand up.

Brandon: You don't have to do this.

Me: Please leave us alone! And don't you dare think about telling Themba that I am back!

Emma: But Tha-

Me: No! Leave us alone please!!

I took my bag and I held their hands. I asked for takeaways. We waited a few minutes and we left....

We walked back to my flat in silence. Uyathandwa was crying. I didn't say anything I just let him be. I held their hands and we crossed the roads. We arrived in my flat I unlocked the door. Uyathandwa ran to my room. I didn't follow him. I had no strength to talk about his selfish father. Themba was nothing but a pig in my eyes. I sat next the couch with Alondwe.

Aloe: mamami?

Me: Laa Laa?

Aloe: Ngimboleke ubhuti ubaba wami?[should I borrow my brother my father?]

Me: No baby but don't tell him that your father is not his father because he will cry.

She nodded and we continued eating. I stood up and I went to check Uyathandwa. He was not on top of the bed.

Me: Uyathandwa??

EJ: Mama.

I went to him. He was building puzzles.

Me: You don't want to eat?

He shook his "No". I seriously didn't know what to say to him.

Me: Should I call your sister so that you can play with her?

He nodded. I stood up and I went back to Alondwe.

She was talking on the phone. She saw me and she handed the phone over to me.

Me: Who is it?

Aloe: He said he wants to speak to Ethan Junior's mother and I asked my mother he asked who I am I said I am Alondwe Laa Laa he said he is my uncle Themba he is Ethan junior's father.

I looked at her because she was talking waya waya. With no full stop or comma. I didn't expect her to tell me the whole conversation but she did. I took the phone.

Me: Go and play with your brother. Don't tell him that his father called.

She nodded and walked away. I looked at the phone. Themba was still on call. I placed the phone on my ear.

Me: Leave me alone wena!

Themba: I don't want you I want my son.

Me: You have a son with me? I don't have a son with you. So please ngehle!

Themba: Uyazihlanyisa yazi wena!

Me: Fusegi wena!!

Themba: I will come to you Thandeka. I want you to repeat those words in my face.

Me: Angisakusabi phela wena! Don't think you will come here and ruin everything that I have created out of my son. Leave us alone. You lied to us and we don't need you.

Themba: Just because you don't need me anymore. That doesn't mean my son doesn't need me.

Me: Why don't you play happy family with Kayla. And stop being a moody pregnant ass on me. Uyinja kabi wena!

Themba: Thandeka Hhaybo! I am still a man. I do believe I deserve some respect from you.

Me: Heeh! Respect from me? I ain't your wife.

Themba: Well you're!

Me: Udakiwe wena!

I hung up the call. And I went to my room. I took the white envelope and looked for the number that I had to call about the house. But I couldn't get ahold of the person. I emailed them. I went back to my room, I placed the envelope away. I bathed my kids and I put them on their pyjamas. Uyathandwa went to eat and we all watched TV. I was scared as hell. I didn't want Themba to find us. Later we all went to bed.

The following day. We woke up and we took a shower together. On the same time. We were singing "in the jungle". We were having a little shower concert. After showering we brushed our teeth and we wore summer clothes. We had breakfast. And we took a walk to Essenwood park. They played zwing and all those things that are on the park. After playing we went to the hotel opposite the park but far up the road. We ordered food and we ate there. I was tired to cook so I ordered takeaways and we walked back to my flat. It was getting late and I wasn't planning on sleeping in my flat with them. We arrived in my flat and we took a nap. We woke up late and we went to shower.

Me: You are hungry?

Them: Yes mommy.

I nodded and we stepped out of the shower. I dried them up and I put them on their pyjamas. I also did the same. I warmed up the food. I was much relaxed because it was late meaning Themba was not coming. We sat on the same couch. Uyathandwa prayed and we started eating.

EJ: Mama haa I was flying today. I was like shuuuuuuu in the air. Laa Laa was scared.

Aloe: I don't like flying. I was scared.

Me: But you did it today.

EJ: Me? Haa I was [he placed the food down and he ran around the house. With his arms wide open] Woooooh Woooooh!

Alondwe and I laughed at him. There was a knock on the door and he stopped.

Me: Go and hide in my room.

They giggled and ran to my room. I locked the door and I went to the main door. I took the plates first and I put it on the kitchen table.

I went to the door and I checked first and Themba in flesh was on the door. He knocked again. I didn't open. He knocked again. I didn't open.

Themba: I know you're inside.

Me: Go away Themba. I am sure your wife is going crazy now.

Themba: You're my real wife please open the door. I need to see my son.

Me: He's not here. I took him back home. I knew you were going to come here.

Themba: Bbe please?

Me: Bbe? How am I your Bbe?

Themba: Thandeka I am begging you. I have the key to your door.

I heard the sounds of keys. There was no running away. I had to face him. It was now or never. I stood up and unlocked the door. He looked up and I looked at him. He looked grown up and good looking. I left him at the door and I went to sit down. He closed the door and he sat next to me. I shifted awkwardly.

Themba: I don't bite.

Me: I didn't say you do. Why are you here? You left your wife in Cape Town.

Themba: You're my wife.

Me: Mxm.

Themba: Okay today is not about us can I see my boy?

Me: Your father killed him. I only have a child with Samkelo and some guy from America. You? I don't have a child with you.

Themba: Hhaybo Thandeka please! Don't even try to lie to me.

Me: You lied to us Themba. You moved on with your life and you are starting a family now. You can't just rock up here and tell me "I want my son" I have no son with you.

Themba: I was trying to protect you Thandeka.

Me: Protect me? By fucking another woman and she even fell pregnant!!! You were trying to protect me?

Themba: I had to do what I did to protect you against my father.

EJ:[from my room] Mom can we have our food.

Me: I didn't say talk. You love talking.

He giggled loudly.

Themba: Is that him?

Me: No that's my child with Mark not you. We raised him together while you were moaning and groaning. While you were busy trying to thrush in deeper and deeper. Grinding and doing all that shit.

Themba: Thandeka –

They both knocked at the door and said: "mom can we have our food" They both laughed. I stood up and I went to open the door. They ran to the coffee table and their food was not there. Themba looked at EJ. He had a puzzled look on his face. He was shocked.

Me: Your food is on the kitchen table.

EJ: Hello. [Themba didn't respond] Mom your friend can't talk?

Me: Go and get your food.

Alondwe dragged him by his arm. They went to the kitchen to get their food. They came back. Uyathandwa walked up straight to Themba. He gave him his dish.

EJ: Please feed me. [He didn't respond]

Aloe: Come to me I will feed you fast.

EJ: Laa Laa. You're a baby.

Me: Themba!!!!

He quickly snapped out of it.

Themba: Huh?

Ej: Please feed me.

He took his plate and put it on the couch. He lifted him up and placed him on his lap. He started feeding him.

Themba: How are you?

EJ: [swallowing] I am fine thanks. How are you?

Themba: I am fine. How old are you?

EJ: I am 2yrs old and you?

Themba:[chuckles] I am 26years old.

He placed his hands on his mouth and giggled loudly.

EJ: Do you know how old my mom is?

Themba: Yes. She's 22 years old.

EJ: [giggles] Laa Laa?

Themba: She's 3years old.

Alondwe smiled and looked at me. I smiled back at her.

EJ: My name is Ethan Junior. My mother is Trinity. My baby sister is Laa Laa.

Aloe: I am not a baby.

EJ: [laughing] She is my baby sister?

Themba: Yes. She's the baby sister.

Uyathandwa stuck out his tongue at Alondwe and he laughed. Alondwe looked at me with eyes that wanted to cry so bad.

Aloe: Mamami? [I picked her up]

Me: You're older than him Laa Laa.

Aloe: But your friend said I am a baby.

Me: He was kidding. Themba?

Themba: I am kidding dear.

Uyathandwa laughed.

EJ: What is your name?

Themba: I am Ethan.

EJ: The uncle we saw yesterday said my father is Ethan. My mother said my dad will come and see me on my third year birthday.

Themba looked at me and I looked away.

Themba: I am your father.

EJ:.....

Uyathandwa looked at me and then back at his father. He quickly jumped off Themba's lap and ran to my room. Themba stood up. I stopped him.

Me: Leave him like that. He will come back if he wants too.

Themba: But Thandeka maybe he is hurting.

Me: You wanted him to scream and say oh daddy dearest?

Themba: Of course not.

Uyathandwa came back. He was holding his backpack that he used to carry when going to his daycare. He took out his scrap book. The front page had my picture and his daddy's picture. He looked at the picture and he looked back at Themba. He stood up and placed his hands on his waist.

EJ: You're my daddy?

Themba: Yes I am.

EJ: But mom said my dad will come on my 3rd birthday.

Themba: I came early because I missed your first and second birthday. Do you think you can forgive daddy for not coming on your birthday?

EJ: We will live together? Me, you, my mom and my baby sister?

Themba: You want us to live together?

EJ: Yes.

Me: Don't promise him something you won't fulfill.

Themba: Yes boy we will live together forever.

EJ: You will go to the beach and play soccer with me.

Themba: Yes.

He smiled and hugged his neck. Themba hugged him tightly. He had tears streaming down on his face.

Themba: I love you boy. Daddy loves you.

EJ: I love you too Daddy.

I smiled and I held Alondwe tightly. It was an emotional moment but I was scared because Themba was going to go back to his life. Then what was going to happen to my son? They let go of each other. Themba placed him on his lap again.

EJ: Mommy can I call Max and tell him that I found my dad?

Me: We don't have his number boy.

EJ: I have his mother's number.

Me: We will call him tomorrow.

EJ: Okay. You will sleep with us?

Me: No baby he won't sleep with us. There is no space for him..

EJ: But mom –

Me: No! Uyathandwa he's not sleeping with us

EJ: I will go with him..

Me: Excuse me?? Themba please leave.

Themba: This is my son Thandeka. You can't keep him away from me. He wants to go with me so he must go with me.

Me: You want that crazy bitch to raise my son?

Themba: I didn't say that.

Me: Yazi yini? Sukumani nobabili nihambe! [Stand up both of you and leave]

Themba: You don't mean that.

Me: Ngikhathele ukwenziwa islima mina. I was the one having sleepless nights. These babies were crying for me. I nursed them and did everything to raise them. When they are up and running. Old enough not to be a nuisance you all want to take them away from me! Samkelo did the same and now it's you? Take him and leave! Leave me alone. Take this with you!! I took out my engagement ring and I threw it on his face. I picked up my daughter and I walked up to my room. I closed the door and locked it.

Me: Climb the bed and sleep.

She nodded and climbed the bed. I switched off the lights and I joined her. I cried silently until I fell asleep.

The following morning I was woken up by my phone. It was ringing. I picked up. Andile was calling.

Me: Andile.

Andile: Hey Thandeka are you fine?

Me: Yes I am fine. Wena?

Andile: I am fine sis wami. I am really sorry about the other day. I was just angry. I needed you this years. I wanted you to be the first person I tell about planning on proposing. I wanted to go with you when choosing a ring for Shemah but you were not there. It wasn't nice sisi it was painful. But I believe you had your own reasons.

Me: I am really sorry Andile. I didn't mean to hurt you like that bhuti wami. I am sorry.

Andile: It's Okay. So how is my nephew?

Me: I don't know. He's not here with me. I am with Alondwe.

Andile: Where is he?

Me: His father rocked up here last night and took him. In fact he chose to go with him. I let them go.

Andile: But Themba is your husband.

Me: He is married to another woman. I can't be his second best Andile.

Andile: He's married?

Me: Yes and I am so not going to be his second wife

Andile: What about your son?

Me: He chose daddy right? So he must go with daddy. I am seriously tired of this shit. Samkelo did the same. I raised Alondwe. I was the one who had sleepless nights ekhala ubusuku bonke and when it suited his balls he took her away from me. Themba is doing the same in fact his son chose him over me no! Man I deserve a break. I have been trying to be a good mother but it doesn't show. I am fed up Brah!

Andile: Yoh! Baby Daddies drama. But Mrs Smith you have to cool down.

Me: I am not Mrs Smith so please bhuti don't make me cut my hair off right now.

Andile: I understand your pain. But I hope things will go just fine.

Me: I don't know and for now I will focus on finding a job for next year.

Andile: Okay. We will talk later okay?

Me: Okay bye.

I hung up the call and I stood up. I went to the bathroom. I took a shower and I brushed my teeth. I went to the kitchen and cooked breakfast for my daughter and I. When she woke up. I

bathed her and I dressed her up nicely. We went to have breakfast.

Aloe: Mommy?

Me: Hm?

Aloe: Uyathandwa will come back?

Me: I don't know baby.

She nodded and we ate. After eating, I took my CV, my documents and I drove to the nearest internet cafe. I was with Alondwe. I applied for a job. On every Architectural position available around Durban and Johannesburg. After that we drove to Pavilion. We went for a shopping. A part of me missed my talkative son. But I tried to suck it up. Alondwe was a quiet child but she had that little fun. She wanted a new doll house. I bought one for her and we bought a few groceries. We drove back to my flat. Along the way I received a call from Mrs Dewan. She was the one who was going to handle my house issue. I was going to meet up with her when she was back in town. It was really late and it was dark outside. Alondwe was fast asleep. She was tired. We arrived and I took a few of our plastic bags. I picked up Alondwe. I walked up to my flat. I tried to unlock the door but it wasn't locked. Okay? I slowly opened the door and I got something I wasn't expecting to get or to see.

Me: Hhaybo? Kwenzakalani? [What's happening]

Themba and his family were sitting on my lounge. They all looked at me. It was his mother, his grandma, his uncle Buzwe, and Themba's pregnant wife. Themba stood up and he took Alondwe. He went to put her down in my room. Uyathandwa ran up to me. I picked him up and I kissed him all over his face. He giggled.

EJ: Hello mommy.

Me: Hello boy. How are you?

EJ: I am fine mom and you mom?

Me: I am fine. I see you're here with your family.

EJ: Yes. I have a Maikhuru [Makhulu]

He buried his face on his hands. Everyone laughed at him. We went to sit down.

Me: Molweni

Them: Molo. [Themba came back and sat down]

We spoke Xhosa because Uyathandwa was with us but I will write in English.

Grandma: We are happy to see Makoti. How have you been?

Me: Nothing has been easy but I had to be strong for my son.

Mrs Smith: We are really sorry. We didn't try anything to look for you but there was nothing we could do.

Me: Oh okay. So why are you all here. I mean I am not trying to be disrespectful but I don't understand why are you here. And worse with the wife of my ex?

Kayla: At least you know that he is your ex.

Themba: Well that's why we're here. To fix the fact that I am not your ex.

Me: Is your wife on medication first?

Themba: Thandeka!!! For once can you quit the sarcasm and show some respect!!!

EJ: Daddy why are you shouting at mommy?

Themba: When adults are talking you don't talk unless they are talking to you do you understand?

He looked at me and back at his father. He nodded.

EJ: Mommy can I go and play with my toys in your room? I will sleep if I am tired.

Me: Okay baby go.

I put him down and he slowly went to my room.

Me: I would have appreciated it if you were more nicer to him.

Themba: I am trying to discipline him and you're telling me I must be nice.

Me: That is my son Themba. You can't talk to him like you're talking to some crazy child.

Themba: He's my son too! How I speak to him is non of your business!

Me: Well it is do you understand!! Uyathandwa is –

Grandma: ENOUGH!! BOTH OF YOU!!!

We both shut up!

Grandma: What is this? Why are you two behaving like this?

Themba: No Makhulu Thandeka doesn't respect me. All I want is respect from her but she can't do that.

Me: But I was just telling you about my feelings.

Grandma: A child needs to be disciplined when he's wrong. There's nothing wrong that Gqibelo did by disciplining Lelethu. He was not talking to him but you.

I didn't say anything. I just felt like Bangijwayela kabi nje. Themba looked at me, he was expecting a "sorry" but I wasn't going to say it. I just looked at him.

Buzwe: Makoti I can see that you're still angry at Gqibelo but all he did, was to protect you.

Me: Why is your wife here?

Kayla: We are trying to help you.

Me: Help me?

Mrs Smith: That's not why we're here. We are here to talk about a way forward because you're literally our wife.

Kayla: Excuse me? Does my father in law knows about this?

Themba: Kayla my dad doesn't know.

Kayla: I am your wife by law and by tradition.

Themba: Actually no. You're my wife by tradition not by Law.

Kayla: What? But we did a white wedding?

Themba: Yes but the Pastor was a fake and our marriage certificate is fake. That's why I didn't encourage you to do a new ID.

Kayla: No! You're lying.

Me: Heee!

Themba: Look I was forced to marry you. I did the traditional wedding but by Law you're not my wife. I wanted to marry Thandeka and make her my lawful wedded wife.

Kayla: We have a child on the way. And I am still your wife. It may not be by law but the ancestors know me as your wife. And I won't allow you to marry Thandeka.

Me: So Themba you want to make me your second wife? Huh? Are we in Thathe here? this is Muvhango?

Themba: Thandeka please.

Me: No. Kayla will be Vho Masindi? I will be Catherine? Think again Brah. I ain't going to be your second wife.

Buzwe: We have paid Lobolo for you.

Me: I wasn't there.

Mrs Smith: That doesn't mean anything because we knew that you wanted to marry him. And your father accepted it.

Me: What about your husband?

Mrs Smith: He is not one of our worries. He is nursing his life. We are here to make things right.

Me: I would like to talk to Themba alone.

Buzwe: That's fair enough.

They stood up and left. They were going to Themba's flat. The wife didn't stand up. I looked at her. And she didn't move.

Me: Sisi. I said Themba not you.

Kayla: This is my husband. And whatever you want to talk to him. I will listen to it.

Me: Themba please stand up.

He stood up and I stood up too. The wife sat down. I went closer to him. I grabbed him by his collar and I kissed the shit out of his lips. He kissed me back. I was getting wet as fuck and his wife separated us. We were both breathing heavily. She was fuming. She was holding her tummy with one hand. It wasn't that big yet. She gave me one fire slap. My cheek was burning.

Themba: Kayla! What are you doing?

Kayla: This bitch is disrespecting me big time.

Me: Themba is mine wena. He was forced to marry you.

She grabbed me by my hair. I screamed. Themba tried to separate us but Kayla hit him by her elbow. He fell off.

Me: Leave me alone. You're hurting me!

Kayla: You think you'll sabotage my marriage.

Themba separated us. He was holding Kayla. She threw her phone on me. It hit my chest painfully. I slapped her. She screamed.

Themba: Thandeka she's pregnant. Don't fight back!

Me: She must stop provoking me.

She yanked herself out of Themba's hold. She pushed him off and Themba fell off again. He hurt his ankle with the couch. I don't know how but I saw him groaning holding his ankle.

Kayla grabbed my hair my again. "Don't \_\_fight her\_\_ bbe please" Themba screamed in pain. I tried so hard not to fight her but she punched me on my stomach. I was more than angry. I pushed her off me and she fell on her stomach. She fell on top of my glass coffee table and it cracked. I held my mouth.

Themba: THANDEKA WHAT DID I SAY TO YOU??? Look at what you've done!

I quickly kneeled down and I turned her over. I made her lie on her back. Themba crawled up to us. She was bleeding. She was out.

Me: Themba she's bleeding.

Themba: You see what you've done Thandeka?

Me: Don't blame me. I asked you if she's on her medication. And you saw her. She's the first one who went crazy on me!

Themba: I told you not to fight her!

Me: You're the one who brought your lunatic pregnant wife here and –

I didn't finish the sentence. He slapped me hard that as I was kneeling down. I landed on the floor. I held my cheek.

Themba: She may be crazy but now she's carrying my daughter. What you can do is help me get her to the hospital and stop being disrespectful!!

I didn't respond. I stood up and I assisted him. We walked out. I called Liam and asked him to look after my kids. His girlfriend went to them. While Liam carried Kayla to Themba's car because Themba was limping. I thanked him and I had to drive because Themba had an ankle injury. I drove to City hospital. They helped us immediately. We sat on the waiting area in silence for hours without any one telling us what was happening.

Me: I am sorry Themba.

He didn't respond. I decided to call Liam and check up on my kids. They were fine. Finally the Doctor came. Themba tried to stand up immediately.

Themba: What happened Doctor?

Doc: We did everything we could to save them both but we couldn't. I am sorry Sir.

Themba: No! What do you mean?

Doc: The baby didn't make Sir.

Themba: [crying] No! No! My baby girl! She was innocent in all this. My little Princess! No Doctor Please!

Doc: I am sorry Sir.

Me:

The Doctor tapped his shoulder. And he left. I sat next to Themba. He was crying.

Me: Themba I am sorry.

Themba: .....

Me: It was an accident. I am really sorry.

Themba: Please leave me alone.

Me: Themba I –

Themba: I SAID GET OUT OF MY FACE WOMAN!!!

I quickly stood up and I took a few steps away.

Themba: Don't go with my car keys.

Me: Oh I am sorry.

I put the keys next to him. I had no money and I didn't have a phone to call the cab. I had to walk to my flat. From the hospital to my flat. It wasn't a long distance. I was a bit scared because it was late but there were people on the road, I tried to be brave. I arrived in my flat safe, Liam and his girlfriend were playing with my kids.

Me: Hey guys.

My kids ran up to me. They didn't hug me because my clothes had blood.

Me: Thanks for cleaning up here for me.

Liam: No problem.

EJ: What happened mom?

Me: Mommy was helping someone who got injured.

EJ: Okay. Where is daddy?

Me: He is busy for now but he'll come back some other time [he nodded and smiled]. Hello Nophiko. [I kissed them]

Aloe: Hello Dinangwe.

Me:[smiling] Who told you that I am Dinangwe?

Aloe: Daddy told me.

Me: Ncoah. Your daddy is a very sweet man.

She giggled.

Me: Thank you so much guys.

Them: Our pleasure.

They stood up and left.

Me: Mommy will shower and I will join you later Okay?

They nodded and I went to shower. I cried inside the shower. It was so painful. Knowing that I had a hand on the death of the little baby girl. It was very hard. And Themba was already blaming me for it. After showering I did all the necessities and I went back to my kids. They were fast asleep.

Uyathandwa had his head on Alondwe's lap. I carried them to bed. And I went to eat something. I took my phone and I called dad.

He picked up on 4th ring.

Me: [crying] I am a bad person daddy. I killed his daughter.

Dad: What are you talking about?

Me: It was an accident daddy I swear.

Dad: What happened? What are you talking about?

Me: I was... [I told him everything]

Dad: No my baby it was not your fault. A person with bipolar disorder is a dangerous person at times. They are capable of anything and they had power even to take a giant man down. It must've been painful when she grabbed you by your hair. You were only trying to make her get away from you. Even if they can blame you but know that. It wasn't your fault.

Me: I shouldn't have come back to South Africa dad. I was happy in America. Though I was lonely

sometimes but there was no drama. Uyathandwa and I had everything. And Mark was supportive. I think I should go back and leave South Africa.

Dad: Running away won't help you baby.

Me: Dad can you please do me a huge favor.

Dad: What?

Me: Please help go to his family after Christmas and apologize.

Dad: Are you sure?

Me: Yes.

Dad: Okay. I will talk to the elders. Sleep well my baby.

Me: You too daddy.

I hung up the call and I wiped my tears. I stood up and I joined my kids in bed. I tried calling Themba but he didn't answer. I left a voice message saying I am sorry.

>>>>>>>>>>

TWO WEEK LATER. I was expecting worst from Themba and his family but actually they never spoke to me after what happened. I tried calling Themba but he wasn't taking any of my calls and the other family members too. This got me worried. What if they plot to kill me? I didn't know what to do and what to say. Ethan junior was no longer fussing about daddy. Why? I don't know but he never asked about him nor talk about him. I didn't bother myself by asking him or talking about his father. Mrs Dewan came back in town and we fixed the issue of the house. The house was located at La Lucia. It was a beautiful house not a double storey house. It was a four bedroom house, master bedroom with a walk in bathroom. Three guest bedrooms. Two bathrooms. The kitchen, dining area and the lounge. One garage. Two room back room and a pool. Someone was renting the house and the money was saved up for me to buy my own furniture. The family who was renting the house left with their furniture. Mrs Dewan assisted me buy furniture for my house. I hired people to everything for me because I had kids to look after. They were still working on the house. After that I was going to move in with my kids.

It was a Saturday morning. Samkelo was coming. He was taking the kids out. I was going to check the progress of people on my house. My babies were looking good and they were ready to go. There was a knock on the door. They both ran to the door and Alondwe opened because she could reach the handle. Samkelo was at the door. Alondwe hugged his leg. Uyathandwa stepped back and smiled at them. Samkelo picked Alondwe up and Uyathandwa too. I could see that my son was more than happy that he picked him up too.

Sam: How are you two beautiful children?

Them: We're fine and you?

Sam: I am fine. You're still treating mommy well?

Them: Yes. [He sat down with them]

Sam: Good. Sawubona MaDinangwe.

Me: How are you Ndunakazi?

Sam: I am fine and you?

Me: I am fine. Please call me when you guys are on your way back so that I can also come back.

Sam: Okay. Where are you going vele?

Me: I have some important things to take care of. At the other side of Durban.

Sam: Okay. Let's go kids. Here's your favorite.

Me: thanks.

They screamed. I took the bag I packed for them, I put the chocolate on the fridge and I walked them out. I kissed them goodbye and they left. I wasn't going to tell anyone about my house beside my family. And they also knew that nobody must know my new address. I went back to my flat to shower. I took a long shower singing on the shower. I stepped out and brushed my teeth. I went back to my room to lotion.

I unwrapped my body and I moisturized my body. I wore my red lace panties.

Voice: Hi.

I got a great fright and I looked at the door. Themba was standing by the door looking at me. I stared at him without a word.

Themba: I am sorry but I did knock. There was no response so I invited myself in.

I nodded and I didn't say anything. He walked closer to me and I shifted back a little. He held my hand.

Themba: I won't hurt you.

He caress my face. I looked down and he lifted my chin up. He kissed me slowly. I kissed him back. The kiss changed from slow to wild. I was wet and I could feel his hard manhood against my thigh. I unbuttoned his shirt and I took it off. He lifted me up and walked with me to the bed. He threw me on top of it and he went on top of me. He kissed my neck and I held on to his arms. I moaned in pleasure. He moved to my breasts and kissed them moving down to my honey pot. He took off my panties using his teeth. He took off his pants and we were both naked. He opened my legs wider and he licked me using his tongue. I pushed his head deeper. I pressed my toes on my bed and I moaned loudly. He stopped and he came back up to kiss me while he was trying to rub himself in but I was too tight. 2years? I was more like a virgin Hhaybo! I screamed and shifted back. He held my waist and pulled me closer to him. "Open your eyes Thandeka and look at me" he said on a soft tone. I shook my head "NO". " Please" he begged. I opened them slowly and looked at him. He looked at me. He tried moving in again making sure that I don't jump off like I did before by holding my waist tightly. I pressed my teeth together and I tried to endure the pain. He was finally in. He thrush in deep and deeper. I dug my nails on his skin and he groaned as I moaned. He was making love to me not fucking me. I was on cloud triple infinite. We finally climaxed and he passed out on my chest trying to catch his breath. We then laid on our backs in silence. He broke the silence.

Themba: That was my goodbye. After what happened I realized that you have a lot of anger towards me. Not that I blame you for that anger but it's not good for us. It won't take us anywhere. Loosing my daughter was painful. But I don't want to loose Uyathandwa too. So I will come regularly to visit him. And he can also visit my family. Kayla is my wife already and there's nothing I can do about that. And you don't want to be my legal wife so it's better if we just end things between us and move on with our lives. So yeah this is it.

Me: OH.

I quickly stepped out of the bed. I picked up his clothes and handed them over to him.

Me: Look please wear your clothes and see your way out. I have somewhere that I have to be. If you want to come and visit Uyathandwa. Please call first don't just show up. And you can leave my key there.

Themba: Okay before I go. I would like to see him where is he?

Me: Samkelo was taking Alondwe out and he wanted to go with them so you can wait here or come back later.

Themba: I will wait.

I nodded and I went inside the bathroom to wash the sex smell on my body. I cried silently. My heart was broken and it was painful. After some time. I stepped out of the shower. I dried my body and I lotion. I wore a white short tight dress. It embraced my curves and ass nicely. I wore black stilettos and I styled my hair. I changed the bed covers and I took my handbag. I walked out of my room. I went to the kitchen and grabbed a box of Ferrero Roche chocolates that Samkelo bought for me. It was the only thing that was going to make me feel better and hyper instead of being broken. I walked out with the box.

Me: Good bye then Themba.

Themba: Goodbye. You look beautiful.

Me: Thanks

I left Themba sitting on the couch. I drove straight to my house crying while crushing the chocolate with my teeth

I arrived in my house and the people were cleaning. I greeted them.

Me: Hello guys?

Them: Hey mam

Me: I guess you're done?

Guy1: Yes so you can move in anytime when you're ready.

Guy2: But for now you can help us clean.

The others laughed. I laughed too.

Me: I see you want to make me dirty. Did you see my dress? [They laughed] but let me take off my stilettos.

I took them off and I assisted them clean the house. They all cheered for me and blew whistles. I smiled. We finished up and they went to freshen up while I looked around my house. I had all my beautiful drawings framed and hanged on my lounge wall besides those bad drawings I drew when Themba threatened to kill me. I went to my room and it was beautiful. The wall was painted in purple and white. I cleaned up myself too and I went to the lounge. I sat on the couch and watched TV while waiting for them to come back. They finally came back.

Me: Let's go to La Lucia mall and have a bite before you all go home.

Them: Never say No to food.

We all laughed and we drove to La Lucia mall. We went to Wimpy and we ordered. After waiting the food finally arrived. I made the electronic payment using my phone. I was paying for their work at the house. We ate. After eating we bid each other farewell and we walked our separate ways. I drove straight to my flat.

I arrived in my flat. Alondwe was on the lounge playing with her daddy.

Me: I said call me when you guys are on your way back Samkelo.

Sam: Your fiancé was here so I saw no need to call you.

Me: Oh. [I sat down]

Sam: Are you alright?

Me: Yes I am fine. Laa Laa come and sit with mommy so that you can tell me about your trip. Where is my son Samkelo?

Sam: He left with his father, he said he will bring him back later.

Me: Okay. Laa Laa.

They both stood up. Samkelo sat next to me.

Aloe: Mina ngicela ukuhlala phezu kwakho no baba. Nizolala [can I sit on top of you and dad. I will sleep]

She giggled. Samkelo picked her up and she made her sleep on us. Her head was on my lap and her bums on her daddy's lap. I held her hand and I rested my head on Samkelo's shoulder.

Me: What did you do today?

Aloe: We played soccer at the beach with daddy and Uyathandwa.

Me: Oh. Why didn't you tell me I was going to join you. So that it can be girls against the guys.

Sam: You were busy and I remembered that your son once asked me to play soccer with him on the beach.

Me: [kissing his cheek] That's so sweet of you.

Aloe: What about me mom? I am not sweet?

Me:[laughing] You're the sweetest girl on earth just like your mama.

Sam: Not like daddy?

Me: No.

Aloe: Just like both of you.

Sam: Clever girl.

We laughed.

There was a knock on the door. I was lazy to stand up and check.

Me: Come in if you're not here to bite us.

Samkelo and Alondwe laughed. The door swung open and Uyathandwa came in running with a big truck on his hands. Themba was with him. He had other plastic bags.

EJ: Mommy!

Me: Sthandwa senhliziyo yami.

EJ: Huh?

Sam: love of my heart.

He smiled and kissed my cheek.

EJ: Please teach me that I want to say that too

Me: Say sthandwa.

EJ: [smiling] Shwain –

He laughed and looked up. Alondwe laughed at him.

Themba: I bought a few things for him.

Me: Okay. Did you have a good time today?

EJ: Yes mommy. I love South Africa.

Sam: American kids.

Me: Fusegi Samkelo.

Aloe: Hawu! Mamami.

Me: Hawu! I am sorry my Laa Laa.

I tickled her and she laughed. Themba stood up. I stopped tickling her.

EJ: You're leaving daddy?

Themba: Yes boy I am leaving.

EJ: But you promised we will live together. Why are you leaving?

Me: I told you not promise him something you won't fulfil.

Themba: I didn't know that things were going to turn out this way.

Me: And who's problem is that?

Themba: I am sorry.

Me: You're saying it to the wrong person.

He came towards Uyathandwa. He kneeled down before him and he held his hands.

Themba: I am so sorry boy.

Uyathandwa looked at me with teary eyes.

EJ: Mommy? He promised.

Me: Okay boy let me teach you something today. Some adults don't keep their promises.

EJ: But mommy you keep all your promises. Uncle Mark kept all his promises. Laa Laa's father kept his promise and he played soccer with me at the beach. Why can't my daddy keep his promises?

Sam: YOH!! LE ngane

Me: Themba??

Themba: Andazi ndithini. [I don't know what to say] There's nothing I can do because you won't agree if I take him.

Me: So that he can live with Kayla? No!

Themba: Nguwe obulele umntwana wakhe [you killed her child]

Me: It was an accident. Even if so! You're trying to say my son must fill in the position of a dead child?

His jaw tightened.

Sam: Let's go and open the toys on your mother's room. Guys come.

He stood up and they stood up. They took the plastic bags and went to my room.

I was left with the furious Themba.

Themba: You know how to hurt me right?

Me: I wasn't hurting you. I was telling you the truth. You're upsetting my son so I must be happy just because an accident happened and your daughter died. No you're being unfair.

Themba: What must I do then Thandeka?

Me: Leave! Just leave us alone. I am sorry your daughter died but you'll be fine. So will be my son without you.

Themba: You're saying that because you are ready to move back to Samkelo right?

Me: Excuse me?

Themba: I can see you're already playing happy family dragging my child along.

Me: You know what? Samkelo is a much better father than you. He's more responsible and involved on his daughter's life. He also has his own girlfriend but he never puts her first and his child second. Uyathandwa wanted to go with them and he had no problem with that. He's better than you but that doesn't mean I want him back or you for that matter. You broke up with me and hurt my son in the process so do both of us a favor leave us alone. Go and complete the Smith family tree.

Themba: I love you Thandeka but everything is against us.

Me: Mxm. Just go Brah.

Themba: Can I say goodbye to him.

Me: Uyathandwa!

EJ: [from my room] Mommy?

Me: Your father wants to say goodbye.

EJ: Bye.

Me: Ain't you gonna come and hug him or walk him out baby?

EJ: No.

Me: I suppose you heard that yourself.

Themba: I will just go then.

I nodded and he walked up to the door.

Me: Themba? [He turned back]

Themba: Mmh?

Me: Are you still working as a chemical engineer?

Themba: Yes.

Me: Did you take the critical illness insurance?

Themba: No I didn't.

Me: Please do it.

Themba: If it means so much to you. I will take it then.

Me: Thank you. Bye.

Themba: Bye.

He left. I couldn't help but cry. I didn't realize that I was making a loud sob. Until I felt Samkelo holding me tight.

Sam: Don't cry Thandeka.

Me: It's so painful Samkelo. I love him so much but now he's just going to be with someone else for the rest of his life.

Sam: You will get over it.

Me: How? Huh? How because he gave me so many things that will make it impossible for me to forget him. I made him like this.

Sam: No you didn't.

Me: Yes I did. Themba was a very nice guy. He was a good guy. Not perfect but he would do anything to make me happy. He tried his best to put a smile on my face when there was nothing but sorrow. But I ruined him. I never gave him the respect that he deserves as a man. I was always going against his word. He wanted what's best for me and I sabotaged all that starting by trying to kill his child. I took advantage of his kindness and his unconditional

love. I unleashed the beast that he had buried a long time ago. Why do I always change people's lives? I changed you for better. And I changed him for worst. Nomsa, Maud and dad I twisted them. why Samkelo? Why?

Sam: You're strong Thandeka. You did get over our painful break up. Surely you will get through this one too. But for now focus on yourself and the kids. If he's meant to come back, Fate will bring him back to you. But I know that you belong to me. But if you have to get through him first to get to me then so be it. I will support every decision you take because I care about you.

I laughed weakly and hit him playfully. I rested my head on his shoulder. He kissed my head.

Sam: You're a big girl! You'll get through this.

Me: Yeah. Thank you hey.

Sam: It's Okay mama ka Laa Laa.

I smiled and closed my eyes.

TWO WEEKS LATER. I tried to forget about Themba. Samkelo spent the whole two weeks with us. He was sleeping at the BnB which was our neighboring building. We did everything that the kids wanted us to do with them. My kids were more than happy. I was also happy to see them smiling. Samkelo was indeed a wonderful father. He was 22yrs old but he cared a lot for his daughter. I was called in for an interview and got a job in a Construction company in Durban. I was going to start working on the beginning of January. I was more than happy. It was easy for me to get a job because I had experience. My dad and my brother were more than happy for me.

I had to tell Samkelo about my house but I told him not to tell anyone about it. On the beginning of the second week we moved in to my house. I left my flat as it was. I took our clothes only. And other important things. Samkelo was sleeping in my house but on the guestroom. My kids had their own rooms but they were sleeping with me. They were happy at our new house. Themba used to call but I never spoke to him. I always gave Uyathandwa the phone.

It was a Friday morning. Samkelo was going to Empangeni. Sanelisiwe was having a graduation party so as her boyfriend he had to be there. We were having breakfast before he could leave.

Aloe: Daddy you will come back here?

Sam: No. You're going to visit your grandfather and your uncle for Christmas so I will go home. But after Christmas you will come to me. We are going to visit grandma Empangeni.

Aloe: I will see Simthande and Melokuhle?

Sam: Yes.

She smiled and continued eating her food. I was feeding Uyathandwa because when he likes he acts like a new born baby sometimes like an adult.

Me: Hawu Samkelo do you have Thobelani's number? I tried to contact him on Facebook but he is unavailable.

Sam: Yoh! Would you believe me when I can tell you that he cried when you were nowhere to be found.

Me: You're lying.

Sam: Serious. He called me.

Me: Yoh! Ntwana yami madoda.

He laughed and gave me his number. I saved them and I made a mental note to call him later. We finished and we washed the dishes with Samkelo. I called my kids and we went to the car. I buckled them on their seats. I stepped inside the driver's seat and Samkelo on the passenger's side. I drove to Durban station where he was going to take a taxi to Richards bay. Along the way my phone rang. It was Themba. I gave it to Samkelo.

Me: Please answer it and give it to Uyathandwa. [He took it] Uyathandwa talk to your daddy on the phone.

EJ: Okay.

Samkelo answered it for him and gave it to him. He took it.

EJ: Hello daddy\_\_ Yes\_\_ We're driving Laa Laa's daddy to the airport. He will fly today. [Samkelo and I looked at each other. We laughed silently because he was lying] My grandfather?\_\_ I don't know him\_\_ Yes\_\_ Yes\_\_ mommy is driving\_\_ I will tell her\_\_ I love you too.

He handed the phone to Samkelo. He took it.

EJ: Mommy, daddy said my grandfather wants to see me. He is sick. He said please call him back.

Me: Okay. Bakudinga uma sebefa.

Samkelo laughed.

Me: Serious yazi. Don't laugh.

Sam: Okay I am sorry then.

We made it to Durban station. We stepped out of the car. Samkelo unbuckled the kids on their seats. He hugged the kids. And then me. We broke the hug and he looked at me. He smiled.

Me: What?

Sam: La Lucia loves you too much.

Me: Why are you saying that? [I laughed]

Sam: You're a serious yellow bone now.

Me: Uyahlanya wena. [I laughed]

Sam: But you look more beautiful.

Me: You see that when we are in Durban station.

Sam: No I didn't realize this beauty until now.

I laughed and I picked up Uyathandwa. Samkelo picked Alondwe up. We walked to the taxi.

Me: You're lucky hey. It needed you qha.

Sam: Yes I am.

He kissed Alondwe's cheeks and he put her down. I held her hand. They fist bump with Uyathandwa. He kissed my forehead and stepped inside the taxi.

Me: Goodbye. Send our love ku Makoti lapho.

He laughed and said: Okay I will.

We walked back to my car. I buckled them at the back and I took my seat. My phone rang. I connected it to my car first before starting the engine and I answered it.

Me: What's wrong with your father?

Themba: He's sick and he wanted to see you and Uyathandwa.

Me: Weee! You can come and take your son but Mina sorry bhuti angizi lapho. Angihlanyi phela Mina.

Themba: Mmm.

Me: What?

Themba: Uyeyisa yezwa?

Me: Awu. Tomorrow I am going to Johannesburg so you will come and take him there. I will have to talk to your mother first though. I don't want my son to sleep in your house.

Themba: Okay but Kayla doesn't know that you pushed her and she lost the baby. But thanks.

Me: I don't care if she knows or not but I don't want my son to live with you and her.

Themba: Okay.

Me: Sure.

I hung up the call and I concentrated on the road.

Me: Uyathandwa your daddy will come and take you. You two will fly to Cape Town to see

your grandfather.

EJ: We will fly?

Me: Yes.

EJ: Wooh! Wooh!

Me: Okay hold it please!

They laughed.

We arrived in the house and we sat on the lounge. They watched Tom and Jerry. I called Themba's mom. She picked up.

Mrs Smith: Emily Smith hello.

Me: Hi. It's Thandeka. Uyathandwa's mother.

Mrs Smith: Oh hey dear how are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Mrs Smith: Besides my husband being sick. I am fine.

Me: I am sorry about that. I wanted to ask if you could take my son during his visit. Please don't make him sleep with Themba and his wife.

Mrs Smith: You're not coming?

Me: No. I am not coming mama.

Mrs Smith: Please dear. My husband needs to see you and your son. He have something to say to both of you.

Me: If it's an apology I forgive him.

Mrs Smith: But sisi –

Me: No. I am not coming. Please take care of my son for me.

Mrs Smith: Okay dear I will. Thanks.

Me: Okay.

I hung up the call.

Me: Come let's go and pack our clothes.

Them: We're still watching mama.

Me: I won't pack your clothes then.

They laughed and stood up. I switched off the TV. We went to pack our clothes. After packing we went to shower and wore our pyjamas because we were going nowhere. I took the drawing pad papers and we sat down on my room. I gave them the papers and paint.

Me: Paint whatever drawing you want.

They nodded and we started painting. I painted them and me. But it wasn't clear because it was a painting not a drawing. We finished.

Aloe: I painted us.

It was three sticks with heads. I smiled.

Me: It's beautiful. Uyathandwa?

EJ: I painted my wife.

I looked at it. It was sticks with a head. I ululated. They laughed.

Me:[singing] Bengingazi ngyombon'umakoti eh unyana wami ujongile this time.

They laughed.

EJ: She's beautiful mom?

Me: Yes boy.

They laughed. I kissed them. We pasted the paintings on my bathroom wall, they were ugly bo! They deserve to be pasted on the bathroom. I went to cook while they watched TV. After cooking. We ate and went to bed early because I was going to drive to Johannesburg the following morning.

In the morning. I woke up early. I took a shower and I lotion. I wore my gown and I went to make breakfast while my kids were still sleeping. I finished breakfast and I went to wake

Alondwe up first.

Me: Laa Laa wake up.

Aloe: Mmm mmm mamami mm mm.

Me: Hhaybo! Alondwe man vuka!

She cried and woke up. She sat up straight and rubbed her eyes. I picked her up and I walked to the bathroom with her. She didn't stop crying. I took off her clothes. I mixed water on my bathtub and I put her inside the tub. I bathed her.

Me: Ngizokushaya ke mina manje. Thul'umsindo Alondwe!

She stopped crying and I continued bathing her. I finished and I picked her up. I walked with her to her room. I put her on a floral summer dress and a nappy since we were going to have a long drive. I went to kitchen and fed her breakfast.

Me: Go and watch cartoons. I will wake your brother up.

She nodded and went to the lounge. I followed her and I turned on the TV for her. I went to Uyathandwa. He was fast asleep. I shook him and he didn't wake up.

Me: Wake up! Uyathandwa.

EJ: No mommy.

I had no time to entertain him. I took off his clothes and his nappy. I picked him up and I bathed him.

EJ: Mommy why are we waking up now?

Me: We're going to visit uncle Andile and grandfather.

He nodded and closed his eyes. He was sleepy. I washed his face with cold water. And I did all the necessary things to be done. After everything. I took our bags buckled Alondwe on her seat.

Me: Uyathandwa come and wear your nappy.

EJ: No. I am old.

Me: Hhaybo! We will have a long drive boy. Come.

He shook his head "NO"

Me: You always wear your nappy at night. What's wrong with wearing it now?

EJ: It's not at night now.

Me: If you dare urinate in my car. I will beat you. I tell you.

He giggled and ran to the car. I took a wet stick and I put it on my front seat.

Aloe: Wear your nappy mommy will beat you.

EJ: mm mm I won't urinate.

Aloe: Look.

She lifted up her dress and she showed him her nappy. Uyathandwa laughed at her. I buckled him correctly and I locked my house. I drove off.

They fell asleep because it was still early. After 4 hours. I stopped for food. I bought food and I went back to my car. I woke them up. I unbuckled them. Uyathandwa was wet. I looked at him and he looked down.

Me: What do I now?

EJ: Change me mommy.

Me: Didn't I say wear your nappy?

He put his hands on his mouth. I took them out and I held them. I took my stick and I whipped his hands. He cried. I stopped.

Me: Next time you will listen?

He quickly nodded and he sniffed. I opened the boot just for ukuzisitha. I changed him and I made him wear his nappy. I changed Alondwe's nappy. I fed them and we were back to the road. After three hours we were in Johannesburg. They were sleeping.

I drove straight home. I arrived and buzzed the gate. They let me in. I took Uyathandwa and I walked inside. Andile stood up and he went to take Alondwe. I put him in my bed and Andile

did the same. I took our bags and I went to sit down. I let out a deep sigh.

Dad: Uyezwa ke kunjani ukuzala?

Me: I am never having another baby.

Andile: And if your husband wants another child?

Me: Surrogate mother will help.

They all laughed.

Dad: How are you baby?

Me: I am fine family and you?

Them: We are fine.

Me: Where is the bride. I want tea.

Andile: Uyahlanya. Who is making tea for your in-laws since you're here.

Me: Mxm please don't start.

They laughed. I wasn't ready to tell them that Themba broke up with me. Just then dad received a phone call. He stood up and went to answer it inside his room.

Me: And then your dad?

Andile laughed and said: I don't know. La Lucia is the place to be if you're yellow so.

Me: I know I am beautiful. [He laughed] Where is Shemah seriously?

Andile: She's sleeping.

Me: I want to sleep too. I am tired Brah.

Andile: Ain't you hungry?

Me: No.

He nodded. I stood up kissed his cheek, he laughed and I went to my room. I took off my clothes and I joined my kids in bed.

My phone rang I close my eyes. I took it and an unknown number was calling. I answered.

Me: Thandeka hello.

Grandma: Molo Makoti uMakhulu kaGqibelo.

Me: Oh. Grandma Smith how are you?

Grandma: I am fine sisi how are you?

Me: Hanging in there makhulu.

Grandma: How is our boy doing?

Me: He's fine. His father is coming to take him. I don't know when?

Grandma: He left this morning. I just wanted to ask if is everything alright with you?

Me: Alright? I don't understand.

Grandma: I don't know. Are you expecting another little one? I have been having some dreams that shows that someone is pregnant. All the Smith girls are not pregnant. And this fake wife of your fiancé is not pregnant so I wanted to ask you maybe you're.

Me: [laughing] Hhayi makhulu I am not pregnant. I am still me.

Grandma: That means I was just having them just for fun to keep the sleeping beauty entertaining.

Me:[laughing] I think so too. But I am no longer in a relationship with your grandson.

Grandma: What do you mean?

Me: He broke up with two weeks back.

Grandma: What? He didn't tell us that. Uyahlanya lo mfana. What happened?

Me: He didn't tell you that after you all left in my flat. His wife was beating me. He told me not to fight her. And I didn't makhulu. But she was holding my hair and punching my stomach very hard. I tried to remove her away from me. She tripped and fell off. That's why the baby didn't make it. [I was crying]

Grandma: Oh. My poor child. Don't cry baby. It wasn't your fault. It was an accident baby. You couldn't watch a mad woman hurting you just because she's pregnant. No. And you didn't beat her but you tried make her get away from you. Gqibelo is insane. Don't blame

yourself.

Me: Yebo makhulu.

Grandma: I would like you and boy to visit me during Easter weekend.

Me: No problem makhulu. We will.

Grandma: Thank you. To me you'll always be our bride. Whether married or not but you are Mrs Smith. I love you baby.

Me: Thank you. I love you too.

Grandma: Bye.

Me: Bye.

I hung up the call and I tried to sleep.

Later I was woken up by Andile. My kids were not beside me.

Me: Mm?

Andile: Your fiancé is here.

Me: Okay. Please take that bag ka Uyathandwa and give it to him.

Andile: Hhaybo wake up wena. They are taking you with Uyathandwa and dad agreed.

Me: Excuse me? Hhaybo. Go and tell them that I said I am not going with them. Please.

He left. I immediately went back to sleep. I woke up when someone was shaking me softly. I opened my eyes it was Themba. Mmm Lord he was fine as hell. Looking at him turned me on. He looked at me and licked his lower lip and said: Oh Lord what was I doing. You look beautiful.

I smiled and responded on a low tone.

Me: Please lock the door.

He stood up and locked it. He came back to me. I kneeled on the bed and grabbed him by his T-shirt. I kissed him and he kissed me back fast. I didn't care about anything. I just wanted to have sex with him.

Themba: This is your brother's house.

Me: I won't moan. We'll do a quickie.

We continued kissing each other and we did a quickie as planned. We finished.

Me: Come we will take a quick shower.

I turned on the air conditioner and we rushed to the shower. He catch hold of my neck and kissed me. I responded quickly and we did another round on the shower. We lotion and there was a knock on the door.

EJ: Mommy open please.

Themba and I giggled like preschool kids. We wore our clothes quickly and we kissed each other once more.

Themba: I love you.

Me: Mxm.

I attempted to walk to the door and he held my hand.

Themba: I mean it Thandeka.

EJ: Mommy and daddy are you there?

Me: Yes boy.

I looked at Themba and I closed my eyes. Looking at him made my body vibrate. I went to open the door. Uyathandwa smiled. I picked him up. I walked back inside with him.

EJ: We're leaving mommy right?

Me: You're leaving alone.

Themba: Thandeka please.

He came closer to me and I looked at him. He slowly came closer to my face and our lips met once again. He kissed me. His lips made my head spin. In-between the kiss, I mumbled "I will go with you". He kissed me deeper that I almost let go of my son...

I put Uyathandwa down. They sat on my bed with his father. They looked at me while I change my clothes. I wore a long purple dress, black vans and a black cardigan. I put on a black doek in my head. Themba cleared his throat. I looked at him. He was staring at me.

Me: What?

Themba: Nothing.

Me: Uyathandwa ask your father what his problem is?

EJ: Daddy what is your problem?

Themba: Nothing boy.

Me: Unamanga. [You're lying]

Themba: Le ngubo oyigqokile inhle but ayingphathi kahle. Ayikho maybe esa maternity like. Ukuze ngingaboni your ass and curves. [The dress you're wearing. It's beautiful but it ain't treating me well. Can you please wear a maternity dress maybe so that I won't see your ass and curves]

I looked at him without a word. He smiled like a child.

Me: You must learn to control your dick Brah.

EJ: Daddy what is an ass?

Themba looked at me. I laughed.

Me: Explain.

Themba: Eh boy it's a secret body part.

EJ: Oh. Mommy what is a dick?

Themba laughed really hard. I threw my mascara at him. He catch it.

Themba: How about you explain that.

EJ: Mommy?

Me: Uhm. Boy do you remember that spoon with a big upper part. The one you laughed at.

EJ:[laughing] The one we saw at the shop?

Me: Yes. That's a dick. It's another name of that spoon.

Themba laughed. Uyathandwa laughed along with him. I rolled my eyes and packed my clothes. I finished. I took my phone and my handbag.

Me: Let's go and stop laughing at something that ain't funny.

Themba: Sorry mam.

They stood up. He took my bag and he kissed me briefly. I gave him Uyathandwa's bag. We went to the lounge. Dad and Andile were watching an action movie.

Dad: You're leaving already?

Themba: Our flight will leave in 45minutes.

Dad: Okay. Take care of my daughter mfanami. Themba: Yebo baba.

Me: Where is Laa Laa?

Andile: She left with Shemah and Evelyn.

Me: Who is Evelyn?

Andile looked at dad and laughed.

Dad: We will talk about that when you come back baby.

Me: Oh okay. I will go without seeing my baby.

Andile: They will come back late so you better get going. You will call her.

Me: Eish. Okay.

We called a cab and we waited for a few minutes. It hooted outside. Uyathandwa went to hug dad and Andile. I hugged them too. They hand shake with Themba.

Andile: Go and make tea for father in-law and mother in-law. [They laughed]

Dad: For the whole family Hhaybo.

They laughed.

Andile: So you won't be here for Christmas?

Me: I will.

Themba looked at me. I looked away.

Dad: It sad but you're practically not a Dhlomo.

Me: We're not married dad.

Themba: But we will.

I gave him a dead stare. He smiled. I didn't want to talk further because he knew that he had a wife.

Me: Let's go. Bye family.

Them: Bye.

Andile: See you after Christmas.

Me: Whatever!

We left. The cab drove us to the airport. Uyathandwa was asleep. We arrived at the airport.

Themba carried him and I took our bags.

Me: Wake him up so that he can see the plane. He woke him up and he started crying.

Themba: Don't cry. We are going to fly.

EJ:[crying] Whee\_\_nn?

Me: Now.

He wiped his tears and he wanted to walk on his feet. Themba held his hand and he took one bag. The time came and we flew to Cape Town. Uyathandwa was eating on the plane.

Me: Why did you say we will get married because we won't.

Themba: We will bbe believe me.

Me: You broke up with me Themba.

Themba: I was angry bbe please forgive me.

Me: There's a wife Themba.

Themba: I am not a married man according to home affairs. And can we not talk about her. He said moving his hand on my thigh. I closed my eyes. "Mmm" I said on a low tone. His hand moved up. I remembered that we are on a plane. I removed his hand.

Me:[low tone] We're on a plane and there are people here.

Themba: But –

Me: Our son is here.

We looked at him and he had a chocolate slap on his hands. He was fast asleep with his mouth slightly opened. We looked at each other and smiled.

Themba: But we created a beautiful boy.

Me: Yeah. Please pass him over to me.

He took the chocolate and put it away. He took him and passed him over to me. I took a face clothe on my bag and I cleaned him. He slept on my arms.

Themba: I have a plan?

Me: What?

He whispered it in my ear. I laughed really hard and people looked at me. I stopped.

Me: You're dirty.

Themba: I told you not to wear this dress.

Me: Okay. We will do it when we get to the house.

He smiled and kissed my cheek. We continued talking until he ended up talking alone. I fell asleep.

We arrived in Cape Town. We took a cab straight to his father's house. He was back from the hospital. He wanted to be around his family. We arrived at the house. Uyathandwa was awake. He was walking on his feet. We walked inside the house. The whole family was there. Even people that I didn't know. We greeted them. Grandma Smith was happy to see me. She couldn't stop looking at me and smiling. You could swear that she was crushing on me. She made me shy. Everyone wanted to hold Uyathandwa like he was a baby. Babephapha ismanga sento.

Mrs Smith: Let's go to him.

Four uncles stood up, Grandma Smith, Themba's wife, and two wives. Mrs Smith took Uyathandwa. We went to his room. Themba was following me behind. He gave me my phone. I laughed a little. We walked inside his room and he started coughing. Mrs Smith put Uyathandwa down and she went to him. She gave him water. He didn't look like someone who seriously ill but it showed that he was sick. My phone rang. Themba was calling me.

Me: I am sorry but I have to take this call.

Joe: Can it wait?

Me: No. Is there a nearest bathroom.

Themba: The second door if you leave this room.

I nodded and walked out of the room. I dropped the call. I giggled and I walked inside the bathroom. I called Themba back. He answered and pretended to be serious. I laughed. He opened the bathroom door a few minutes later. I giggled and went closer to him. He locked the door. He put his bedroom key down.

Me: Your father?

Themba: He won't die yet. He can wait but this can't wait.

I giggled and kissed him. He squeezed my ass and I took off his shirt. He took off my dress and I unzipped his pants fast. We were both naked and I jumped up to him. I wrapped my legs around his waist. His dick found a hiding place inside my vagina. I gasped and we both started moving. I didn't moan because there people around. We stopped.

Themba:[panting] Bbe I am tired.

Me: Put me on the floor. We haven't reach climax .

He placed me on the floor and we continued. There was a knock on the door. I tried to speak.

Me: I am inside.

Kayla: We're waiting for you. I was told to check up on you.

Me: I am not done yet. I will come.

Kayla: Okay. Where is my husband?

Me: Hhaybo how am I supposed to know where he is?

Kayla: I am sorry.

Me: Now if you don't mind. I am in the middle of an important phone call.

Kayla: Sorry.

She walked away. We giggled and continued. We made it quick until we reached climax.

Me: Lets take a quickest shower.

Themba: No let's use the tub.

We took a quickest bath with cold water. We dried ourselves with a big towel that was on the bathroom. We lotion and wore our clothes.

Themba: I will come out first.

Me: Okay.

He kissed me and took his key. He opened the door.

Themba: Makhulu??

Grandma: I want to use the bathroom.

Themba: Uhm\_\_why don't you use the other bathroom makhulu?

Grandma: No. Don't worry she can come out too. I heard you talking inside.

Themba: Huh? Eh. Okay.

He quickly walked away. Grandma Smith walked inside the bathroom. I looked down.

Me: I am sorry Makhulu.

Grandma: I understand. When you're pregnant you turn to become a little freak it's normal. But go everyone is waiting for you.

Me:[giggles] But grandma I am not pregnant.

Grandma: [smiling] It's Oka just go baby.

I nodded and ran out of the bathroom. But I didn't understand why she thought I was pregnant. But I shrugged that thought.

I went inside the room. Grandma came back and gave me my doek.

Me: Hawu! I am sorry.

Grandma: It's Okay dear.

I took it and put it back on fast.

Joe: You gave us a beautiful son.

I smiled and looked down. I was a little embarrassed. Uyathandwa was no longer inside the room.

Joe: I am sorry mntanami for a everything that I put you through. I was trying to save my family in a bad way. I am so sorry. You're a god girl and you love my son. I give you my blessing that you two can get married and have many children as you wish.

Everyone laughed.

Joe: Please forgive me.

Me: I forgive you Baba.

Joe: Thank you.

Kayla: As the first wife who just lost a first child. You don't have my blessings.

Joe: The child wasn't Themba's child and you know that.

Us: What?

Kayla: You promised that you won't tell the truth.

Joe: I don't want to die with the truth.

Themba: Dad what are you talking about?

Joe: Musa [one of the boys in his gang] slept with her. Her father wanted a grandchild. And he also threatened me about it. You didn't want to have a child with her. When you had sex with her you were always using protection. She told me all that. We made a plan that Musa will make her pregnant. And she was going to use the condom broke method and you believed it.

Themba: What? This is betrayal at it best. Thandeka we're leaving now.

He came towards me and he grabbed me by my arm. I tried to stop him.

Me: Bbe calm down please. He did say that he was threatened. Please give him a chance. He is your father. There's no other father you have beside him. Please Smith calmed down.

He took deep breath and let go of my hand.

Themba: I am marrying Thandeka and you're not my wife. I never paid lobola for you.

Joe: You have to move on and leave my son alone. Musa told me that you have been having an affair with him even after the plan was done. He likes you maybe you can start something with him.

Kayla: I will tell my father about this.

Joe: Where is he? We set him up again. He got arrested on a foreign country this time. He's never coming back. And there's nothing you can do about it.

Kayla: He went on vacation. I will tell the police.

Joe: There's no evidence against me and you'll be waisting your time because he will die in a foreign country.

She cried and said: Musa was better then you. You know nothing about making love to a woman. [I laughed. Hhaybo? Usho bani kabani.]

Themba: I wasn't in love with you.

She screamed and said: fuck you and your whole family.

She then stormed out. Themba's father started coughing. His wife gave him water.

Joe: No. I feel like I want to vomit.

They gave him a bucket quickly and he vomited blood clots. Mrs Smith started crying.

Themba: Don't cry mama.

He eventually finished and asked for water. They gave him water. He rinsed his mouth.  
Joe: Y'all thought I was dying? I am not dying until I see my son getting married to this beautiful lady.

Everyone laughed. He stood up and his wife tried to stop him but he was just fine.

Joe: My wife, mom and Smith wives how about you start planning a traditional wedding for them. So that we can welcome her to the family.

The wives ululated and I looked down. I was shy a little. Phela earlier ngenze izimanga emzini...

I was instructed to cook dinner for the whole family. Mind you these people were 20. And I was told that others family members were not around but they were going to come on the Christmas day. I wanted to go home already. Mrs Smith gave me all the ingredients and the meat I was going to cook. Buzwe's older daughter came in while I was still chopping vegetables. Her name is Yonela. She clapped hands for me I suppose. I looked at her and I didn't say anything.

Yone: Finally! You have managed to get rid of Kayla.

Me: I didn't get rid of her.

Yone: I wish to know that what's so special about you because even grandma likes you but she doesn't like Silumko's wife [Silumko is her brother] but she is the sweetest.

Me: I suppose I am sour.

Yone: A person who doesn't see that you're full of yourself is a fool.

Me: Mmm.

Yone: But I will make sure you get a divorce on your first year of marriage.

Me: Good luck with that.

Yone: Just because you're a yellow bone that doesn't mean you're beautiful. The ass and curves doesn't mean you have brains.

I didn't say anything. I decided to shut up and I concentrated on my pots. Because I was gonna take her on and she was going to cry. She didn't leave. She sat down on the high chair and she looked at me. Themba walked in with his mother. They were talking about Lord knows what. Themba came close to me.

Themba: MaDhlomo. You want us to sleep here or at my house?

Mrs Smith: But why would you leave us?

Themba: The house is full mama.

Mrs Smith: They will sleep at the hotel or something.

Me: I suggest we sleep at your house and the others can go with us. They will sleep there.

Themba: You see mom. Exactly what I told you. We think alike.

Mrs Smith: Whatever but in the morning. We will come and have breakfast with you. All of us.

Themba: Yoh! Okay mom. But mom it's unfair that my wife is cooking alone for 20 people.

Mrs Smith: It's a pre – welcome to the Smith family. She'll be fine.

She tapped my shoulders and she left.

Me: Where is Uyathandwa?

Themba: He's playing with other kids outside.

Yone: Why your kid can't speak our language?

I looked at Themba.

Themba: Mama wakhe?

Me: I had no Xhosa friends or family in America.

Yone: But you should have taught him. Now other kids can't talk to him because he only speak English.

Me: So what do you suggest I do?

Yone: Teach him.

Me: I don't have time for that. Maybe you can do it for us.

Themba: It will be hard work to teach him Xhosa because he grew up speaking English. And in

Durban I don't think there is a school where they teach Xhosa in multi schools. But if there is maybe he can go there.

Yone: You two will live in Durban?

Themba: Yes. My wife has a job there. And I will transfer back to the lab in Durban.

Yone: What about you? And your house is here?

Themba: I will buy a new house and what's up with the million questions?

Yone: Nothing.

Themba: Okay. I will see you later neh.

He kissed my cheek. I nodded. He left. Yonela followed him after she looked at me up and down. I continued cooking. I was getting tired and the food took forever to get ready. Uyathandwa came in crying. I went to him.

Me: What's wrong?

EJ: They pushed me off and I fell down.

Me: You were playing right?

EJ: Yes but they laughed at me mama.

I picked him up. I looked at his wound and it was on the knee. It wasn't that bad but it was not good.

Me: Eyi yazi lezi ngane. Where is your father?

EJ: He left with other uncles.

Me: Okay sit here. I will give you a bath when I finish cooking.

EJ: Can I have something nice like a danone?

I laughed and I looked for something nice like a danone on the fridge. There was one danone left. I gave it to him. He ate it. I finished up cooking. I asked the other girls to dish up the food.

Others were watching TV. I took my son and I went to bath him. He was crying because his knee was painful.

Me: Don't cry baby.

EJ: it's painful mama.

Me: Sorry.

I carried him to his father's room. I lotion him and put him on his pyjamas. I made him sit on my lap. I took my phone and called Andile. He picked up.

Me: Bhuti wami?

Andile: How is being a wife?

Me: Don't even ask me about it. I miss home already. Where is my baby?

Andile: They are not back yet.

Me: Hhaybo Andile. Where are they kanti?

Andile: There's a Christmas Eve party going on. So they went there. Call her tomorrow morning.

Me: Okay. Who is Evelyn?

Andile: Hhayi Hhayi. She's a Doctor. Dad will tell you more about her.

Me: Mmm okay. Goodnight ke.

Andile: Goodnight.

I hung up the call.

Me: Baby let me go and feed you.

I carried him to the kitchen.

Everyone was eating, The elders were around table. Others on the chairs away from the table because it wasn't that big. Themba and his brothers were not back yet. I took Uyathandwa's food and I fed him.

Silumko's wife: Why don't you let him feed himself?

Me: Is there a problem if I feed him?

Silumko's wife: No but he must learn how to feed himself.

Me: He can feed himself sisi. But I don't mind doing it.

She didn't talk further. Yonela's daughter stood up and I asked for her danone. Yoh! I wanted to run.

I decided to save her the trouble of walking up to the fridge. Kanti uzo fike ashawe ibhomu.

Me: I am sorry I didn't know it belonged to your daughter. I gave it to my son. He was crying.  
Yone: Hallelujah. So your son when he's crying you give him danone?  
Me: No. But he asked for it.  
Yobe: And you gave him something that you didn't bring.  
Buzwe: Yonela it's no big deal she didn't know. Yone: No dad. Who said she must take something that she didn't bring.  
Grandma: Yonela! Let it go. Where must she get the danone now?  
Yone: Mxm why everyone likes her vele. You all dropped Kayla like a hot potato because she's a yellow bone.  
Grandma: She's pregnant little pig. She wasn't this yellow before.  
Me: No Makhulu maybe you're mistaken. I am not pregnant.  
Grandma: You're pregnant my baby.  
Themba: [coming in with his brothers] Who's pregnant?  
Mrs Smith: Grandma thinks that your wife is pregnant.  
Grandma: I don't think. I know that she is pregnant.  
Themba: [ he was excited] Bbe we're having another baby?  
Me: But bbe we used – Oh Lord we didn't. I am pregnant again?  
I cried. I stood up and I passed Uyathandwa over to Themba. He took him. I ran to his room. I locked the door and I threw myself on top of his bed. I cried

I must've fallen asleep because I woke up my stomach was grumbling. I woke up and I went to wash my face. I went to the kitchen. The house was quiet. I saw Themba and Uyathandwa on the couch. They were both sleeping. Uyathandwa was on Themba's lap. I smiled and went closer to them. I kissed Uyathandwa's cheek and I kissed his daddy's lips. I wanted him to wake up so I licked his face. He opened his eyes. Wahlina. And smiled when he saw that it was me. I laughed.

Themba: I was wondering where the dog came from.

Me: Themba? A dog.

Themba: Yeah. Bbe you were licking my face nje. Come and lick my lips.

Me:[laughing] Smith will wake up when I lick your lips bbe.

Themba: You will make him go down nje.

Me: No. I am hungry futhi. Let's go to your house. I will take my food with me.

Themba: Okay mama.

I went to the kitchen and warmed up the food. Themba went to buckle Uyathandwa on the car and our bags. He came back and called me.

Themba: Ngiyanishiya ke mina. [I am leaving you behind]

Me: Hhaybo. You can't do that.

I took my plate and we walked out of the house. He closed the door behind. He opened the door for me. I stepped in and he closed it. He did the same and drove straight to his house. I was eating.

We arrived at his house. And he carried Uyathandwa inside the house. I followed him.

Themba: He will sleep on the nursery?

Me: No he will sleep with us. But we ain't sleeping on the bed that you slept in with your wife.

Themba: Hawu Thandeka. What must I do now because all the guest rooms are full.

Me: I don't know but I won't sleep on that room.

Themba: I will change the bed covers.

Me: No. The nursery has a baby cot only?

Themba: There is a bed.

Me: I will sleep there with my son.



Aloe: Yes but daddy said you won't marry him.

Me: Yes baby.

Aloe: Why don't you marry them both and we will all stay together.

Me: Uhm.. I should marry one of them. But you can visit us anytime because your father wants you to stay with him.

EJ: We will always play together if you visit me right?

Aloe: Yes you're my baby brother.

Uyathandwa giggled this time.

Me: Okay baby we will talk some other time. Mommy loves you.

Aloe: I love you too mommy.

EJ: I love you too.

Aloe: I love you too.

We shared a giggle. I don't know why but we did. I hung up the call. We continued playing puzzles with Uyathandwa. Makhulu came inside the room and sat on the edge of the bed.

Grandma: Makoti why are you always sitting alone with your son?

Me: It's nothing Makhulu. Uyathandwa doesn't want to play anymore because he always get hurt. That's why I stay with him.

Grandma: Oh I thought you were missing home.

Me: I do miss my family.

Grandma: Oh mntanami you'll be fine. I know that the girls doesn't like you but after the wedding it will be you, your son and your husband.

Me: Yebo Makhulu.

Grandma: Okay. Let me leave you.

I nodded and she left. We continued playing with my kid.

>>>>>>

[Thandeka didn't write the full details of her traditional wedding. But Avuyile assisted me.]

30 December was my traditional wedding day. My family and I, we went to my in-laws house at Umtata. But stayed in a different house, slept there and in the morning Themba's family sang wedding songs and came to fetch me at the separate house I was in. They sang and took me to the main house where the elders were. They proceed with everything and they gave me a new name YANDISWA SMITH.

But before that they did what is called uYala umakoti(that means they spoke to me about what is expected of me and all my duties as a wife and how to treat my husband) then ndanxityiswa. I made tea for the elders and washed dishes. Basically cleaned. That where I became Themba's wife according to tradition. When my family had to leave. I cried. I became emotional. It was like dad just gave me away.

Dad: Hhayi Thandeka you're old enough now don't cry. You love this boy right?

Me: [crying] I do dad but you know what they say. You don't just marry the guy but you marry the whole family. What if I fail.

Dad: You won't fail.

My Zulu granny: Remember everything I said to you. You will be fine. [I nodded]

My Xhosa granny: Respect is the key my granddaughter.

I nodded and I hugged them. Andile wiped my tears and he kissed my forehead.

Andile: You're Yandiswa now.

Me: Mxm. I will miss you.

Andile: I will miss you too.

He hugged me once and they left. Tears fell down and I wiped them. I went back to my new home...

On my way back to the house I was going to sleep in with Themba. I met up with Themba.

He had Uyathandwa on his arms. It was getting dark outside. His brothers were with him. Themba gave me Uyathandwa.

Themba: Mama wakhe take him and give him a bath. He said he wants to sleep. I am going somewhere with my brothers.

EJ: Daddy?

Themba: Hm?

EJ: You will come back before I sleep?

Themba: No. I will come back when you're sleeping.

He nodded. I just looked at him. He pecked my lips.

Themba: I will see you later. I love you.

Me: I love you too.

They left. I took a bathing basin and I walked inside the house with it. I warmed up the water on a kettle. I walked outside to get cold water. I mixed the water and I bathed him. He was sleepy. I moisturized his body and I put him on his pyjamas and a nappy.

Me: You're not hungry?

EJ: I don't want to eat because my daddy made me eat that black meat.

Me: What black meat?

EJ: It's looked like a cloth

Me: uThemba bakithi. You will have a running stomach.

EJ: No mommy. I will wear a nappy during the day?

Me: Yes baby.

EJ: No.

He cried and I rocked him in my arms until he fell asleep. I put him inside the bed blankets. I cleaned up where I was bathing him. I was called to the main house. The other elders were going back to their houses around Umtata. We prayed and they left. I washed the dishes and cleaned the main house. I then went back to the house to bath.

The time was around 21:00. Themba was not back yet. The door swung open and he came inside the house. He closed the door behind him. He looked tipsy. He came towards me and he kissed me. I kissed him back. I broke the kiss.

Me: Themba you're disturbing me. I am trying to bath right now.

Themba: I wanted to know how it feels to kiss you as my wife.

I rolled my eyes. He grabbed my ass and kissed me again. I stopped him.

Me: Ha.a Themba there's Uyathandwa here.

Themba: He's going to sleep with us?

Me: Yes. Where must he sleep?

Themba: I am taking him to grandma's house.

Me: Hhaybo Themba. Why did you give him tripe?

Themba: What's wrong with it?

Me: He will have running stomach Themba. He's not used to that kind of meat. He never ate it before.

Themba: He'll be fine.

I looked at him and he sat down. He took off his clothes. He told me that wants to bath too. I finished and I prepared water for him. I cuddled my son while he was bathing.

Themba: Manje Bbe we're going to sleep with him like serious?

Me: Yes Smith.

Themba: But Yandiswa that's unfair.

I smiled. I kind of liked my new name. It sounded nice.

Me: This is our son why would you want to pass him to Makhulu.

Themba: I want to chow you tonight.

Me: Not tonight Themba.

He didn't respond. He finished.

Themba: I am done Yandiswa.

Me: So?

Themba: Wake up and clean up here.

Me: Hawu Themba?

Themba: You're my wife mos.

I didn't respond. I stood up and I cleaned up the place. Ngachitha amanzi abegeza ngawo phandle. I went back to the house. He was fast asleep. I turned off the lights and I joined them inside the blankets. I woke up when Themba was licking my face. It was hell annoying. I opened my eyes and pushed his face off. Uyathandwa was not inside the bed.

Me: Where is my son?

Themba: He's sleeping with Makhulu. I want you right now.

He said tickling me. I laughed really hard and he stopped. We then kissed each other and one thing led to another.

Makhulu woke us up early in the morning. Uyathandwa was sick. I went to take him. He was having a running stomach. I changed him and bathed him. He cried because he didn't want to wear a nappy.

Me: Uyathandwa. You're sick what must I do now?

EJ: Tell daddy to buy medicine for me.

I nodded and woke his father up.

Themba: Hmm?

Me: Uyathandwa is sick. Do mind driving to town and get him some medicine for the running stomach?

He looked at me and I could see that he wanted to make an excuse but he knew that I was going to put the blame on him. He stood up and I prepared water for him. He bathed.

Me: You see daddy will buy the medicine but for now wear the nappy.

EJ: No I will wait for him.

Themba: Ethan Junior wear your nappy! You will wait for me? Do you know when am I going to come back?

He placed his hand on his mouth and said: No

Themba: I didn't hear you what did you say?

EJ: No.

Themba: Your hand must be out of your mouth if you're talking to me okay?

He nodded and removed the hand.

Themba: You can't talk now?

EJ: I can.

Themba: Say yes don't nod.

EJ: Yes.

Themba: Yes to what?

EJ: Yes that my hand must not be inside my mouth when I am talking to you.

Themba: Good! Now get on that bed and let your mother help you wear your nappy.

He tried to get on the bed. I picked him up and I put on his nappy and the rest of his clothes. His father finished and he left. Uyathandwa went back to sleep. I bathed too and I went to make breakfast for the whole family. I woke Uyathandwa up and I fed him. His father came back and gave me the medicine. I gave it to him. That day Uyathandwa didn't want to stay with his father. He followed me everywhere. That night, the new year began. The whole family had their own celebration. It was a lovely night. Those years where there was no big nuzz but Zola, Mandoza, mafikizolo. All those old artists.

After new year. Uyathandwa and I flew back to Durban. I was going to start my new job.

Themba was going to join us after a week or so because he still had to fix his transfer back to

Durban with his supervisor. I started looking for a wedding planner. I wanted a wedding with 100 people. But I was still going to discuss it with Themba.

I settled in well in my new workplace, though it was quite different from Mark's company but I was coping. Alondwe was also with me. I had a young girl who was looking after them. Her name was Unathi. She was a tempo. I was still looking for a perfect daycare around La Lucia. I woke up in the morning. I took a shower and I prepared myself for work. I made breakfast for the kids they were still sleeping. I ate and put their food on the warmer. I carried them to Unathi's room because I couldn't leave them alone. I took my things and I left for work. I arrived and I passed by the reception. I was focusing on my phone. I was chatting with Themba. He was coming back that day.

Me: Morning Naledi. Is Mr Khumalo in?

Yone: Sorry but Naledi is no longer working here. I am the new receptionist.

I raised my head and I closed my eyes. I sighed and opened them again.

Me: Yonela?

Yone: Yes Mrs Smith. I told you that the year won't end. Soon you'll be divorced and it will be over.

Me: So you're here to sabotage my marriage?

Yone: Yes dear and I won't go until it all over.

Me: Well good luck with that. Is Mr Khumalo in?

Yone: No he's not.

Me: Thanks.

I walked away. I went to my office. I was actually scared because I didn't know what she planned. But I was hoping that whatever she planned wasn't going to work.

My day started. Along the day Mr Khulumalo came in with an intern that was going to work with me. It was a handsome guy. He was tall, dark in complexion and he had bongo dreads with dark lips. He was cute. I looked at him until Mr Khumalo cleared his throat. I quickly focused on my boss and I faked a smile.

Me: Mr Khumalo.

MrK: Yandiswa this is Lizwi Zondi. He'll be working with you as you know.

Me: Yes Sir. Nice to meet you Mr Zondi.

Lizwi: Please call me Lizwi.

Me: Oh. Lizwi. I have fixed a desk for you here[pointing it] I hope you'll be comfortable.

Lizwi: Yes mam. Thanks.

Me: Please call me Yandiswa.

He smiled revealing his dimples and he nodded. I smiled too.

MrK: Eh. Lizwi can you give us a moment please?

Lizwi: Okay Sir.

He left. I sighed and sat down. Mr Khumalo looked at me.

Me: I am sorry Okay.

MrK: You're married remember?

Me: I know. I know. And I promise I will keep everything professional.

MrK: I understand that you're young but he's younger. He's 20 years. You're pregnant and you have a family.

Me: Relax Sir. Nothing will happen.

He nodded and left. Lizwi came back and we started working. He was quite passionate about his work. He reminded me of myself when I started working with Mark. After work I made my way to my car.

Yonela: Bye bye Mrs Smith.

I gave her a dead stare and I walked out. I made my way to my car and I drove off.

I arrived at home and Unathi was outside. She was crying. I stepped out of the car and I went to her. I went down to her level. I brushed her back. She had a cut above her left eyebrow.

Me: Why are you crying nana?

Unathi: [she wiped her tears quickly] It's nothing mam. I just miss my mom.

Me: Sorry. What cut your skin?

Unathi: It's the door mam.

Me: Come on Unathi I can see that it's not the door that hurt you like this.

Unathi: [crying] He didn't want to eat and I told him that he won't watch cartoons. He ran out and he refused to come back inside the house. Alondwe was asleep and I was lying on my back on the couch with my eyes closed. I felt something cutting me. I jumped off the couch and Uyathandwa was holding a knife.

My throat went dry. I lost words. I held her tight because she was scared and frightened.

Me: Where is he?

Unathi: He's watching cartoons.

Me: Who opened them for him?

Unathi: I did. He said he'll tell his father that I don't want to open them for him.

Me: I am sorry baby okay. I am so sorry.

She nodded and I stood up. I went to my small trees with wet sticks. I took one and I walked inside the house. I hid the stick behind me. He saw me and he ran towards me. He hugged my legs and screamed "mommy". I placed my bags down and I held his hand.

Me: Why did you cut Unathi's skin?

EJ: Mommy. I was playing with her.

Me: Playing with a knife Uyathandwa?

He nodded. I looked at him and he was crying already.

Me: Why are you crying?

EJ: You will beat me up.

Me: You deserve it.

I whipped him with the stick. He cried. Alondwe came inside the lounge running. She stood by the TV stand and cried too.

Aloe: [crying] Mama forgive him.

Me: No. Unathi is older than you Uyathandwa and you're being disrespectful. I want you to stop disrespecting her or I will beat you everyday do you understand?

He nodded quickly. I let him go. He ran out crying. He went outside the house. I called Unathi and I cleaned her wound up. I put on the plaster on it. I went to my room and changed my clothes.

I went to the kitchen and I started cooking. Alondwe walked out. I looked at her through the window. She went to sit next to her brother and she tried to make him stop crying. I went back to my pots. Later I called them and bath them. Uyathandwa was quiet. Unathi came inside the bathroom.

Unathi: Sisi. Someone is at the gate. He said he is Themba.

Me: Ohk. Let him in baby.

She nodded and left. I finished up, I went to my room with them and Uyathandwa started crying once more.

Me: Why are you crying now?

EJ: You won't tell daddy?

Me: Did you say you're sorry to Unathi?

EJ: I will.

Me: But we have to tell daddy.

EJ: No mommy. Don't tell daddy.

Themba:[standing by the door] Don't tell daddy what?

He cried even louder. Themba came inside the room and Uyathandwa ran out of the room.

Themba looked at me.

Me: He cut Unathi above the eyebrow with a knife.

Themba: What? Why?

Me: She didn't want him to watch cartoons because he didn't eat his food.

Themba: I will beat him up today. Akezwa.

Me: No. Themba. I did. Leave him like that.

Themba: He's rude. Argh!

Me: Calm down my love.

I held his face and he calmed down. I kissed him briefly. We broke the kiss and he hugged me tightly.

Themba: I have missed you.

Me: I have missed you too.

We baby kissed and he went to Alondwe. He picked her up and played with her cheeks.

Alondwe giggled.

Themba: Hello Laa Laa.

Aloe: Hello.

Themba: I bought you and your brother gifts. Let's go and open them Princess.

She smiled and they left. I went back to the bathroom and cleaned up...

After cleaning I joined my family on the lounge. Themba and the kids were unwrapping the toys. I sat down beside Themba who had Alondwe on his lap. Uyathandwa was on the floor. He kept looking at his father but Themba paid no attention to him. He was busy with Alondwe.

Themba: Do you know how to plait your doll like the hairstyle your mother have?

I had a straight up on my head.

Aloe: Yes I can.

Me: You're lying Laa Laa Brah. [She laughed]

Themba: Don't call her Brah Yandiswa.

Me: whatever! Uyathandwa baby come here.

He stood up and looked at Themba. Themba looked at him and he concentrated on the doll. I picked my boy up and I made him sit on my lap. I looked at his toy.

Me: What is this?

EJ: Mr Robot. We have to build him up so that he can look like the one on the picture.

Me: You gonna ask your daddy to help you?

He shook his head "NO" I looked at Themba. He was busy plaiting Alondwe's doll.

EJ: I am going to do it myself. I built up the red one that uncle Mark bought for me on my second birthday.

Themba: We Yandiswa ubani uMark? [Yandiswa who is Mark?]

Me: My boss from America.

Themba: Nanizwana neh? [You two were close hey?]

Me: Ungaqali Themba. [Don't start Themba]

Themba: Start what? I can see that my son doesn't forget him. Mark is always on his mouth.

Me: Mxm.

I stood up with Uyathandwa. I went to the kitchen and I placed him on top of the counter. I set the table on the dining area and I dished up for everyone. I called everyone and I called Unathi. She was on her room.

I went to Uyathandwa. He was busy building up his Mr Robot. I tickled him. He laughed really hard.

EJ: Mommy. Please!!

I stopped and kissed him all over the face. He giggled. I laughed.

Themba: Are you two joining us or?

Me: We're coming.

I kissed him again. He smiled.

Me: I love you my charmer.

EJ: I love you too my Queen.

I smiled and I carried him to the dining table. We sat down, we prayed and ate.

Themba: I am sorry for what my son did to you. I think my wife must take you to the Doctor.

Unathi: It's Okay Sir. I don't need the Doctor.

Themba: Please call me Bhuti at least.

She nodded and continued eating.

Me: Uyathandwa did you apologize to sisi Unathi?

EJ: I am sorry for what I did to you sister Uinai-

Me: Unathi.

EJ: Uinaithee. I won't do it again and I will eat my food.

Unathi: And I will let you watch cartoons.

He smiled and ate his food. He was messing himself with food. He looked at me.

Me: Come here.

He stepped off the chair and he took his food. I made him sit on my lap and I fed him.

After eating, I served them the cake and drinks. I washed the dishes and I cleaned up.

They were watching tv. I went to bath, brushed my teeth with toothpaste but I didn't vomit this time, lotion and I wore my night dress. I went to the lounge.

Me: My babies you won't sleep with me tonight.

EJ: Why?

Me: Because your father is here.

EJ: I am scared of the dark.

Me: I won't turn off the lights.

EJ: I am scared to sleep alone.

Aloe: Me too mommy.

Unathi: You will sleep with me.

Them: Okay.

Themba: Don't sleep yet. I want to speak to Ethan. I will join you just now.

Me: Okay please be nice to him.

Themba: You know I am sweet.

Me: Weee! Goodnight babies and Unathi.

Them: Goodnight.

I went to my room and I prayed. I asked God to protect my marriage against Yonela and to help my aggressive child. I finished and took my phone and I browsed through Facebook.

Themba came in and he went to take a shower. He came back, he lotion and wore his pyjamas. He joined me inside the blankets. He kissed my forehead and he kissed me intensely. He then kissed my tummy.

Themba: How is my Princess doing?

Me: She's fine. She is a good girl.

Themba: And she's making you more beautiful

I giggled and I went over him. I kissed him while unbuttoning his top. We took the rest of our clothes. He made me lay on my tummy and he placed two pillows underneath my waist. He departed my legs by getting in between them. He leaned over me and he kissed my neck. I moaned deeply as I felt pleasure building up quickly. He tried to use his fingers. I removed them.

Me: You \_\_\_ know I \_\_\_ don't like that.

Themba: Sorry bbe.

He entered me from behind and he started moving forward and backward. I was moaning on top of my voice. He changed and moved in circular motion. I found myself speaking the dirty talk that I have never spoke before. We both came and we changed positions. I flipped over and I was ridding him. I was tired as I go on but I didn't want to stop because I wanted to reach climax. We climaxed and we laid on our backs. We were panting like someone was after us.

Themba: You were amazing.

Me:[giggles] You were perfect my love.

Themba: [mimicking my tone] "Yes bbe. Harder please bbe\_\_ I want to -"

I hit him playful. I hated it when he did that.

Me: I will keep quiet next time.

Themba: I know you won't.

Me: Mxm.

Themba: Queen ka Uyathandwa.

Me: Are you jealous?

Themba: I am not. But Mark does make me jealous sometimes.

Me: Mxm. Wa bora yazi.

Themba: Okay. I am sorry ke. [I nodded.] Your house is beautiful.

Me: Thank you.

Themba: What are you going to do about it?

Me: What do you mean?

Themba: We won't stay here after the wedding. I will buy a new house for you and our kids.

Me: There's no need for a new house Themba. We must save money.

Themba: Who said I want to save? I want to buy a house for my family and I will do it. I can't stay in the house my mother in-law bought for you. I must stay in that house for the rest of my life?

Me: Where's the problem with that? The house is already here what more do you want kanti?

Themba: What more do I want kanti? Uyazizwa kodwa ukuthi uthini? What more do I want? Ungazongihlanyela Mina Yandiswa. You can't ask me that question like I asked you to buy the house for me.

Me: Ngiyakuhlanyela Mina?

Themba: Ungizwe kahle nje. Ubuzani pho?

Me: Tsk!!

Themba: Unxaphela mina njalo? [You're clicking your tongue for me?]

Me: Ukhona yini omunye umuntu ombonayo layindlini ngaphandle kwakho? [Is there any one else in this room beside you?]

Themba: heeee ngiyalingwa la. I will buy the house whether you like it or not and uzohlala kuyo. Ngeke ngizwe ngawe phela mina. Heee!

Me: Mxm!

Themba: Yandiswa why are you disrespecting me like this?

Me: I am disrespecting you?

Themba: Hheyi Fusegi man! Ubuza ngoba ungaboni nje?

Me: Fusegi nawe!

I clicked my tongue and gave him my back. He didn't respond but his breath said it all that he was humming with anger. I tried to sleep though I was also angry.

I woke up at 3am or so. I was hungry as fuck. I wore my gown and I went to the kitchen. I made a quick snack and I ate it. I was craving for raisins. I wanted them so bad but there were no where to be found. I wanted to cry so bad. I tried to look for a substitute. I looked for a

substitute in the candy box of my kids. I found the black sweet called champion. Original toffees. I chowed about five of the sweets. I turned off the lights and I sat on the floor. I ate them.

Themba: [standing beside me] What are you doing in the dark?

Me: I am eating.

He sat next to me and lighted up with his phone. He looked at what I was eating and he joined me but he was eating a different kind of a candy. We ate the sweets in silence. I rested my head on his shoulder and I finished off my champion. I ate another bunch, I was sleepy. I woke up in my bed. I had a champion in my mouth. I chowed it off. Themba was still sleeping. I went to the bathroom and I took a shower. I brushed my teeth and I prepared water for him. I went back to my room to wake him up.

Me: Ain't you going to work?

Themba: I am.

Me: Hamba uyogeza phela. It's morning already.

Themba: Thanks.

He stood up and went to the bathroom. I lotion and I opened his suitcases. I unpacked his clothes. I wore my clothes. I took his and I ironed the outfit for that day. I made the bed. I opened the windows. I took my bags and I went to the kitchen.

I made breakfast and I set up the table. I sat down, prayed and I started eating. My phone rang. I took it out. It was the potential wedding planner. Who had promised to plan my wedding. I answered.

Me: Yandiswa speaking hello?

Lisa: It's Lisa. I have managed to get time for planning your wedding because you won't be having a big wedding.

Me: Yes. Thank you.

Lisa: I will email you the details. I would like us to meet tomorrow lunch time.

Me: That's fine by me.

Lisa: You said you want a venue that accommodates how many people?

Me: I want 100 guests for my wedding?

Themba:[sitting down] 100 guests?? Hhaybo Yandiswa.

Me: What is wrong with that?

Themba: You-

Lisa: Excuse me?

Me: I am sorry. I will call you back later. I have something I want to discuss with my husband

Lisa: Okay. [We hung up]

Themba: You didn't discuss the guest list with me first before telling the planner?

Me: I was going to discuss it with you Themba.

Themba: When?

Me: Probably yesterday if you didn't create the house feud. [His jaw tightened]

Themba: I started the house feud?

Me: You know you did and I just want to have a wedding with 100 people is that too much to ask?

Themba: I have a big family and they are all coming to the wedding. And you're telling me about 100 people. In this 100 include the neighbors and family friends.

Me: Heee! Hhayike 100 people from your side? Where will they sleep or they will come late?

Themba: You don't have to worry yourself about that. It's not your money that is going to accommodate them.

Me: Oh Wow! I suppose it's who's money? Yours? Your father? Your family? Argh! You know what you can bring the whole Eastern Cape to your wedding. I don't care. Tsk!!

I pushed off my bowl. I took my phone and my bags. I went to work. I passed by La Lucia mall and I bought the big packet of raisins.

I drove straight to work. I arrived, parked my car and I took my bags. I locked my car. I opened the packet of raisins and I ate it on my way to the office. I passed by the reception desk. I made my way to the lift.

Yonela: Morning Mrs Smith.

Me: Morning Miss Smith.

Yonela: I have something for you here.

I went to her desk and she gave me an envelope.

Yonela: Mr Khumalo said it's the description of your new project. You have to work with Lizwi. Your intern.

I nodded and I went to the lift. I get off on my floor and I went to my office. Lizwi was already building the building that I draw.

Me: Morning early bird.

Lizwi: Morning Yandy.

I smiled and I sat down. I opened the envelope and I read the project.

Me: We have a new project that we have to work on. Lunch time we're meeting with our clients at gateway mall.

Lizwi: Okay mam.

I nodded and I finished off my other tasks. Lizwi kept on looking at me but I tried to avoid him. I wasn't planning on adding another fight with my husband. We worked in silence. He would ask for several guidelines and I will show him. The day proceeded.

My phone rang. It was my house phone. I answered.

Me: Hello

EJ:[crying] Mommy who ate our candy?

Me: Uhm\_\_ I\_\_ baby don't cry okay. Mommy will buy another candies today.

EJ: But we want to eat it now mommy.

Aloe: [crying] And not even one candy is left on the candy box.

Me: I ate the candy with your father. I am so sorry okay. I will pay them back.

Them: [crying] Mommy!!

Me: I am so sorry.

Unathi: And they were accusing me.

Me: I am sorry dear. Please give them the cake or something.

Unathi: Okay.

Me: Thanks. Mommy loves you okay. You don't love mommy?

Them: No!

I laughed and hung up the call. I smiled to myself. My kids were dramatic.

Lizwi: You have kids?

Me: Yes.

Lizwi: How many?

Me: Two.

He smiled and said: I bet they are beautiful like you hey.

I stood up and laughed. I packed my bags. I signaled that it's time to leave. He stood up. We walked out of the office.

Me: I suppose that's your way of telling me that I am beautiful.

Lizwi: Well I might sound unethical but you're beautiful.

We both laughed as we stepped out the lift. Yonela gave us the dead stare.

Yonela: Don't make my work easy Mrs Smith.

I looked at her and I didn't respond. We continued walking.

Lizwi: What's her problem?

Me: She's just a bitter sister in-law.

We laughed and stepped inside the car. I drove straight to gateway. We went to the restaurant where we were going to have our meeting. The clients came and we discussed business. After that we did handshake. The clients left.

Me: Let's go and buy some pizza. I am craving for one.

He took my bags and we left. Along the way he was cracking up jokes and I was laughing. Someone called my name. I didn't turn back because there are a lot of "Thandeka" in the world. I stopped when I heard Themba saying "Yandiswa Smith" I turned back and I looked at him. He was with his friends. They came towards us and they hugged me.

Me: Long time.

Emma: You can say that again.

Themba: Do you mind introducing us?

Me: Oh. This is Lizwi Zondi, my colleague. Lizwi this is my husband Themba Smith and his friends.

Lizwi: Nice to meet you.

Them: Likewise.

Emma: I've missed you.

Me: Me too hey. You should come over for dinner this weekend.

Bheki: That would be lovely. I can bring my partner right?

Me: Yeah sure. And your daughter Emma.

Emma: She will cause chaos. But Bheki will bring his son for sure. He's almost the same age as your son.

Me: Oh that's lovely.

Themba: I am also inviting you Lizwi. You can bring your partner.

Lizwi: Well I don't have a partner but I will definitely bring a friend.

Them: Mmmm no partner?

They gave him an awkward look. I cleared my throat.

Me: We will see you Saturday then. Bye.

Them: Yeah. Bye.

I smiled and we left. I wasn't comfortable because they were going to think overboard but anyway nothing was happening. We went to buy pizza and we waited for it. Themba and his friends also walked in. Themba looked at me. I looked away. He came close to me.

Themba: Weren't you here for lunch with him?

Me: we were meeting up with a client.

Themba: Was it necessary to drag him along.

Me: He's an intern so yeah it was necessary to drag him along.

Themba: Mmm Okay.

My order was called out. I went to take it and I attempted to walk away but Themba held my hand.

Me: What?

Themba: You weren't going to say goodbye?

Me: I did say goodbye earlier.

He looked at me without a word. I rolled my eyes and kissed him briefly. We broke it.

Me: I love you.

Themba: I love you too.

We left and headed to the car. I drove straight to my workplace. We went to the office and we ate the pizza while working. I remembered that I never called Thobelani. I took my phone and I called him. He answered.

Thobe: Thobelani speaking hello.

Me: Thandeka speaking hello.

He didn't respond for quite some time. I cleared my throat.

Thobe: Thandeka Dhlomo?

Me: Yes. I hope you remember me.

Thobe: How can I forget you ntwana yami. You left me and you didn't explain.

Me: I am so sorry. Where are you?

Thobe: I am in Johannesburg.

Me: Yoh! I will call you when I am around, Johannesburg.

Thobe: Please do. We have a lot of catching up to do. You're such a wrong person.

Me: I am sorry but we will talk when we meet.

Thobe: Okay. Thanks. Ex ka Samkelo. I have missed you skhokho.

Me: Me too ex ka Olwethu.

Thobe: That bitch is married.

Me: Married? To who?

Thobe: That Bheki guy.

Me: Wow! I guess she's the mother of his son?

Thobe: Yeah.

Me: Okay. We'll talk later then.

Thobe: Sure ntwana.

We hung up the call. I smiled and continued working. The knock out time came and we were far behind from finishing up our work.

Me: No let's go. I don't want to arrive late at home. My husband knocks off at 5pm. So he must find me home.

Lizwi: Okay. Let's go. It's 16:30 already.

Just when we were standing up. The door swung open and Yonela came in.

Yonela: I was getting worried. I mean you two are not coming out of this office. I hope you were not cheating on my brother.

Me: Mxm! Goodbye Lizwi. I will see you tomorrow.

Lizwi: Bye.

I took my bags and I left. I drove to the mall first and I bought candies, raisins and a few things for the house. I drove straight home.

Themba was already home. I parked my car and I went through. Alondwe and Uyathandwa ran towards me. They hugged my legs. They let go and they looked at me.

Me: What?

Them: Our candy!

Me: You won't say Hello mommy. How was your day mommy?

Them: Sorry mommy.

Me: Yeah whatever! Follow me.

They followed me and I gave them their candy. I placed the rest on their candy box.

Them: Thank you.

Aloe: Mommy, daddy called on the house phone. He said he's coming to fetch me tomorrow mommy.

Me: Yoh! Your daddy is not romantic.

Aloe: What does that mean?

Me: It mean that your daddy is beautiful. But because he is a guy we say he is romantic.

Aloe: Ooh!

EJ: What about my dad?

Me: He's beautiful too.

They smiled and I left them. I went to my room and Themba was dead sleeping. I changed my clothes and I went to spend quality time with my daughter more special because she was

leaving...

Later I started cooking. Unathi took the kids and she went to bath them. I was stirring my pap when Themba held my tummy from behind.

Themba: Hello my Princess.

I closed the pot and he made me turn over. I faced him. He kneeled down and kissed my tummy. He placed his ear on my tummy and he started crying. Hhaybo! I held his hands. I made him stand up.

Me: Bbe are you alright?

Themba: Is my baby alright Yandiswa?

Me: Yes she's fine. What's wrong?

Themba: Did you go to the Doctor ever since you came back here?

Me: Yes I did. Uyathandwa was with me that day. We went to the Doctor together.

Themba: I had a bad dream like she will die. I am scared. That dream seem like it was real.

Me: She won't die Themba. Don't worry.

I wiped his tears and I pulled his face close to me because he was taller then me. I kissed his forehead.

Me: Now don't cry my older son. Are you hungry?

Themba: Yes mommy but I want this kind of food right now.

He held my waist and he kissed me. He kissed me intensely. I was getting wet. I mumbled "Bbe let's stop". He didn't stop. Instead he opted for my neck. I couldn't hold my moans back. "Let's take it to your room" he said. I nodded quickly. I turned off the stove and he carried me to my room. He threw me on top of the bed. We continued where we left off. We did the deed and we went to shower. We did another round on the shower. We went back to lotion.

Themba: Bbe Lizwi is really your colleague?

Me: Excuse me?

Themba: I am just asking. It just that you looked more relaxed to be colleagues.

Me: He's my colleague. Are you trying to ask me that am I dating him or what?

Themba: No I was just asking. I am –

Me: I am not cheating on you. If that's what you're worried about!

I took my gown and I left him. I went to the kitchen and I set up the dinner table. Unathi and the kids were watching tv. I dished up the food for everyone. I was angry but I tried to control it. I went to call my family.

Me: The food is ready. Uyathandwa go and call your father in my room.

EJ: Okay mom.

The girls stood up we sat on the table. Themba came back with Uyathandwa. He had him on his arms. He sat down with him. We prayed and ate. Themba and the kids were having a conversation. I wasn't in the mood. I stood up and I went to put my food on the microwave. I went back to the dinning table.

Me: Unathi please pack the clothes I recently bought for Alondwe. And leave the rest. She'll leave with those clothes.

Themba: Is she going somewhere?

Me: Yes her father is going to fetch her tomorrow morning. She'll come back after my wedding. I will probably see her during Easter holidays.

Themba: Who's idea was that?

Me: It's an arrangement we made no Samkelo nje Themba.

Themba: Okay.

I kissed my kids goodnight and I went to my room. I brushed my teeth and I went to bed. I prayed first. I stepped inside my blankets. I cried silently. It was painful because Themba

thought I was cheating on him. Where else I never cheated on him beside kissing Hope. I couldn't stop crying.

Themba walked inside the room. I wiped my tears quickly. I faced the other side. He went to the bathroom. Probably to brush his teeth. He came back, turned off the lights and joined me inside the blankets. He held my waist.

Themba: Yandiswa?

Me: Hm?

Themba: I am sorry about what I said earlier.

I nodded. I couldn't speak because he was going to hear that I was crying. I mistakenly sniffed.

Themba: Yandiswa are you crying?

I shook my head. He made me turn over. He lighted up my face with his phone. I closed my eyes. Tears didn't stop gushing out of my eyes. He licked them with his tongue. He held me tight.

Themba: I am so sorry my angel I didn't mean to hurt you. I am really sorry.

Me: Okay.

Themba: Kiss me to confirm that.

I smiled faintly and I kissed him. We broke the kiss, he kissed my forehead and he held me closer to him.

Themba: Yandiswa can we talk about the house.

Me: It's Okay you can buy the house of your choice.

Themba: You will come with me to choose the house for our family?

Me: No. I won't be available. But any house works for me. I don't mind. Any place.

Themba: Why does it sound like uyadikila nje pho?

Me: Angidikili. I have a new project that I am working on so that's why I won't be available. You can take your friends and choose the house.

Themba: Yandiswa why are you like this now?

Me: Hawu? Like what? I am saying buy the house. What is wrong with that?

Themba: Nothing.

Me: Okay and everyone can come to the wedding. I don't mind.

He didn't respond. I then tried to sleep.

As I was slowly drifting off my phone rang. I took it and checked the caller ID. It was Lizwi. I looked at it for quite some time.

Themba: Ain't you gonna answer his call?

Me: No he'll leave a message.

Themba: Oh.

I placed my phone away. I knew that he thought I was cheating on him but I knew that I wasn't so I had nothing to worry about. My phone rang again. I ignored it.

Themba: Your ringtone is irritating please answer the phone.

I took it and Andile was calling. I answered the phone.

Me: Bhuti wami.

Andile: I am father Brah.

Me: What? Serious?

Andile: Yes. It's a baby boy. He's beautiful.

Me: Oh. Man! I am an aunt already. I am so happy for you two bhuti. Congratulations.

Andile: Thanks hey. Though dad says he looks like you.

Me: Waaah! He knows his aunty. His name?

Andile: Lubanzi Tyler Dhlomo.

Me: I will come home this Friday night. I will give him the Xhosa name. I know his granny would've done that.

Andile: Yeah hey. But please don't give him bad name!

Me: Come on. I won't.

Andile: Okay let me go sisi. I will see you Friday.

Me: Okay. Send my love to everyone.

Andile: Okay. You too send my love to your family. Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight. I love you.

Andile: I love you too.

I smiled and I placed the phone away.

Themba: So You're leaving this Friday?

Me: Yes if you don't have a problem with that.

Themba: It's cool.

Me: Please tell your friends that I have cancelled the dinner invitation.

Themba: Okay.

Me: I won't go with Uyathandwa kodwa. Uyahlupha lo mntwana.

Themba: Ingane yakho mos useyahlupha manje?

Me: Hhaybo! Ingane yethu sobabili. Musa ukuthi ingane yami as if ngamenza ngedwa.

Themba: But uwena owawuthi "Oh bbe I want more please" and I gave you more.

I hit his chest playfully. He laughed.

Me: Uyaphapha yazi.

Themba: I am kidding then mama. Owethu sobabili. Samenza olwandle do you remember?

Me: Yeah. It was my first time having sex on the sand. You can be romantic sometimes.

Themba: I know.

Me: Mxm Bantu!

I slapped his cheek playfully.

Themba: Ouch! Mama?

Me: Oh! I am sorry my boy. Do you want to sleep on your mother's chest?

Themba: Yes mommy.

Me: Okay boy come.

I laid on my back and he came up. He laid his head on my chest. I wrapped my arms around his shoulders and I kissed his forehead.

Me: Sleep then my angel.

Themba: I love you mama.

Me: I love you too my baby.

I closed my eyes and we drifted off to dreamland....

The following morning. I woke up early because I had to prepare Alondwe. Samkelo was coming that morning to take her. I did my daily routine first. I went to them and I woke her up. She refused.

Me: Laa Laa your daddy is coming.

Aloe: Tell him to come later mama I am sleeping.

Me: He is on his way Laa Laa.

Aloe: No his Princess is sleeping mama tell him that.

Me: Alondwe Ndunakazi! Wake up please!

She woke up. I carried her to her room. I bathed her. I moisturized her body and she chose the clothes she wanted to wear. I ironed them and I helped her wear her clothes. I went to make breakfast. She went to sit on the lounge. I finished up and I sat the table up. I went to prepare water for Themba. I woke him up.

Me: Wake up and take a bath baby.

Themba: Is it necessary for me to bath?

Me: Yes! You must start your day, looking fresh and handsome.

Themba: If you say so.

He woke up and kissed me. We broke the kiss. He went to the bathroom. I made the bed and I opened the windows.

I went back to the kitchen. I took Alondwe's breakfast and I went to her on the lounge. She was asleep. I woke her up.

Me: Wake up and eat.

I took her and I made her sit on my lap. I fed her. There was a buzz on the gate.

Aloe: Is that my daddy?

Me: I will check.

I stood up and I checked the gate. It was him. I opened up for him. I went back to the lounge and I continued feeding Alondwe. Samkelo came inside the house. Alondwe smiled. I put her down. She stood up and she ran towards her father. He picked her up. He kissed her face up.

Alondwe giggled.

Sam: Hello my Laa Laa.

Aloe: Hello daddy.

Sam: Is your mother treating you well?

Aloe: Yes daddy.

Me: Uyaphapha yazi wena!

Sam: Come on I was just asking. Baby mama.

Me: Baby daddy.

I stood up and we half hugged.

Me: Let me get her bags. Please finish up feeding her.

He nodded. I went to get her bag. I went back to them. They were talking and laughing.

Me: Here's your bag Nana. Your brother is sleeping so I guess you will go without seeing him.

Aloe: I will ask daddy to call him.

I nodded and I took her from his father. I hugged her tightly. I couldn't hold my tears back. It was like she was leaving forever.

Sam: She'll come back Thandeka you don't have to cry.

I nodded and let go. She kissed my forehead. I kissed her back. I gave her back to her father.

Me: Bye bye Nana.

Aloe: Bye bye mommy.

Sam: We'll see you.

I smiled and nodded. They left. I sat down on the couch and cried silently. I didn't want her to go but I had no choice. I didn't plan our lives, everything just happened. I wiped my tears and I went to my room. I wore my clothes. I took my bags and I went to the kitchen. I looked for my raisins.

Themba: Why did you say Samkelo is romantic to Alondwe?

I looked at him. I was surprised.

Me: Uhm- Who told you that?

Themba: I heard her telling him.

Me: It's not like that okay. It just slip out and she wanted to know the meaning of romantic. I said it another meaning for a beautiful guy.

Themba: Oh. Have a nice day. I love you.

Me: You too have a nice day. I love you too.

We kissed each other and he left. I sighed. My husband was becoming insecure and I didn't like it. I took my keys and I drove to work too.

I arrived at work and I went through. I didn't want to see Yonela. I used the stairs instead. I arrived in my office. Lizwi was already inside the office. I sat down.

Me: Morning.

Lizwi: Morning.

Me: Last night you called me.

Lizwi: I am sorry about that. I took some work with me so I wanted to ask a few questions.

Me: Okay let me see.

He stood up and show me. I looked at his work and I helped him where he needed help. He went back to his desk and we started working. The day proceeded.

Lizwi: Can you check this for me?

Me: Come.

He stood up and came to me. He stood by my side. We both looked at the drawing.

Me: The building has quite a lot of mistakes. Take your chair I will fix it up and you will look.

Themba:[by the door] It's lunchtime already, can that wait?

Me: Themba? What are you doing here?

Themba: I am taking you out for lunch.

Me: Okay. We will continue later okay.

Lizwi: Okay.

I took my bag and I walked up to him. We shared a brief kiss and we left. We used the lift.

He held my hand as we walked out of the lift. Yonela looked at us and smiled.

Yonela: It's good to see that today you're holding hands with your husband not the intern.

Me: I've never held Lizwi's hand before.

Yonela: Yeah you will deny it now because you see my brother. Have a nice lunch date.

I didn't answer her. I was pissed. Themba was quiet. We arrived where he packed his car. He opened the door for me.

Themba: Please wait here I need to speak to that woman.

I nodded. He walked up to a shady coloured woman. Those people who live on the street. They spoke for quite a long time. He came back. He stepped inside the car and started the engine.

Me: Who was that?

Themba: Just an old friend from the street.

Me: Okay.

Themba: So you walk around holding hands with Lizwi?

Me: Your sister was lying Themba. I never did such a thing.

Themba: And what will she gain by lying?

Me: Victory for breaking my marriage of course.

Themba: Why would she break your marriage?

Me: She doesn't like me and she's here because she wants to see my marriage failing. She told me that herself.

Themba: Oh really?

Me: Yes! Oh you don't believe me do you?

Themba: I didn't say that. But the guy is already calling you at night. And you didn't answer his phone call. Is there something you're hiding from me?

Me: I am not hiding anything Themba.

Themba: But it looks like you're.

I didn't answer him.

We arrived at the restaurant. We ordered and waited for our order in silence.

Themba: Do you love him maybe?

Me: Who?

Themba: You know who I am talking about.

Me: No.

Themba: No what?

Me: No I don't love him.

He nodded. Our order arrived. We ate in silence. I was angry. I couldn't eat the food wasn't desirable in my eyes. I took the container that was on the table and I vomited in it. The people around looked rather disgusted. I had no choice. I stood up and I walked to the bathroom with it. I vomited on the toilet. I disposed the one on the container and I rinsed it. The waitress came and told me to leave it there. I left the container and I went back to my table. Themba was not there with my bag.

Waitress: He said you'll find him in the car.

I nodded and smiled. I walked out of the restaurant. I went to the car. I stepped inside the car. I took my bag and I looked for a chewing gum. I took it and chewed it. Themba drove off. He didn't say anything. Nor ask if I am alright or whatsoever.

We arrived at work and I stepped out of the car. Themba did the same. I looked at him he signaled that I should go. I did and he followed me. I opted for the stairs.

Themba: We're going to the reception desk.

Me: For?

Themba: Come.

I nodded. He held my hand and we walked to the desk. Yonela was drinking tea and cupcakes.

Themba: What is it that I hear about you wanting to break my marriage with Yandiswa. She looked surprised like someone who was confused or who didn't know anything about what Themba said to her.

Yonela: I don't understand Bhuti.

Themba told her everything I said to him.

Yonela: Yes I don't like her but that doesn't mean I want to break your marriage. If you're happy with her. Who am I to come between that? Come on sisi. I told you I can hide your little affair with Lizwi since you gave me cash to hide it but to lie like that? No dear.

Me: Excuse me affair?

Yonela: Wow! So you gonna act like you don't know. Should I call Lizwi?

Lizwi: Call me?

Yonela: Yeah. Please come here.

He came closer to us. Themba was looking at me all that time. He looked at Lizwi.

Themba: Are you having an affair with my wife

His mouth went wide open. Like someone who has been caught from stealing.

Lizwi: Sir I can explain.

Me: Explain what exactly?

Themba: Shut up wena! Yes or no mjita.

Lizwi: Yes.

Tears streamed down my face. I couldn't hold them back. They set me up clearly. Yonela took out a cheque that looked exactly like the my cheque book cheques. She gave it to Themba. She even forged my signature.

Yonela: Here's the cheque. I won't need it anymore since the secret is out.

Themba took it. He read it and he crashed it. He threw it on my face.

Themba: How could you?

Me:[crying] Themba it's lies. I am not –

Themba: So you seriously going to lie to me now with all the evidence against you.

Me: Please Themba listen to me.

Themba: I don't want to listen to you. Call that wedding planner and tell her that this whole wedding is off.

Me: Excuse me?

Themba: I said the wedding is off!

Me: Okay!

I yanked my hand out of his hand. The lift swung open. People came out. I ran to towards it. I stepped in and it went up. I got off my floor and I ran to my office. I cried

I wiped my tears away but I couldn't stop crying. I took my phone and called Andile. He picked up.

Me: [crying] I was hoping this time was real bhuti but I was just dreaming.

Andile: Hey! Hey. What are you talking about?

Me: Themba. He [I told him everything]

Andile: That's bad sisi. This woman is evil.

Me: My son was actually warming up to the idea of having both his parents under the same roof.

Andile: But you're still married.

Me: Legally no. But traditional yes. According to the law I am still a Dhlomo. Tradition I am a Smith. But for me. You know I am not a traditional person. I actually don't believe in tradition. I was doing it because I had to. Themba believed them so I just have to move on and forget about it all.

Andile: But you love him.

Me: Yah. But I will be fine right?

Andile: Please try. I am sorry okay.

Me: It's Okay. I have to go. I love you.

Andile: I love you too Nana.

I giggled and hung up the call.

Lizwi came in and he sat down. I called Mr Khumalo.

MrK: Yes.

Me: Sir can you please come to my office. I am sorry to order you like this.

MrK: It's fine.

Me: Thank you.

I hung up. Lizwi stood up.

Me: Don't go yet.

Lizwi: You don't have to do this. I needed the money.

Me: I have a son and a daughter coming on the way. They needed both their parents as much as you needed the money.

Lizwi: I am sorry Okay.

Mr Khumalo came inside the office.

MrK: You called for me.

Me: I am sorry. You make it sound like I am the boss now. [We laughed] I wanted to tell you that I can't work with Lizwi anymore.

MrK: Why?

Me: He got an extra job to break my marriage and he succeeded so I can't work with him.

Maybe Joseph can work with him.

MrK: I don't understand.

Me: He [I told him everything]

MrK: I thought you were an intern.

Lizwi: I am seriously. The offer just came up.

MrK: Just because she gave you money. You put your future on the line?

Lizwi: I was just stupid Sir I am really sorry.

Mrk: Let's just hope Joseph will agree to work with you or else if he doesn't you'll have to find another company.

He left after that. I continued doing my job. It was the only thing that was going to help me

focus on other special things in my life. I had to work and finish up every drawings that day. I called unathi and I let her know.

Me: Hey dear please cook for yourself and Uyathandwa. I am working late.

Unathi: Okay sisi.

Me: Is my – Is Uyathandwa's father home?

Unathi: uhm no he is not home.

Me: Okay. Bye.

Unathi: Bye.

I hung up the call and cried. Lizwi stood up. He came towards my direction.

Me: Leave me alone bustard! Just go!

He stopped and he turned back. He took his bags and left. I continued working til late. I was tired so I stood up and fixed up my things. I took my bags and I left.

I drove straight home. I was driving slowly. I arrived at home. The lights were off. I parked my car outside. I was lazy to park it inside the garage. I stepped out of the car and I walked inside the house. There was soft music playing. I turned on the lights and I walked to the kitchen. There was a romantic dinner set up and Themba was standing beside the table. He smiled when he saw me and he came towards me. I didn't smile because I was confused.

Me: What is the meaning of this?

Themba: I cooked dinner for my wife.

Me: Okay? Are you for real?

Themba: You think I was going to believe my sister over you? Yonela has a diploma in drama. She didn't get the job and she opted for administration.

Me: But you told me in front of her that the wedding is off.

Themba: Because I wanted her to believe that. I want her to call all her sisters and sisters in-law and she will tell them that our wedding is off. They will rejoice and be merry over the failure of our marriage. While we plan the best wedding she has ever seen in the Smith history. We will go home and deliver the invitation cards for their friends and neighbors personally because I want to see the look on their faces when we tell them that we're getting married legally.

Me: If the elders get involved? On the failure of our marriage?

Themba: We will make excuses because I know they will want a meeting. January is almost over so you and the planner must plan the wedding.

Me: But Lizwi confirmed it why you didn't believe him?

Themba: Any guy who has a thing for you was going to say Yes if they want you. I love you Yandiswa and nothing can come between us. We can fight but no one will break us apart.

Me: I love you too. I am sorry for everything that has been happening over the past few days.

Themba: That is the past. We have more then a bright future together. And our kids.

I smiled and kissed him. He held my waist and kissed me intensely. We broke the kiss and he kissed my forehead.

Themba: Now let me treat my wife and my little Princess.

I giggled. He pulled the chair for me. I sat down. He put my bags away and we had dinner together....

I met up with the wedding planner. We opted for Protea hotel for our wedding. We were going to do the vows outside the hotel and the reception inside the hotel. Uyathandwa was lonely without Alondwe. His father tried to spend time with him after working hours. Yonela was more then happy because I wasn't going to marry her brother. I acted bitter ke nami. Joseph agreed to mentor Lizwi. I was working alone again. It was a Friday morning. I was having breakfast with my boys. Unathi was sleeping.

EJ: Mommy when are you coming back?

Me: I am going to come back Sunday morning.

EJ: Why can't I go with you?

Me: But baby we spoke about this. You'll have fun with your father.

EJ: True daddy?

Themba: Why don't we go with you Thandeka. We can still get the tickets. I will miss you too. You will leave us alone?

Me: And Unathi?

Themba: She can call her friend or sister they will stay here.

Me: But –

Them: Please mommy.

Me: Yoh! Okay we can go but you will drive us Themba. We won't take the bus.

Them: Thank you.

Me: Okay my babies. Let's eat.

They nodded and we continued eating. We finished eating and I went to talk to Unathi. She had no problem with that. We kissed our son goodbye and Themba drove me to work that morning. He parked the car outside the building. We kissed each other first. We broke the kiss. I smiled and he kissed my forehead. His shady friend came towards his car. She stood aside.

Me: What's your business with her?

Themba: I am helping her out baby nothing more. You don't have to worry about anything. I nodded and I stepped out of the car. He did the same. She was shaking like she was feeling cold. I greeted her.

Me: Hi.

Her: Hi Mrs Smith how are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Her: I am good. My name is Robin.

Me: Nice to meet you. Are you hungry or feeling cold?

Robin: Yes but your husband promised to buy me food.

Me: Okay that is good. Bbe have a nice day.

Themba: You too sthandwa sami.

We kissed briefly and I walked inside the building.

I passed by the reception desk for my parcels. I was going to use to create the buildings.

Yonela: Mrs Smith or should I say Miss Dhlomo.

Me: Look you won't be okay? So please stop being a nuisance and give me my boxes.

She didn't answer me. She gave me the boxes. I asked the security to carry them for me and he did.

Me: Thank you.

I left. The security placed the boxes on my desk. I placed my bags down. I opened them and I started working. Joseph came inside my office.

Joseph: Thandeka I am going to the site are you coming with me?

Me: No. I can't. I am pregnant remember?

Joseph: Oh. Yah yah. I guess I will go with the intern then.

Me: Okay please do show me their progress.

Joseph: No problem.

Me: Thanks.

He nodded and he left. I continued building. I ordered lunch and I ate. I logged in on Facebook and I checked out Hope. I sent her an inbox text and I logged off. I didn't have friends who were going to be my maids and I didn't know who to take. I sighed. Lunch time was over. I finished off my work. 4pm was my knock off time but I continued working because I was going to wait for my husband to call me. About 17:15 he texted me. I gathered

my things and I left. Themba was with Robin. They were exchanging parcels. I went to them.

Me: Bbe.

He smiled and kissed me. We broke the kiss when Robin cleared her throat. We giggled.

Me: Sorry.

Themba: My wife will give you the food every morning and you will bring back the container to her after her work hours.

She smiled and nodded. We said our goodbyes. I took my husband's hand and we left.

Uyathandwa was sleeping on his car seat.

Me: We won't go home?

Themba: No my love. Unless if you want to go home.

Me: No I don't want to. Let's hit the road.

Themba: Okay Mrs Smith. You don't mind giving Robin food right?

Me: No I don't mind bbe.

He nodded and started the engine. We drove straight to Johannesburg. I fell asleep on the road. I woke up later when Themba gave us food. Uyathandwa was awake. Themba fed him. We ate and went to the bathroom[toilet]. We then went back to the car and Themba drove off. I woke up when we arrived at the hotel. Themba had booked us in. I took one bag and he took Uyathandwa. I put him inside the bed and I took off his shoes. I went to shower while Themba took the rest of our bags. I finished bathing and I went back to the bedroom. Themba was taking off his clothes.

Themba: Why didn't you wait for me?

Me: I am tired baby I want sleep right away.

Themba: I understand.

I nodded and I wore my pyjamas. I went to bed. I drifted off immediately.

We woke up the following morning and we prepared ourselves. I was dressing up Uyathandwa.

Me: We will leave our bags here?

Themba: Yes. We definitely won't sleep in your brother's house.

Me: Why not?

Themba: Hawu Yandiswa ngeke.

I nodded. I fixed up my boy and he was looking good. I took my handbag and I tied up my hair.

Me: Smith can you pay for my new hairstyle.

Themba: I will pay if I will choose the new hairstyle.

Me: No problem husband.

We laughed and we left our room. We drove straight to my brother's house. We arrived at the house. We buzzed the gate and they let us through. We stepped out of the car. Uyathandwa ran inside the house. We followed him. The family was on the lounge. There was a white woman with them. She had Andile's son on her arms. Shemah was beside them. We sat down. Uyathandwa was on his grandfather's lap.

Us: Molweni.

Them: Molo.

Dad: Mkhwenyana.

Themba: Baba.

They did the handshake. Andile gave me a confused look. I smiled and shrugged my shoulders. He shook his head.

Me: How is the little boy. Can I take him mam.

She smiled and gave me the baby. I looked at him and smiled. He was so adorable.

Andile: The name?

Me: Mqabaqaba.

They all laughed. I laughed too.

Andile: You're kidding right?

Me: Yes I am joking come on. This is Luzuko.

Themba: That's a nice name.

Andile: Yeah not bad.

White lady: What does the name mean?

I looked at Themba because I wanted him to answer.

Themba: It's means glory.

Me: Can anybody do an introduction?

Andile: Dad?

Dad: This is Evelyn Roberts. She's my partner. Evelyn this my daughter Thandeka, her husband Themba and their son Ethan Junior.

Evelyn: Nice to meet you all.

Us: Nice to meet you too.

Evelyn: You have a beautiful son.

Me: Thanks. Is there food around.

Dad: That's what you do best.

We laughed. We stood up and went to the dinning table. We sat down. Uyathandwa was asked to pray and he prayed. I had the baby on my arms. We started eating and Uyathandwa laughed. We all looked at him. He laughed even louder. I wanted to laugh too because he was also laughing. I looked at Themba and he looked at me.

Themba: Ethan Junior what is wrong?

EJ: [laughing] Mommy. \_\_\_\_ it's grandpa.

Me: What about him?

EJ: [he laughed harder] He's eating with a dick!

I held my mouth and looked at Themba. Dad coughed. I wanted to laugh but everyone was surprised.

EJ: Wooooh! It's funny mommy. Look at it.

He had tears from laughing.

Dad: Thandeka!!!!

Me: Dad I can explain.

Dad: Themba and Thandeka please follow me now!

We looked at each other and we stood up. We followed him to the study room.

Dad: Sit down!

We both sat down. I looked down.

Dad: What was that about?

Me: I can explain dad.

Dad: You will tell me that you talk about dicks in front of the child and when he asks you tell him that it's a spoon?

Me: I didn't know how to explain it to him dad.

Dad: Why were you talking about it in front of him on the first place?

Themba: It was a mistake tata.

Dad: A mistake? Next time you will do wonders in front of the kids and you will say that it's a mistake? Huh?

Us: No.

Dad: Should I take this child and live with him here if you are going to teach him dirty talks. Clearly you are gonna do more then talking about dicks next time.

Us: No. Don't take him.

He clicked his tongue and left. I looked at Themba and he looked back at me. We sat there in

awkward silence.

[I am not back yet. But here's a mini skirt for you not to forget me]

Me: I am sorry.

Themba: For?

Me: For failing to give our son a proper explanation. I spoke about a dick in front of him.

Themba: And I spoke about an ass. It's no big deal Bbe you don't have to apologize. We just have to tell him the real explanation in a polite manner.

Me: Okay. Let's go. I want to do my hair remember?

Themba: Yeah.

We stood up and went to the dining table. We sat down. And continued eating.

EJ: Mommy you lied to me?

Me: About what my baby?

EJ: About a spoon.

Themba: She didn't lie to you but she didn't know how to explain it to you okay?

He nodded and we continued eating. I finished my food but I was still hungry. I couldn't eat more food because they were going to make fun of me. I was going to tell Themba that I am hungry. I pinched Themba on his thigh under the table and he screamed "Ouch! Yandiswa!" They all looked at me. I looked down.

Dad: What is wrong?

Themba: Yandiswa pinched me.

Dad: Thandeka what is wrong with you kanti?

Me:[giggles] Nothing daddy.

Dad shook his head. I stood up. I collected the dishes and I went to wash them. I finished and I went back to the lounge.

Everyone was watching cartoons with Uyathandwa. I cleared my throat and dad turned down the volume. They looked at me beside my son. He was looking at the TV.

Me: Andile can we leave Uyathandwa here. We will come and fetch him later.

Andile: Where are you two going?

Me: Themba is going with me. I want to do my hair.

Shemah: Mmm Patrick did you hear that?

Andile: I am sure my sister threatened him.

We all laughed.

Me: I didn't! I am sure he can testify.

Themba: Well I can say she kind of did.

Me: Themba??

Andile: You see I told you.

They laughed and I sulked. Uyathandwa laughed after us.

Me: And then what's so funny young man?

EJ: I want a white rabbit mommy.

Me: That's why you're laughing?

EJ: Yes. I can imagine myself playing with it.

He giggled. Themba and I looked at each other. We looked back at our son. He was looking at us.

Themba: We will talk about the rabbit when we come back boy.

EJ: Okay Daddy.

Me: We will see you later. Come and kiss mommy.

He smiled and stood up. He pouted and I kissed him. I took my bag.

Us: Bye.

Them: Bye.

We stepped inside the car and Themba drove off.

Me: Bbe. I am hungry.

Themba: But we just ate now.

Me: I didn't get enough.

Themba: Okay I will buy food for you. What do you want?

Me: I want a burger.

He nodded. We drove to steers. We went inside and I ordered two burgers. Themba paid. I ate them at once and we drove to the saloon. The hairdresser asked us what do we want.

Themba looked around.

Me: It's seems like you don't know what to choose.

Themba: I know. Please plait her those short braids.

Hairdresser: She'll have to cut off her hair.

Themba: You don't mind Yandiswa?

Me: I do mind. I can't cut my hair.

Themba: But they will grow. I want to see you on this hairstyle.

Me: No.

Themba: Mmm. How about you plait her underneath and fold the braids made with her hair. Fold it using the wool. Then plait her those braids.

Hairdresser: Okay we can try but the price will be higher than the usual one.

Themba: No problem.

They washed my hair. They finished and we went back to start plaiting.

Me: Bbe can you please go and buy raisins for me. Please.

Themba: Okay.

He took his wallet on my handbag and he left. He came back later and gave me the raisins. I ate them. Themba told them to add blonde on my braids. They did. On the front the braids were a side fringe. After a number of hours. I finished. Themba paid and I looked at my head. I was looking lavish. I smiled and looked at my husband. He smiled upon my beauty.

Me: Thank you Bbe I like it

Themba: You look beautiful.

I hugged him and he kissed my cheek. We left.

We drove to Pick n pay. And we bought a few groceries. We walked holding each other's hands. After buying groceries. I went to buy clothes for Luzuko. We drove straight home.

Me: Bbe we will buy the rabbit for our son?

Themba: No. It would've been better if he said a dog. But a rabbit sounds like a girl.

I laughed really hard at that.

Me: You're worried that he'll be gay?

Themba: He loves talking and now he wants a rabbit? Hhayi.

Me: Come on Bbe. He's just a child.

Themba: But we won't buy a rabbit.

I didn't answer him. I knew that we were going to end up buying it because Uyathandwa was not going to rest until he finds the rabbit. We arrived at home. I gave Shemah the baby's clothes and I went to unpack the groceries. I was tired. I wanted to go and rest. I went to my room and sleep. Uyathandwa woke me up later.

Me: What?

EJ: Daddy said I must wake you up. It's time for us to go.

Me: Okay boy.

EJ: My Queen?

Me: My charmer?

EJ: Will you and dad buy the rabbit for me?

Me: Why do you want the rabbit?

EJ: I want it to be my friend. Laa Laa is not here. I need a friend.

Me: We will buy it.

Themba: [walking in] We won't buy the rabbit.

EJ: Why not? [He started crying]

Themba: You're a boy. We will buy a dog.

EJ: No I want a rabbit.

Themba: No you won't get it. Let's go.

He left. Uyathandwa cried. I held him close to my chest. We spoke to each other whispering.

Me: I will buy it for you.

EJ: But dad will not allow you mom.

Me: He won't see it. We will hide it away from him.

EJ: Where will we hide it mommy?

Me: We will hide it in the guest room. Its house and food will stay there. He won't see the rabbit.

EJ: [hugging my neck] Thank you mommy. I love you.

Me: I love you too baby. Let's go before daddy see that we are planning something behind his back.

He smiled and nodded. We stood up and went to the lounge. We were told to eat dinner first.

After dinner we drove straight to the hotel. Uyathandwa was quite happy. He kept on talking until we made it to the hotel. We arrived at the hotel and I took a shower. Themba was with Uyathandwa. I brushed my teeth and I went back to the bedroom.

Me: Can you two please bath together today?

Them: Okay mommy.

Me: Good boys!

They giggled and Themba carried Uyathandwa to the bathroom. I lotioned and wore my pyjamas. I took my phone and Google the place around Durban where we were going to get the rabbit. I found one and saved the address. Themba and his son were singing on the shower. They were more like crying then singing. I went to the door and recorded them. Uyathandwa was better but his father was worst. It's like he was talking instead of singing. I ran away from the door when I heard them closing the water on the shower and they hummed their way out of the shower. I laughed and sat down on the bed. I called Thobelani.

He picked up on 4th ring.

Thobe: Ntwanaz.

Me: Skhokho how are you?

Thobe: Ngi grand and you?

Me: I am top thokozile. [We both laughed] I am in Johannesburg ke ex ka Olwethu.

Thobe: Really? When are you leaving ex ka Samkelo?

Me: Tomorrow. Uhm...

Themba and Uyathandwa came inside the bedroom. They were both naked. They were still singing.

Me: Bbe when are we leaving tomorrow?

Themba: Morning.

Me: Eish I can't see you skhokho but I will try and make a plan for another time.

Thobe: Relax I will tell you if I come to Durban for business or anything.

Me: Okay computer genii!

We both laughed.

Thobe: Goodnight skhokho. Ngsakuthanda

Me: Ngsakuthanda nami ntwana goodnight.

We hung up the call. Uyathandwa came to me with his pyjamas. I helped him wear them.

Themba: That was your friend mama?  
Me: Yebo baba. But he said he will tell me when he is around Durban.  
Themba: Okay. Let's sleep then my family.  
Us: Yes Daddy.  
I fixed the bed and we all stepped inside the blankets.  
EJ: Daddy can we call my baby sister please.  
Themba: Thandeka please call her.  
Me: Please use your phone. My airtime is exhausted.  
He nodded and took his phone. I dialed Samkelo's number and he picked up.  
Sam: Ndunakazi speaking hello.  
Me: Awusazenzi umnumzane.  
Sam: [he laughed] Uyaphapha.  
Me: My son wants to speak to his sister.  
Sam: Okay. [Shouting] Laa Laa woza la.  
Aloe: [on the background] Okay daddy.  
Uyathandwa giggled. We heard Alondwe running.  
Aloe: Daddy?  
Sam: Your brother wants to speak to you.  
Aloe: Hello boy.  
EJ: Hello girl. You didn't call me when you left.  
Aloe: I forgot to call you. I am sorry.  
EJ: But I called you because you are my sister.  
Aloe: It was a mistake. I will remember the next time.  
Me: I miss you baby.  
EJ: Mom this my time.  
Themba: It's my airtime Ethan Junior let my wife speak. [He sulked]  
Aloe: [giggled] I miss you too mommy. Daddy said I will come back on holidays.  
Me: Yes you will and we will play together.  
Aloe: Yes mommy but Uncle Themba my doll ruined it hairstyle. And I beat her for being a bad child.  
Themba:[ laughing] You did a good thing Laa Laa. But you have to fix her hairstyle.  
Aloe: I can't and daddy doesn't know how to plait the hairstyle that you plaited.  
Themba: Okay we will do it again when you come back.  
EJ: Can I speak to my sister now?  
Us: Okay.  
They continued talking about cartoons and their toys. They talked until it was time to say goodnight.  
Aloe: Goodnight mama's boy.  
EJ: Goodnight mama's girl.  
Me: I love you Nana.  
Aloe: I love you too mom.  
We thanked Samkelo and we hunged up the call.  
Themba: Goodnight my love and my son.  
Us: Goodnight daddy. [We giggled]  
Themba: I love you.  
Us: We love you too.  
He kissed us and we switched off the lights. We drifted off to dreamland.  
Early in the morning I was woken up by grandma Smith calling me.  
Me: Grandma?  
Granny: I am not happy at all. What is it that I hear about you cheating on your husband.

Me: Uhhh... Uhhh.

Granny: Uhhmm what?

Me: It's not what you think.

Granny: I am really disappointed in you. I trusted you but you disappointed me.

Me: I am sorry makhulu but I didn't do it.

Granny: I don't trust that! Tell your husband that I want to see you both this weekend!

She hung up the call. Themba was awake. He was looking at me.

Themba: She's mad?

Me: No but she's Furious. She said we must come home this coming weekend.

Themba: Relax my love. You didn't do anything. We will go home and tell them the truth. I love you okay?

Me: I love you too Smith.

We shared a morning kiss. We went to the bathroom and took a shower together. I prepared my son and we left the hotel. We had breakfast and drove straight to Durban.

Wednesday during my lunch break. I drove back home. I took Uyathandwa and we drove to the farm where we were going to buy the rabbit. Uyathandwa was very excited.

EJ: I can't wait mommy.

Me: You need to be careful though. If your father is around the house. You won't stay with the rabbit okay?

EJ: Okay mommy.

We arrived and the owner showed us the rabbits. Uyathandwa picked out the rabbit he liked. He carried it on his arms. We thanked the owner and we went back to buy the house and food for the rabbit. We drove back home. We fixed the space for the rabbit on the guest room. I kissed him.

EJ: Thanks mommy.

Me: Okay baby. I have to go back to work now.

He nodded and I left him...

After work. I met up with Robin and took the lunch box. It was quite heavy.

Me: Did you eat the food in here?

Robin: Yes mam why?

Me: The lunchbox is heavy like there is something inside.

Robin: No! No! Mam there's nothing inside. Please don't open it just give it straight to your husband.

Me: Why?

Robin: It's his orders. I have to go.

She turned back and walked away.

Me: Robin please wait?

She ran away. I went to my car and I shook the lunchbox. It was heavy. I took a deep breath and opened the lunchbox. My eyes popped out and I held my mouth. I quickly closed the lunchbox and put it aside. I started my car and I drove straight home. I was confused and I was scared to ask Themba about what was going on. How was I going to ask him because he told Robin to tell me that I mustn't open the lunchbox. In no time I was home. Uyathandwa was not around. Unathi was alone on the lounge. I went to my room and changed. I placed the lunchbox on top of my dressing table. I went to unathi.

Me: Where is Uyathandwa?

Unathi: He's playing with Alvin.

Me: Alvin?

Unathi: His rabbit.

Me: Oh. Please don't tell his father about it.

Unathi: Okay.

I went to the guest room and Uyathandwa was feeding the rabbit.

Me: Baby you have to come out of this room now. Your father will be here any minute from now.

EJ: I will come mom. I am still feeding Alvin.

Me: Okay.

I went to make a quick snack for myself. And I started cooking while eating.

Themba: Mama.

Me: Hm?

Themba: Where is your mind?

Me: It's nothing. How was your day?

Themba: It was long and tiring. Yours bbe?

Me: It was just a normal day.

Themba: Where is my son?

Me: Uhm. He's playing with his toys.

Themba: Let me go and check up on him.

Me: No! Uhm. How about you go and change first then you can play with him while I prepare the food for you.

Themba: The pecks of having a wife.

I faked a giggle. He kissed me and I responded to the kiss. Unathi cleared her throat and we broke the kiss.

Unathi: I am sorry to disturb you.

Me: It okay. He was leaving.

Themba: Uhm. Yeah I was.

He took his bags and left.

Unathi: Sisi I wanted to remind you that Wednesday next week the school are reopening. I have to go back home.

Me: Okay. I will go back to that daycare. Please go and tell him that his father is home.

She nodded and went to the guest room. I stood up and fixed the dining table. I dished up the food. Unathi came back alone.

Me: And then?

Unathi: He says Alvin doesn't want to stay alone and he didn't get enough food.

Me: Hhayi this child!

I went to the guest room. He was talking to the rabbit and feeding it.

Me: Baby Alvin is alright now. Let him rest. Your father is home Uyathandwa. He'll find this rabbit here and he'll throw it away. Do you want him to be mad at us?

EJ: No.

Me: Then leave Alvin alone. He wants to think too. Okay?

He nodded. I took his hand and we walked to the door. I opened it and looked around.

Themba was not around.

Me: Let's go.

We walked out of the room.

EJ: Lock mom.

He gave me the key and I locked the door. We turned to the dining table's direction. Themba was looking at us.

Themba: What's going on?

Me: Nothing. Did you see the lunchbox?

Themba: Yes and you two what's going on?

Me: I was locking up the guest room.

There was squealing sounds coming from the guest room.

Me: Can we go and eat?

Themba: What was that sounds?

Me: Nothing come!

I grabbed his hand and we walked to the dining table. We sat down and Unathi prayed. We started eating.

Themba: Boy are you alright?

EJ: Yes dad I am fine.

Themba: How was your day?

EJ: Best day ever. Alvin is a good friend.

I gave him a dead stare. He came back to his senses. And he looked down.

Themba: Who is Alvin?

EJ: My robot. I named him Alvin.

He nodded and he looked at me. I ate my food and I didn't look at him. We finished eating. I collected the dishes and I went to wash them. Themba came inside the kitchen and rinsed them.

Themba: Do you mind telling me what's going on?

Me: Where?

Themba: With you and Ethan Junior. He's jumpy and he's all over the place. One minute he's happy the next minute he's frightened.

Me: You're reading too much to it.

Themba: You're hiding something away from me Yandiswa. What is it?

Me: Nothing.

Themba: Stop lying!

Me: I am not! You're the one lying to me.

Themba: About?

Me: About Robin! The lunchbox?

Themba: Did you open it?

Me: You wanted me to do what?

Themba: You weren't supposed to open it!

Me: Why? What's going on?

Themba: Don't make this about me. I am talking about my son here.

Me: Nothing is wrong with him. Tomorrow we have an appointment with my gynaecologist. I am going to shower now.

I left him on the sink. I walked up to my room. Uyathandwa followed me. He whispered.

EJ: Mom? The key please.

Me: Here. Don't lose it. Keep it in your room.

He took it and nodded. I went to my room and took a shower.

Themba came inside my room while I was still moisturizing my body. He came to me. He placed his hands on my waist and he tried to kiss my neck. I stopped him. He looked at me.

Me: What's up with that cash?

Themba: What cash?

Me: You know exactly what I am talking about.

Themba: Let's not talk about that because you weren't supposed to see that money.

Me: Really? Don't you think I deserve an explanation on how can I give Robin the food I cooked and she give me the lunchbox full of cash. Not just a mere R1000 but hard cold cash. Where on earth Robin got that cash?

Themba: Can I go and bath? I am not ready to answer your questions.

Me: Why not? Do you have anything to hide?

He looked around like he was looking for something inside the room.

Themba: Am I in court maybe?

I didn't answer him.

Themba: Okay I am not in court.

He left and went to the bathroom. I wore my pyjamas and I went to eat my raisins while I watched TV. I heard little giggles around the house. I stood up and I followed the sound. It was Uyathandwa on the guest room. I opened the door. I whispered.

Me: Who opened the door for you?

EJ: I took a chair and opened.

Me: Do you want your father to see you?

EJ: No.

Me: Then go to sleep now and leave Alvin here please Uyathandwa.

He nodded and he put him inside his house. I locked the door and I gave him the key. I went to my room. Themba was asleep. I joined him.

The following day. Nothing much happened. We were not talking to each other that much. I took the lunchbox with the food and my bags.

Me: Don't forget that we have an appointment with my gynaecologist at 12.

He nodded. I left him. I drove straight to work. I gave Robin the lunchbox and I walked inside the building.

Yonela: Hey Miss Dhlomo right?

Me: Hi.

Yonela: I heard that Makhulu wants to see you and your ex husband.

Me: I suppose you heard right.

The lift swung open and I walked in. I went to my office and my day began. I didn't have time to entertain Yonela Lunchtime, Themba and I went to the Doctor. The baby was alright. We left the Doctor.

Themba: I got a beautiful house by La Lucia. I would like us to go and look at it. If you like it. I will buy it.

Me: When are we going to look at the house?

Themba: Tomorrow.

Me: Okay. I have to go back to work. That money was for the house? Did you take a loan Themba.

Themba: Okay. I didn't take the loan. I love you baby okay?

Me: I love you too.

I stepped inside my car and I drove back to work..

>>>> >>>>>>>>

Uyathandwa was trying by all means to hide his rabbit. Though Themba was curious about his behavior but my baby tried to keep it together. Themba and I went to look at the house and it was a beautiful double storey house. He was going to buy it. He never told me anything about the money I saw on the lunchbox. I was thinking that maybe he went to mashonisa. The thought of that made me feel worried about him because the interest rate from loan shacks is way too high and they always want their money through violence. But I kept on praying. I found daycare for my son he was going to start right away on Monday because Unathi was going back home. Our wedding planner managed to give us our wedding invitation cards. On Friday afternoon we were ready to go to the airport. To Eastern Cape.

Me: Themba the cab is here please hurry up.

Themba: Okay mama. Go and get Ethan Junior I will take the bags.

Me: Yebo.

I took my handbag and I went to Uyathandwa. Unathi and her big brother were sitting on the lounge.

Me: Where is Uyathandwa Unathi?

Unathi: He's saying goodbye to Alvin.

Me: Okay.

I made my way to the guest room. He was brushing Alvin telling him that he'll come back

Me: Boy let's go. Daddy is going to come out soon.

EJ: I will miss him mommy.

Me: He will miss you too baby but you will see him on Monday.

EJ: Do you trust sister Uinaitheee to take good care of him?

Me: Yes I trust her. Let's go.

EJ: Okay. Please kiss him. You're his grandmother right?

Me: Uyathandwa?

EJ: Please mommy.

I closed my eyes and bend over. I felt rabbit cold mouth touching my lips. He giggled and removed him. I wiped my lips. He kissed him too. He put him on his house. He held my hand and we walked out of the room.

EJ: Mom I think we must find a sister for Alvin because I will be going to school. Alvin will be bored alone.

Me: We will talk about it when we come back boy okay?

EJ: Okay mom.

We said our goodbyes to Unathi and her brother. I reminded her to look after Alvin. We went to the cab. Themba came and the driver drove straight to the airport. We flew to Eastern cape. The time I was waiting for to put on a show and see all the faces of my sisters in-law.

[I am sorry for not posting. I am still sorting out my things for registration. I don't get time during the day]

We landed in Eastern Cape. We waited for uncle Buzwe. He was going to fetch us.

Uyathandwa was fast asleep.

Themba: Bbe I have to go before uncle Buzwe finds me here.

Me: Okay my love. I just hope they won't eat me off for cheating.

Themba: I will come in time and rescue you.

Me: I love you.

Themba: I love you too. You, my son and my little princess.

I giggled and kissed him. We broke the kiss and he took his bag. He kissed Uyathandwa and he left. After a few minutes of waiting uncle Buzwe came. He wasn't himself.

Me: Molo.

He didn't greet me back. He took the bags and walked up to his truck. I sighed and followed him to the truck. I stepped inside with my son. He drove us home in silence. We arrived at home.

Buzwe: Give me the keys to your husband's room.

I took them out and gave them to him. He took our bags and went to the house. I took Uyathandwa and followed Buzwe. He opened and placed our bags there. He left. I put my son on the bed and I left.

I went to the main house. The daughters, young wives and their mothers in-law were cooking in the kitchen. I didn't expect to see a lot of people but they were there. They all looked at me in disgust. I greeted them and they didn't greet me back.

Yonela: You finally came Miss Dhlomo.

Me: As you can see.

Wife1: I hope you are ready to face the consequences because the Smith elders take cheating serious.

Me: I guess they will crucify me.

They all laughed at that.

Wife2: That is nothing.

Me: I am scared ke.

Wife 3: I feel sorry for Themba. For having a bitch pregnant wife.

Makhulu came inside the house and she looked at me. I looked down.

Granny: I am disappointed in you. Where is my grandson. Buzwe told me that you came alone.

Me: I don't know where he is Makhulu.

Granny: I said I need you both here.

Me: I believe he will come.

She shook her head and left. The others clapped their hands. I was laughing inside but I pretended to be sad.

Buzwe's wife: I told my husband that you're a devil in a dress mntana ndini! And he thought you're sweet.

Silumko's wife: Sweet lona? I heard you have a child that doesn't belong to Themba?

Me: I suppose you heard right.

Silumko's wife: I wonder what Themba saw in you ngampela?

Wife1: curves and ass of course.

Me: Usho kahle phela wena ngoba uqondile ngathi iplangwe! Tsk!

The house went silent. I left them. I went at the back of the house. I called Themba.

Themba: My wife?

Me: My love I need raisins.

Themba: But bbe I can't come now. We will ruin the whole plan. Please.

Me: [crying] But bbe I ate the whole pack that you bought. I need more. Two pockets can work.

Themba: Please bbe wait. Eat apricot jam. You will feel better.

Me: Jam? Smith are you out of your mind? Please do something bbe I beg you.

Themba: I will send someone to give you. Do you want anything else?

Me: Cheese cake and your son's yoghurt.

Themba: That's a lot of things.

Me: We are your responsibility mos Themba.

Themba: Okay. I love you bbe.

Me: I love you too bbe wami.

We hung up the call. And I turned back. My mother in-law was looking at me. She looked at me for a long time without a word.

Me: Uhm. Mama?

Mrs Smith: Who was that on the phone?

Me: [looking down] I was talking to my –

Mrs Smith: You are continuing with your cheating even if you're here?

Me: I am not cheating mama. I never –

Mrs Smith: Liar! Where is my son?

Me: He'll come.

Mrs Smith: Why didn't he come with you. You're his wife?

Me: I don't know.

My phone rang it was an unknown number. I looked at it. I wanted to answer the phone.

Mrs Smith: You won't answer that phone. I am still talking to you.

Me: I am sorry mama but it's important.

She clicked her tongue and left. I answered the phone.

Me: Yandiswa Smith.

Guy: I am outside the gate. Themba said I must deliver something to you.

Me: Okay I am coming.

I walked up to the gate. The guy was inside the car. I didn't go outside the premises.

Me: Please come to me.

He took the plastic bag and came out of the car. He gave me the plastic bag.

Me: Thank you so much.

Guy: Themba said text him when everyone is together.

Me: I will do that. Please tell him that he must hurry up before they burry me alive.

He laughed and nodded.

Me: And tell him that I love him.

Guy: I will.

I nodded and I turned back. Makhulu was looking at me. I swallowed hard. She called me using her hands. She went inside her house. I followed her. I went inside the house. I sat on the couch.

Granny: Is that the man you're cheating with?

Me: No Makhulu.

Granny: Who is that?

Me: Delivery guy. I wanted this delivered to me. I need to nurse my cravings.

She nodded and let me eat it. She left the room. I ate everything at once. I left the yoghurt. I asked to go and rest. She gave me permission to go. I went to rest with my son.

Later I woke up and bathed my son. I fed him the yoghurt.

EJ: Mom. Did you check up on Alvin?

Me: We will later baby okay?

He nodded. I continued feeding him.

EJ: Where is daddy?

Me: He will come back later.

He nodded. We were called in for dinner. We settled down with everyone. I texted Themba.

Mr Smith [Themba's dad]: Makoti where is my son?

Me: He will come tata.

Mr Smith: I heard you cheated on him.

Me: I didn't.

Yonela: Are you trying to say I am lying.

Me: Ain't you lying?

Yonela: Of course I am not.

Mrs Smith: I am disappointed in you.

Me: I didn't cheat on Themba. Yonela lied.

Her mother: You're saying my daughter is a liar? You cheat and frame my daughter?

Me: I didn't cheat on my husband.

Mrs Smith: You hurt my son's feelings and now you're lying to us?

Themba:[ coming in] She's not lying and she didn't cheat on me. No wedding is off. We are getting married as planned. Here are the invitation cards Makhulu.

I looked at Yonela. She looked down. Her eyes were wondering about. She was shocked to the core.

Mrs Smith: Are you serious Ethan?

Themba: Yonela framed my wife. I always knew that no woman here loves Yandiswa but I didn't say anything about it. You thought I was going to believe you?

Buzwe: Yonela??

Yonela: Dad I am sorry.

Granny: You're evil Yonela. Arghaa! You wanted to break your brother's married through lying.

She cried and apologized. They all apologized to us and we forgave them. Makhulu was happy that the wedding was not off.



She hung up the call. I looked at Uyathandwa.

Me: Baby what are you doing with Alvin here?

EJ: Mom Alvin and Ava has two babies.

Me: What?

EJ: Yes mom they are both beautiful.

Me: Go back to their room with him your father will come in anytime.

Just when he stood up with him. Themba walked inside the house.

Uyathandwa just froze. I looked at Themba in disbelief. He looked at us. I grabbed Uyathandwa softly. I made him sit with me.

Themba: What is this? Yandiswa?

Me: Bbe I can explain.

Themba: Explain what? Because I told you that I don't want my son to have a rabbit. You went behind my back and bought the rabbit.

Me: He needed the rabbit.

Themba: Uyathandwa go to your room now I want to speak to your mother.

He stood up and went upstairs to his room. Themba sat down on the opposite couch.

Themba: How long have you hide this rabbit?

Me: Not too long.

Themba: When did you buy the rabbit?

Me: After he asked for it.

Themba: You're trying to tell me that you have hidden the rabbit for 8 months.

Me: I am sorry.

Themba: You're sorry? You're teaching my son to go against my word because that is the best thing you do Yandiswa?

Me: No. But he was nagging and crying. I don't want him to be unhappy.

Themba: So his happiness means going against my word.

Me: No but Themba him having a rabbit is not wrong at all. Alondwe is not here and Uyathandwa needed a friend.

Themba: I want that rabbit out of my house.

Me: You can not do that. He has a bond with them. Taking them away from him will break him apart Themba.

Themba: Them?

Me: The rabbits has two babies. They are four now.

Themba: Four? Junior! Junior!

EJ: Daddy?

Themba: Come here now!

He came downstairs with Alvin. He sat next to me. He looked down brushing his rabbit.

Themba: Do you think what you and your mother did is a good thing?

EJ: Yes daddy. You didn't want me to have a rabbit and mommy gave me a rabbit. Parents keep their babies happy right?

Themba: Babies must respect their parents. When I say No! I say No. I am your father.

EJ: Trinity is my mother too.

Themba: You don't back chat adults. You will talk when I say talk!!

Me: Don't shout at him.

Themba: Don't tell me what to do Yandiswa!

Me: How will this help any of us because the rabbits are here and Uyathandwa loves his rabbits. There is nothing wrong with that.

Themba: Who is the man kanti la?

Me: You being a man doesn't mean you should hurt my son's feelings. These rabbits belong to him and they are going nowhere Themba.

Themba: This is my house Yandiswa.

Me: It's your son's home. I believe he has a right to be free here. You won't choose what he wants.

He clicked his tongue, took his bags and went upstairs. There was a noise of music coming from our bedroom. Themba was doing it to calm his anger down.

EJ: [crying] I don't want Alvin to go mother.

Me: He won't go my baby.

I tried to stand up and my waters broke. I held my tummy. Uyathandwa looked at me. He wanted to laugh.

EJ: Mommy? Are you urinating?

Me: No.

EJ: Should I call daddy?

Me: He won't hear you baby the music is too loud.

EJ: I will try.

He gave me Alvin. I held him. He went upstairs and bang the door. I expected to feel contractions but I didn't feel them. I called him back.

Me: Take Alvin baby.

He took Alvin. I sat down because there was no pain.

EJ: Mom go and change.

Me: No I am fine my baby.

The music went down and I saw Themba slowly coming downstairs. He looked like someone who was in pain. He came to me.

Themba: Yandiswa I am feeling pain.

Me: Where?

Themba: Here on my lower abdomen.

Me: Yoh! Bbe sorry. Uphethwe islumo?

Themba: No Yandiswa. Don't make fun of this bbe please.

Me: Okay let me take you to the hospital.

Themba: Can you drive with that tummy?

Me: Anything for you bbe wami.

I stood up and I went upstairs. I changed and took my handbag. I went downstairs. Themba was rolling on the couch.

Themba: Uyathandwa said you peed on yourself.

Me: My waters broke but I am not feeling any labor pains.

Themba: Am I? Am I feeling your labor pains?

Me: My labor pains? How do you feel? That is impossible.

Themba: It's like someone is stretching me inside.

EJ: Mom help dad please.

Themba: Please Yandiswa.

I took the car keys and we walked to the car. I held him. He was walking like someone who was feeling great pain. They both sat on the backseat. I drove straight to the hospital. I was driving slowly. We arrived at the hospital. The nurse attended us and I told her everything.

Nurse: It's rare but I think your husband is feeling your labor pains.

The other nurse came and joined in.

Nurse: Your husband must take off his belt so that you can give birth. Come.

We followed the nurse. They made my husband sit on the wheelchair and Uyathandwa went on the waiting room. I changed into the hospital gown. I was told to sleep on my back on the bed. The Doctor and other nurses came in.

Nurse: Sir please take off your belt.

Themba took off his belt and I felt the need to push.

Me: I feel like pushing.

Doc: Let me check your womb. [He checked] You're ready to give birth push.

I opened my legs wide and pushed. I pushed and pushed. Themba held my hand. They told me to stop and my baby was out.

Doc: It's a baby girl.

He passed the baby on to my arms. I held her and put her on my chest. She cried. Themba held my hand. He kissed my forehead.

Themba: Themba + Thandeka = Thembeka.

Me: Really?

Themba: Yes. This is Thembeka.

Me: Thembeka Uyabongeka Smith.

Themba: Thank you.

I smiled and kissed.....

Two days later I was going back home. Themba, Alondwe and Uyathandwa came to the hospital. I was ready to go. I stepped off the bed and I hugged my daughter. I kissed her all over her face. She giggled.

Me: How are you my Angel?

Aloe: I am fine mama and you?

Me: I am happy that I see you baby. You're 4years old now?

Aloe: [she smiled] Me too mommy. Next year daddy is going to graduate and he said we will live in Glenwood here in Durban.

Me: Okay that's nice my baby. You will be close to your mom. Are you happy?

Aloe: Yes mommy I am happy.

I kissed her again and I looked at her brother. He was sad and he looked like he was crying. I placed Alondwe down. I went down to him.

Me: Hey baby what is wrong?

EJ: Daddy called people who will come and take all my rabbits.

Me: Themba?

Themba: Let's go home please.

I nodded and looked away. I was sad because my son was sad. He took Uyabongeka and I took my bags. The nurse came in. I sat on the wheelchair. We went to the car and he drove straight home. We arrived home and we went inside the house. We sat down on the lounge and I fed my baby her bottle. My kids were sleeping. Themba took them to their bed. He came back and sat down with me.

Me: Why are you taking away my son's rabbits?

Themba: I need no rabbits here. No son of mine will play with rabbits.

Me: It's his life Themba. You can't choose for him.

Themba: It's his life but in my house I need no rabbit. I am giving them away.

I stood up with my daughter. I went to her nursery with her. I locked the door behind me. I went to the bed with her. I continued giving her milk. She was slowly drifting off. Themba knocked on the door.

Me: You know I won't sleep on the same bed with you Themba. What do you want?

Themba: I want to say goodnight.

Me: Goodnight.

Themba: To my baby girl too.

Me: She says goodnight too.

Themba: Okay.

He walked away. I wasn't supposed to share the same bed with my husband and I wasn't supposed to cook for him because I just gave birth. I don't know why but my grandmother

from my father's side told me to do so. Uyabongeka fell asleep. I made her sleep on her tummy because she didn't burp. I took my phone and called my dad. He answered.

Dad: My baby?

Me: Hello daddy. How are you?

Dad: I am fine my baby and you?

Me: I am good. I have given birth daddy.

Dad: Really?

Me: Yes. Her name is Thembeke Uyabongeka.

Dad: Glory be to the most high God.

Me: Amen. Please tell my brother.

Dad: I will. Though he was complaining that you hardly visit us.

Me: Andile always complains.

Dad: He misses you baby and I miss you too.

Me: I will visit when my daughter is ready to go out and see the world but for now she's still young dad.

Dad: Okay my baby. Your father is getting married.

Me: Really? With Evelyn?

Dad: Yes with her.

Me: Congratulations dad. I hope she will treat you like a king.

Dad: She already does.

Me:[giggles] That's better. Or else she'll have me to deal with.

We both laughed.

Dad: Yes I know. I love you my daughter.

Me: I love you too my old man. Goodnight.

Dad: Goodnight MaDinangwe.

I giggled and hung up the call. I took off my clothes and I fell asleep.

The following morning my daughter knocked on the door. I was sleeping like a baby. I didn't sleep at night my baby was crying the whole night. Themba was on a five days leave.

Me: What do you want?

Aloe: Daddy said breakfast is ready.

Me: Okay I will come.

She walked away. She was also calling Themba daddy. I went back to sleep. I woke up when I heard my son crying on the door. I quickly got up and I went to the door. I opened the door and picked him up.

Me: What is wrong?

EJ: Daddy took away my rabbits mama.

Me: What? When?

EJ: Just now. He left with all of them. He took Laa Laa with him.

I felt tears threatening my eyes. I brushed his back and I held him tightly.

Me: I am sorry my boy.

EJ: I hate him mama. I hate him.

Me: No don't say that he's your father.

EJ: I hate him.

I held him close to me. I rocked him in arms. He cried until he fell asleep. I put him inside the bed covers and I went to my room. I took a shower and I changed my clothes. I went to the nursery. Uyabongeka was awake. I bathed her and gave her the bottle. I went downstairs and ate my breakfast. After breakfast. I sat with my daughter. We were just bonding on the carpet. We ended up falling asleep.

Later we were woken up by Themba and Alondwe. Themba took Uyabongeka.

Aloe: Where is Uyathandwa mom?

Me: Go and check him on the baby's nursery.

She nodded. She went upstairs.

Me: So you finally managed to hurt my son?

Themba: What did I do?

Me: You know what you did.

Themba: Mxm can we close the rabbit chapter. It's starting to irritate me.

Me: Excuse me? You don't care about my son's feelings.

Alondwe came downstairs running. We looked at her. She was panting.

Aloe: My brother is not here mom.

Me: What do you mean? He was on the nursery.

Aloe: he's not there.

Me: His room?

She shook her head "No"

Themba: The playing room?

Aloe: I checked every room upstairs mom but he's not there.

Me: No.

I stood up and I quickly went upstairs. I checked everywhere upstairs. He was not around. I thought of checking him on the backroom. I went there and he was not there. I started crying. Alondwe was following me around. I went to the basement. We checked every room but Uyathandwa was nowhere to be found. I went to his room. I looked around. His school backpack was gone. I sat down on the carpet and cried. Themba came inside the room with Alondwe.

Aloe: [crying] Mommy? Where is he?

Me:[crying] I don't know. I don't know Laa Laa. Oh Lord my baby.

Themba came close to me. I pushed him off.

Me: This is all your fault. I hate you too Themba.

Themba: Yandiswa you don't mean that.

Me: You drove my son away just because he wanted a stupid rabbit! I hate you!

I stood up and ran downstairs. I took my car keys and I went to my car. I got inside and I drove off. I drove around the street calling out his name. It was dark outside. I drove almost all the La Lucia streets but I couldn't find him. I parked my car on the other side of the road and I cried my lungs out.

drove back to my neighborhood. I didn't go to my house. I went to Mrs Martins house. She was an old white lady living with her grandchildren. I buzzed her gate. She answered. I wasn't crying loud. I was crying silently.

Mrs M: Mrs Martins hello.

Me: It's Mrs Smith. Can you let me through?

Mrs M: Okay dear.

The gate swung open. I drove through. I stepped out of the car and I went through. The puppy came out of the house running. It was barking at me. The young boy Luke came and picked it up.

Luke: You naughty boy. Don't scare Alvin's grandmother.

I smiled faintly. I wiped my tears away. Luke went to the same daycare with Uyathandwa. He was four years old. He knew about Alvin.

Me: Hey Luke.

Luke: Hello mam. How is Alvin? I saw EJ leaving with a lady.

Me: You saw him?

Luke: Yes.

Mrs Martins: Please come inside.

I followed Luke. We sat down on the lounge.

Mrs Martins: How can we help you dear?

Me: My son is missing.

Mrs Martins: We saw him leaving right Luke?

Luke: Yes granny. A black BMW parked in front of the gate. It hooted for some time. The gate was opened and it drove through.

Me: And then?

Luke: A coloured lady came out of the car. Ethan Junior attended her. They talked for a long time. Then EJ went back to the house he came back carrying his backpack. They both stepped inside the car and the lady drove off.

Mrs Martins: Ethan Junior waved his hand at us. He looked excited about going with that lady. What happened?

Me: I was sleeping with my daughter on the lounge. I didn't hear all those things happening. I didn't sleep last night the baby was crying. I was really out. I woke up my son was gone. Can you describe the lady for me.

Luke: She had red hair. They were not long.

Mrs Martins: It's more like a boy cut baby. She's tall and skinny. She's quite beautiful.

Me: Thank you so much. You won't mind telling the police boy?

Luke: No I won't.

I stood up and I hugged Mrs Martins and Luke. I drove straight to my house. Alondwe was crying on the lounge. She was alone with Uyabongeka. She ran up to me. I hugged her.

Me: Where is your father?

Aloe: He left.

Me: uThemba kanti uyahlanya yini. Engakushiya wedwa Lana. Tsk! I am sorry baby. Don't cry.

Aloe: Did you find my brother?

Me: No my love but we will find him.

Aloe: Did he run away because daddy took away Alvin and his family?

Me: [crying] No baby. He didn't. Don't worry. Let's pray for him so that he can come back home safe.

I held her hand and I prayed. She just cried.

I said Amen when I heard the door being opened. I opened my eyes and Themba walked inside the house.

Me: How could you leave my children alone?

Themba: I am not in the mood for you right now. Please.

He went upstairs. I wiped my tears away.

Me: Are you hungry?

Aloe: Yes.

I stood up with her. Uyabongeka was sleeping. I made a quick snack for her. I gave it to her.

Aloe: You won't eat mommy?

Me: I am not hungry my baby.

She nodded and continued eating. I thought about the information that Luke told me about. I cried silently. I gave Alondwe my back.

Aloe: Mommy can I go and sleep?

Me: Okay.

I wiped my tears and I kissed her goodnight. I picked her up and I went upstairs with her. I put her inside her bed covers.

Me: I love you.

Aloe: Promise me you'll go and look for my brother.

Me: I will go my love.

Aloe: And you will find him.

Me: I will find him and bring him back home.

Aloe: I love you too mommy.

I kissed her forehead, I gave her the teddy bear and I left her room. I went back downstairs. I took my daughter and I went to put her on her cot. I called the nanny and asked her to come to my house using a cab. She was okay with it. I went to my room. Themba was on the bathroom. I took my spot bag and I packed a few clothes. I went to the bathroom. I took my toothbrush and toothpaste. Themba was brushing his teeth. He was butt naked. I went back to my room. I packed the toothbrush and the toothpaste. Themba came inside the room.

Themba: Where are you going?

Me: The last time I checked you were in no mood for me.

Themba: Yandiswa where are you going?

Me: I am going to look for my son.

Themba: I have contacted the police. Please don't go out there on the streets at night. It's dangerous.

Me: It's dangerous? My son is somewhere around the world and you're telling me it's dangerous.

Themba: You don't even know where he is.

Me: I know that one of your coloured bitches took my son away from me.

Themba: Coloured bitches? What are you talking about!

Me: It's either your psychopath wife or your obsessed girlfriend. One of them has my son and I swear to God when I find her I will kill her.

I took my bag and I went downstairs. The nanny arrived. I told her about my situation. She went up to the nursery. I went to the kitchen and I took two knives. I put them inside my handbag. I took my bags and I walked up to the door.

Themba: Yandiswa please don't go please. At least let's work together to get a way forward and the best strategy on how we can find him.

Me: Right now I don't have time to plan. I will act what my mind tells me to do.

I walked out of the house. I stepped inside the car. I drove off. I didn't know where I was going but all I wanted was my son..

I checked in to a lodge around South Beach. I took my phone and I called my mother in-law. Her phone rang. She picked up.

Mrs Smith: Hello baby.

Me: [crying] My son mama. My son is missing.

Mrs Smith: What do you mean?

Me: He.. [I told her everything]

Mrs Smith: How could Ethan deny his son a pet. It's nothing but a pet. He didn't tell me that Lelethu is missing.

Me: I don't know what to do mama.

Mrs Smith: I will tell my husband. I am sure my husband will know people who can look for him. We will find him don't worry.

Me: Thank you mama.

Mrs Smith: Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight.

I hung up the call and I called Samkelo. I wanted him to take Alondwe. I didn't want my daughter to be alone in that house. He picked up immediately.

Me: Samkelo?

Sam: Thandeka?

Me: Can you please go and take my daughter. Uyathandwa is missing. I am trying to look for

him. Please come and take my daughter.

Sam: Okay. I will do that. I am sorry about your son Thandeka.

Me: Thank you.

I hung up the call. I called everyone who was close to me letting them know about my son's disappearance.

>>>>>>>>>>

A week had passed we were still looking for my son. Dad hired a private investigator to help me find Uyathandwa but there was no hope. It was a Saturday afternoon. I was preparing for church. There was a service that night. I was still in the lodge. I didn't go back home.

Themba wasn't talking to me. Even if his father's people called us to gather the clues. He would come to the meeting and after that he would rush back home without talking to me. If I try to say a word to him. He didn't even bother to answer me. Or respond to anything I say to him. I was wearing my clothes when my phone beeped. I took it and read the text.

"You have a wonderful son. Thandeka. He is full of life and happiness. I never thought I would love a child like I love Uyathandwa. You and Themba created a beautiful boy" I panicked and called the number back. It rang with no answer. I quickly contacted Thobelani to trace the number for me because he was an IT. He promised to get back to me. I sat on my bed and I impatiently waited for him. I was praying while waiting. After about an hour or so he called me back.

Me: Did you find anything?

Thobe: The caller lives in morning side. The phone number is registered by Ava MacLean.

Me: Shit! What do I do?

Thobe: Call the police and go to the address I will email you just now.

Me: Thank you so much.

Thobe: I really hope you will find him. The phone is still on. This Ava is not that smart after all.

Me: She's just a bitch!

I hung up the call and I called one of my father in-law's guys to accompany me. I waited for him and he finally showed up.

Me: Muzi we don't have time let's go.

Muzi: I will kill her.

Me: No slow down please.

I took my bag and my car keys. We drove straight to morning side. We parked far away from the house but close enough that we could see it.

Muzi: We won't buzz the gate. We have to jump the fence. Let's just stay here until it get dark.

Me: Okay.

We stayed there until it was very late. We waited for the neighborhood to sleep.

Eventually most houses the lights were off. We stepped out of the car and we went to the dark side of the fence. It was an easy fence to climb. Muzi kneeled down and I got on him. I fell on the yard. He climbed the fence and we went to knock on the door. And surprise! Ava opened the door. Muzi took out his gun and pointed it on her. He put his gun on silencer.

Muzi: You scream. I will pull the trigger.

Ava: You don't have to do this. Yes Uyathandwa misses you Thandeka but we're happy together.

Muzi: Move in now!

Ava: Please don't shout! He'll wake up. I just put him on bed now.

Me: You have mothered my son?

Ava: I wanted to do more on him just to hurt Themba after finding out that Themba and his friends killed my father but I couldn't do it. He's such a lovely boy. He desperately needed

his rabbits back and I found them for him. I searched the whole Durban and I found them. I am sorry. I couldn't –

The next minute she was on the floor. I looked at Muzi. I was shocked.

Me: Killing her was not part of the plan!

Muzi: She's a bitch and she's wasting our time. We don't leave such alive.

Me: But to kill her?

Muzi: Help me work on the plan to get rid of her.

Me: I have a plan.

We sat down and worked on the plan. Ava was dead. We then looked for her diary or anything that had her handwriting. We found it. My son was peacefully sleeping with his rabbits. I copied her handwriting and I wrote a short note saying "I am sorry I took your son Thandeka. I wanted to do more to him but I couldn't. He wanted his rabbits and I found them. But he dearly misses you that's why I brought him back to you. I am sorry – Anonymous"

Muzi: That's clever. I will check if we don't have cameras here.

I nodded. He checked the whole house. It was clear.

Muzi: You will take your boy and his rabbits. I will take this body and dispose it and her car.

I nodded. We covered our hands and packed up a few clothes and shoes for her. Muzi took her body, put it inside her car and her bag and I went to get the car and I drove inside the yard. Muzi took my son, his rabbits and his backpack. We wiped everything that we touched with our hands. Muzi drove out of the house. And I drove to the lodge first. I parked my car. I broke the back window and I left Uyathandwa alone in the car. I went to my room and I stayed there for about 45 minutes. Muzi sent the text pretending to be Ava. He used her phone to tell me to come and get my son. I then rushed out of my room crying. I went to the security.

Me: [crying] The woman who kidnapped my son sent this text.

I gave the security and he read it.

Security: Give me your car keys. I will go and search your car. Just in case it's a prank.

I wiped my tears and I gave him my car keys. He ran out of the building. I sat down on the waiting area. And I pretended to be worried. He came back holding my son. I quickly got up and took him away from him. I kissed him.

Me: Oh my baby.

Security: this letter was there and there were rabbits in the car but I didn't take them because pets are not allowed in here.

Me: Okay sir thanks. I think I have to call the police.

Security: Okay.

Me: Thanks again.

He nodded. I took my keys and I went to my room. I placed my boy on the bed. I shook him. He reluctantly opened his eyes. He rubbed them. He looked at me. I smiled at him and he smiled back.

EJ: Mama!

Me: My baby.

I hugged him tightly. I cried. We let go. I wiped my tears.

EJ: Mama. I have missed you mama.

Me: I have missed you too my baby. Why did you leave without telling me?

EJ: Aunt Roxy showed me a picture of her and my dad together. She told me she's a good friend of my father. She asked why I was sad and I told her that dad took my rabbits away. She promised to get them back only if I go with her. She will tell dad to come and get me later. I agreed. She said we must not wake you up because you're tired. She was nice mama. She brought Alvin, Ava and their babies back.

Me: Oh. My baby. I am happy that you're safe. I love you baby and don't ever go with

someone you don't know. Even if they say they are friends with us okay?

EJ: Yes mommy. I love you too.

Me: Okay let's sleep. You will see Alvin tomorrow.

He smiled and nodded. I kissed his forehead and we cuddled each other to sleep.

The following day. I reported to the police and I gave them the letter. I showed them the SMS. They promised to investigate. I told everyone that we found Uyathandwa. I fixed my car's window. Muzi told me he got rid of everything. After it all. We then drove back home. I drove through and I found Themba on the lounge. He was with Uyabongeka. He looked at us and he stood up. He gave the nanny Uyabongeka. He went down and hugged Uyathandwa. He carried him upstairs. He didn't say a word to me. I went Kimberly and took my daughter.

Me: I hope she didn't give you hard time.

Kim: Not at all.

She looked down. She was avoiding me.

I played with my daughter. She fell asleep. I went upstairs and I buckled her on her cot. I went out of the room. Themba came out of Uyathandwa's room.

Me: Is he sleeping?

He nodded and walked passed me. I held his hand. I looked at him.

Me: What did I do wrong?

Themba: I want you to leave my house Thandeka.

Me: Excuse me?? I am Thandeka now?

Themba: You heard me. I can't do this anymore. Thanks for finding Ethan junior but I would like our relationship to be about our children only nothing more.

Me: Why? What did I do wrong?

Themba: You will never see me as your husband. I don't deserve your respect in your eyes. There are lot of things that I can keep up with but I can't keep up with disrespect. I asked the nanny to pack up your things. You will leave first thing tomorrow.

Me: But Themba I love you.

Themba: No you don't. No woman disrespect the man he loves. I tried ukubekezela but I can't anymore. Maybe if your mother raised you well this wasn't going to happen.

Tears streamed down my cheeks when I heard him say that.

Me: My mother? How could you say that when you know that I grew up without my mom.

Themba: I am sorry but this is not working for me. I can't do it. When there's no respect. I doubt there is love there. I can't.

Me: [crying] Fine. I will leave but I am leaving with my children.

Themba: You can leave with Ethan Junior but Thembeke is going nowhere!

He said and walked away. I sat on the floor and cried...

I pulled myself together and I went to his room. I opened the door. He was sitting on top of his bed.

Me: Themba I can't leave my daughter. I love her and she's my child.

Themba: You left her here.

Me: So? You were here nje.

Themba: Mmm. Look you don't have to tell your parents about our breakup. I won't tell mine too. I know you don't like humiliation. We won't get divorced but there's no relationship between us.

Me: So I will be stuck up with Smith name?

Themba: You're still my wife but I can't seriously be in a relationship with you.

Me: I can't leave my child Themba.

Themba: What do you suggest?

Me: Can I take them both?

Themba: No.

Me: Uyathandwa will hate living without you. Can we be parents to them.

Themba: Okay come and sit down.

I grabbed a chair and I sat down.

Themba: We can stay together for the sake of our children. But you will have your own room. You will sleep there. I will sleep here. That's how we can raise them together because Thembeke is seriously going nowhere. I felt great pain for my daughter to let her go just like that.

Me: You were willing to let Uyathandwa go because you felt no pain for him?

Themba: No. You can leave my room now.

I nodded and stood up. I transported my things and I placed them on the guest room. I was willing to stay in the house just to be with my kids. Yes! I was in love with Themba but it was seriously useless. How do you force a man to love you? No you don't force anyone to love you. I unpacked my clothes and I went downstairs to make something to eat. Themba was eating.

Me: The nanny left?

Themba: Yeah.

Me: Okay. So you won't ask how we got Uyathandwa?

Themba: It doesn't matter. What matters is that you found him.

Me: Okay. His rabbits are back do you have a problem accommodating them in your house?

Themba: It's cool. They can stay here. Where you were keeping them before.

Me: Thank you.

Themba: Okay.

I made a quick snack. I took my plate. I sat down on the lounge and I ate. I washed my plate and I went upstairs. I took a shower. I wore my pyjamas. I went to check on my son. He was sleeping. I kissed his forehead and I went to the nursery. I slept with my daughter.

Weeks went by and we were still living together. I wasn't doing anything for him. But I was only taking care of my children. I was going back to work the following year January. We threw a huge birthday party for Uyathandwa. It was his third birthday. His friends from the daycare were there. Even Alondwe came for his birthday. It was very special and my son was happy. His grandparents came. Themba and I managed to pretend like we are happy. They didn't suspect a thing. The police didn't find anything on Ava and the case was closed. It now end of November. It was a Friday night. Themba was out with his friends. I was in the nursery with Uyathandwa and Uyabongeka. We were sleeping together. I took my phone and I called my daughter. Samkelo answered.

Sam: Baby mama?

Me: Baby daddy can I speak to our baby.

Sam: You don't even ask how are you baby daddy. You don't even love me nakancane?

Me: Do you always have to remind me, us?

Sam: That's because I still love you.

Me: I am not ready for another relationship.

Sam: What do you mean?

Me: I mean can I speak to my daughter?

Sam: Laa Laa. Your mother wants to speak to you. [I heard her running.]

Aloe: Mamami?

Me: Laa Laa wami.

Aloe: How are you Mamami?

Me: I am fine and you?

Aloe: I am fine mama. I am going to do grade R next year mommy.

Me: Really? I am a proud mother.

EJ: I will do it too.

Aloe: You are young! You will do it after me. I am your big sister.

Sam: You are not that big Laa Laa.

EJ: Thank you uncle.

We laughed.

Me: When are you bringing my daughter home Samkelo. It's November already there is no need for her to go to pre school anymore.

Sam: I will, don't worry.

Me: Thanks. I love you my Laa Laa.

Aloe: I love you too mommy and baby brother.

EJ: I love you too and uncle too.

Sam: Thank you boy. I love you both.

EJ: And my mommy?

Sam: Yes and your mother. [He giggled]

Me: Sam!

Sam: Okay goodnight.

Us: Goodnight.

Sam: [speaking Zulu] Thandeka?

Me: Baba ka Laa Laa

Sam: Laa Laa your grandmother is calling you.

Aloe: No she didn't.

Sam: Yes! She did, go!

She made funny sounds and walked away.

Sam: Talk to me. I can feel that you are not Okay.

Me: My marriage [I told him everything]

Sam: I am sorry. But do you know what does that mean?

Me: What?

Sam: That means you must come back home. Where you belong.

Me: Goodnight Ndunakazi ka Sanelisiwe.

Sam: She left me and went to Dubai.

Me: I am sorry but you'll be fine.

Sam: I will wait for you Mrs Ndunakazi.

Me: Mxm! Sleep!

I hung up the call. I kissed my babies.

EJ: Mommy?

Me: My boy?

EJ: Did daddy tell you that he loves you today?

Me: Uhm.. Yeah he did.

He smiled and brushed my hair. I turned off the lights and we drifted off to sleep....

The following morning was a Saturday. I woke up. Uyathandwa was not next to me.

Uyabongeka was still sleeping. I went to the bathroom and I took a shower. I brushed my teeth and lotion. I wore a simple black dress. I went downstairs. Themba and Uyathandwa were playing soccer outside the house. I stood by the door and looked at them. Themba was giving him a hard time.

EJ: Mommy\_\_ come and play with us.

Me: I can't run baby.

Themba: Uyakusinda umzimba? [Your body is heavy]

Me: Uyawubona nje nawe. I got some ass and curves.

Themba: Welele!

Me: Let me leave you to it.

EJ: We're tired now. Right daddy?

Themba: Yes boy. Let's go and bath now.

Me: Have you ate breakfast?

Them: No.

Me: Okay.

He picked him up and walked up to his room with him. I went to make breakfast. I put their food on the microwave and I ate. I went upstairs and checked up on Uyabongeka. She was awake. I picked her up.

Me: Hello Miss Smith. Let mommy give you a bath now.

I took off her clothes and her nappy. I mixed water and I bathed her. I put her on warm clothes and I went downstairs with her. I gave her, her mouth nipple and I passed her to her daddy. I went to the kitchen and made her formula. I put it in ice cold water.

Me: Uyathandwa?

EJ: Mommy?

Me: Did you check up on Alvin?

EJ: No I will now.

He ran out of the house. I followed him. He sat down and played with them.

Me: You are a bad father. You forgot about your babies.

EJ: No mommy. I didn't forget about them. I was playing with daddy.

Me: Okay my baby. Feed them I will leave you.

EJ: Okay mommy.

I turned back and Themba was standing by the door.

Themba: Uyabongeka wants to play with the rabbits too.

Me: She's too young Themba.

Themba: But she told me that she wants to play.

Me: Her formula is alright now.

Themba: Ubandlululo.

I shook my head and took Uyabongeka. I went to the kitchen and I gave her, her formula.

Themba: [standing by the door] Uyathandwa told me that Samkelo said he loves you.

Me: Oh.

Themba: That's all you can say?

Me: What do you want me to say?

Themba: So you two are back together?

Me: That surely doesn't concern you Themba. We're no longer in a relationship remember? And I don't see nothing wrong if he tells me that he loves me.

Themba: The problem is you're talking all those things in front of my son.

Me: Oh.

Themba: Tsk!

He went upstairs. He came back dressed up. He took his car keys and left. I was left alone with my kids.

We were watching cartoons with Uyathandwa. Uyabongeka was fast asleep. There was buzz on the gate. I stood up and attended it.

Me: Smith residents yebo?

Sam: Do you mind opening the gate for us.

Aloe: The sun is hot outside.

They both giggled. I laughed. I opened the gate. I went to the lounge.

Me: Uyathandwa your sister is here.

EJ: Really??

He stood up and ran outside. I followed him. They stepped out of the car. Uyathandwa

hugged his sister. I hugged Samkelo.

Aloe: My brother.

EJ: My Sister. Did you fly?

Aloe: Yes I am not scared anymore.

Me: You have grown up now.

I picked her up and kissed her.

Aloe: Yes mommy.

Sam: Let me take you all out.

Me: Asifuni!

Sam: Wena njalo uyaphapha.

Me: I am kidding let's go. I will have to call my nanny. We can't go with Uyabongeka.

Sam: Can I see her?

Me: Yeah sure. But she's sleeping.

Sam: No problem.

We walked inside the house. My phone rang. I put Alondwe down and I ran to it. Andile was calling. I answered.

Me: Bhuti wami.

Andile: Kuki wami my foot!

Me: I am sorry.

Andile: We didn't say forget about us just because you're married.

Me: Eish I am a bad sister. I am sorry. How is my nephew?

Andile: He's fine. I wish he can never grow up. Useyahlupha.

Me: Shame. You'll be fine daddy.

Andile: You'll come home right?

Me: Yes we will come. Any progress on daddy's wedding?

Andile: Stepmother is busy planning it.

Me: Okay. That's better. Send my love to everyone.

Andile: Okay. Don't be a stranger. I love you.

Me: I love you too.

Andile: Send my love to your family.

Me: I will.

Andile: Okay bye.

Me: Bye.

We hung up and I called the nanny. She promised to come right away. I went to the lounge and Samkelo had Uyabongeka on his arms.

Sam: She's beautiful.

Me: Just like me.

Sam: Mxm. Beautiful wena?

Me: Mxm. Let me go and change.

I went upstairs and changed my clothes. I wore a red dress and black stilettos. I took my handbag and I went downstairs after I took Uyathandwa's clothes. The nanny was already there.

Me: Come baby let me change you.

He stood up. I changed him. We finished and we left. We drove straight to La Lucia mall.

They wanted wimpy so we went there. They ordered what they wanted and we did the same.

As soon as the order arrived we all ate. After that we drove to Ushaka. We played games with them. It was a very special day and my kids were really happy. After that we drove back home. Samkelo parked outside the house.

EJ: Laa Laa let's go and check on Alvin.

Aloe: Okay.

Me: Thank you for today.

Sam: Please don't go yet.

He opened the door for the kids. I opened the gate for them. They waved goodbye to Samkelo and they walked inside the yard. We sat on the backseat.

Me: What's wrong?

Sam: Fate has a way of working things out.

Me: I suppose you're talking about our relationship.

Sam: Yes.

Me: I am still married.

Sam: There's no relationship between you two and you know that.

Me: I know but it won't feel right.

He held my hand and looked at me.

Sam: Let's at least try. If you can't I will respect that. But please give me a chance. Us a chance.

Me: Why not? It's not like I am in a relationship with anyone.

He grabbed me by my neck. He kissed me and I responded to the kiss. It felt so good. His hands on my skin. He kissed me like the first time after doing that ceremony. It described how much he missed me I suppose. We broke the kiss after a long time. I rested my head on his shoulder.

Sam: You have no idea how much I missed you. I always kept on hoping that maybe one day you will come back but you never did.

Me: I was angry at you. I wanted you to suffer because you didn't give me a chance to explain. You gave away our relationship after everything we went through together. You forgot easily.

Sam: But Thandeka you were in bed with another man. How was I supposed to react. I was hurt and betrayed by the only woman I love. I wanted to forget about it and move on but it was hard. But I never stopped loving you and hoping.

Me: I am sorry for everything.

Sam: It's in the past now. Ungubambo lwami phela wena.

He kissed my cheek. I giggled. I kissed him. We broke the kiss. He kissed my forehead.

Me: I have to go. When are you leaving?

Sam: I have a few things to sort first. I am moving to Durban next year. then I will go and visit mom.

Me: Okay mama's boy.

He laughed.

Sam: I am a big boy now. I don't depend on mama.

Me: That's a very good thing.

Sam: I hope you are no longer daddy's little girl.

Me: Haaa uyazi nawe. I will forever be daddy's little girl.

Sam: [laughing] And I will forever be mama's boy.

Me: Eww! Samkelo.

Sam: You love me like that right?

Me: I love you like that mama's boy.

Sam: I love you like that too daddy's little girl.

I giggled and we kissed once more. We stepped out of the car. We shared a long hug.

Sam: Umuhle.

Me: Umubi.

We laughed. He made a puppy face.

Me: Okay. You're cute as fuck.

He smiled and kissed my forehead. He held my hand.

Sam: Take care of yourself.

Me: You too take care.

We let go and I stepped aside. He stepped inside the car. He waved his hand goodbye. I did the same. He drove off and I walked inside the house with a smile on my face. No one was downstairs. I went to check up on my kids. They were still playing with the rabbits. I went upstairs with an aim of taking a shower. I took off my clothes. I wrapped myself with a towel. I went to the bathroom. I had no shower gel. I went to Themba's room. I wanted to take another one in his bathroom. I opened the door. I screamed at the sight of Themba and the nanny having sex.

Themba: Shit! Yandiswa man! Why don't you knock.

Me: I am sorry.

I quickly closed the door and I went back to my room. I closed the door and I sat on the floor. I kept on replaying what I saw...

I stood up and went to the mirror. I looked at myself. "I will definitely not be sad about all this. We are no longer in a relationship and he is entitled to move on." I sighed. I went downstairs and took a bar soap. I went back to my room and I bathed. I wore my pyjamas. I went downstairs and I started cooking for my kids. They came back running.

Me: What's wrong?

Aloe: Mama Baby Alv is sick.

EJ: Help him mommy.

I picked him up. I wiped his tears away.

Me: Don't cry Nana. We will take him to the hospital. And he'll be fine. Okay?

He nodded.

Me: Go and sit on the lounge I will bath you just now.

They both nodded. I put Uyathandwa down. They ran to the lounge. I went to open the TV for them. I finished up cooking and bathed them all. I took my baby and I went downstairs with them. Kimberly was drinking water.

Me: Look dear. I don't want you to be my nanny anymore. I will find someone else.

Kim: I am sorry Thandeka.

Me: Don't be dear. You can fuck your man in whatever way you want but not in front of my kids Okay?

She nodded quickly and left. I put Uyabongeka down. I dished up for myself and the children. I left Themba's food on the pot. I am not that cruel after all. I called them. They sat down. I took Uyabongeka and fed her nestum. Themba came down on his pyjamas.

Themba: Hello Princess Laa Laa.

She stepped off the chair. She ran up to Themba. Themba picked him up. He kissed her forehead.

Aloe: Hello daddy.

Themba: How are you Nana.

Aloe: I am fine daddy and you?

Themba: I am fine too. I am happy to see you again.

Aloe: Me too daddy.

Themba: Continue eating.

He put her down. And tickled his boy.

EJ: Daddy!

Themba: Unjani boy?

EJ: Huh?

Themba: Weeh! Inyoni yami madoda.

EJ: What are you saying dad?

Me: He says you're a bird.

EJ: Daddy!!

Themba: I am kidding boy. Can I eat too?

He was looking at me.

Me: Yeah sure.

Themba: Thanks.

He kissed my cheek and went to the kitchen. He joined us and we ate. He was making a conversation with the kids.

The kids finished and they went to the lounge.

Me: Themba?

Themba: Yandiswa I am sorry that you saw all that. Seriously I am sorry.

Me: It's cool. Themba can we just get divorced once and for all.

Themba: I don't want to divorce you Yandiswa. I am failure for a man but I won't divorce you.

Me: I want my Dhlomo name back and leave the Smith name.

Themba: I know you want that but divorce are expensive Yandiswa.

Me: Can you please stop calling me Yandiswa.

Themba: Okay.

Me: I don't want your money. I just want a divorce. That's all.

Themba: I am not divorcing you that's all I can say. You'll only get married again if I die. That's the only way I can find closure.

Me: Ayikho ke lento oyishoyo Themba.

Themba: Ayi asazi ke.

He took the plates and left. I stood up and I went to put Uyabongeka on her cot. I went to back downstairs. My kids were sleeping.

Me: Themba sweetie please take the kids to bed. They are both sleeping.

Themba: [he laughed] Uyakwazi ukuzincengela yezwa. I am sweetie now?

Me: Nhlaba ke.

Themba: Please stick to sweetie. Your baby daddy called. I told him that you'll call later. I hope you're not back together.

Me: Eh! Chineke! God forbid! Go and put the kids to bed and leave my private life private.

Themba: But Thandeka –

Me: No Themba. Go baba.

He nodded and left. I walked out of the house, I sat by the kitchen's stairs and called Samkelo back. He picked up.

Sam: Your ex almost killed me through the phone.

Me: Awu. Don't mind him.

Sam: I almost fainted Thandeka.

Me: My baby don't be scared please. He was just acting out.

Sam: I hope so. Look my love can I see you tomorrow? Just the two of us.

Me: Okay. I will have to call the nanny's agency and find a nanny.

Sam: What happened to the other nanny?

Me: It's a long story mabhebeza.

We laughed.

Sam: I have missed your laughter.

Me: Okay you're making me blush.

Sam: That's my job right?

Me: I hope I will be able to give you all the love that I have bottled up inside for years because of anger.

Sam: I trust you. I know you will. We just have to let the past go.

Me: Yeah. All we need is a fresh start.

Sam: I love you Nanesh.

Me: [I giggled] I love you too honey bear.

We both giggled.

Sam: Goodnight. Kiss the children for me.

Me: Okay I will. Kiss me through the phone ke.

Sam: Mncwa!

Me: Mncwa!

I giggled and hung up the call. I stood up and Themba was standing right behind me. I gasped.

Me: You gave me a fright.

Themba: Sorry.

Me: You know it's rude eavesdropping other people's conversation.

Themba: Yah I know.

He walked away. I sighed. Seriously I didn't know what Themba wanted from me. I went to sleep with my babies. I kissed them goodnight and I drifted off to sleep...

Midnight I woke up. Uyabongeka was crying. I tried to calm her down but she didn't stop crying. I gave her milk she didn't drink it. Alondwe woke up and looked at me.

Aloe: Mama is the baby sick?

Me: No baby she's not sick.

Aloe: Go and give her to daddy.

Me: Mmm okay.

I stood up and I went to Themba's room. I knocked on the door. There was no response I tried again.

Me: Themba?

Themba: Hm?

Me: Please come here.

He came to the door and stretched himself.

Themba: What's wrong with my Princess?

Me: She doesn't want to calm down maybe she needs you.

Themba: Okay Nana come to daddy.

He took her.

Themba: Give me her formula.

Me: Okay.

I went to our room and I took her formula. I took a few things and I went to him. He was on the bed with her. Uyabongeka was not crying anymore.

Themba: She needed me seriously.

Me: Yeah. Alondwe said I must give her to you.

Themba: She's a clever girl.

Me: Should I leave her here?

Themba: Yes I will sleep with her. I will wake you up if engihlula.

Me: Okay goodnight ke babies.

Themba: Say goodnight mama.

I kissed her forehead.

Themba: What about me?

Me: Ayi suka uyimbondla wena.

We laughed and I walked back to my room. I kissed Alondwe. She was asleep.

Me: Thank you baby.

I then drifted off to sleep.

In the morning I was woken up by my phone. It was ringing. Themba's mother was calling. I answered the phone.

Me: Morning mama.

Mrs Smith: Morning baby how are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Mrs Smith: I am fine. I called to tell you that uMakhulu is sick. She said she wants to see you, your husband and the kids this weekend.

Me: Okay mama. Did you tell Themba?

Mrs Smith: I told him.

Me: Okay mama.

Mrs Smith: I will see you Friday ke.

Me: Okay bye.

Mrs Smith: Bye baby. Kiss my grandchildren for me.

Me: I will.

We hung up the call. I then called the agency and I asked for a nanny. I told them my address. They were going to send a nanny. I stood up and I went to take a shower. I brushed my teeth and lotion. I wore my gown and I went downstairs. Themba was sitting by the counter with Uyabongeka.

Me: Morning.

Themba: Morning.

Me: She didn't give you hard time last night?

Themba: No she didn't.

Me: Okay. Your mother called.

Themba: Yeah. We will leave Friday.

Me: Okay.

Themba: Are you going to church today?

Me: No I have somewhere that I have to be.

Themba: Where?

Me: Yoh! Don't ask Themba.

He nodded. I made breakfast for everyone and I bathed all my kids. Themba was going to church with them. He was going to go with the nanny. We had breakfast and they waited for the nanny. After a few minutes a woman between the ages of 40 – 49 was at my doorstep. Themba and her took the kids and they left for church. I cleaned the house first and washed everyone's clothes including Themba's clothes, he was no longer my responsibility but it wouldn't be fair leaving his clothes just like that. After all I was never a lazy wife that's why I had no maid working for me. I put the clothes on the washer. I then hang them on the washing line. I went to shower again. Samkelo texted me that he'll be by my house within ten minutes. I wore white jeans and a blue loose top. I wore white ankle converse sneakers. I combed my hair and tied them up into a neat bun. I applied a lip balm. I took my handbag. And rushed out of the house because the man was hooting non stop. I locked up and I walked out.

Samkelo came out of the car. He smiled and we shared a hug. We baby kissed. I wiped the lip balm off his lips.

Sam: You look beautiful.

Me: I wanted to be more beautiful than this but you were busy hooting on me.

Sam: I know that you take forever to get ready.

Me: Uyazi nawe. Some things will never change.

Sam: Yeah and with you that's so true.

I laughed. He opened the door for me and I stepped inside the car. He did the same.

Me: You hired a car just for a few days.

Sam: I am not used to Durban so I had to. I hate using taxis.

Me: Okay the pecks of being an Accountant.

Sam: A cute one.

Me: Mxm umubi nje wena.

Sam: Ouch you broke my heart.

Me: Sorry my baby.

I kissed his cheek and brushed his chest. Because his little heart was broken.

Me: You will work here in Durban?

Sam: Yes somewhere around UMhlanga.

Me: Okay.

We drove to La Lucia mall and we bought a few snacks. We then drove to botanical gardens.

We had a picnic lunch there. I took a single grape and I aimed it to him.

Me: Catch!

Sam: No bbe –

Me: Please Ndunakazi!

He opened his mouth and I shoot the grape inside his mouth. I laughed and clapped hands for him.

Sam: Your turn.

I giggled and opened my mouth. He purposefully threw the grape on my forehead.

Me: Samkelo! You did that ngamabomu!

Sam: No I didn't. Your mouth whole was too small my love.

Me: You're lying lying.

I hit him with two grapes. He laughed. He baby kissed me. We put the food aside and we laid on our backs. We held each other's hands.

Me: Honey bear?

Sam: Not Bunny bear?

Me: No! [He laughed] do you look like a bunny?

Sam: No my love.

Me: Good! My love Themba's grandma is sick. She wants to see us. I thought I should let you know.

Sam: Okay. I have to take Alondwe.

Me: No don't.

Sam: No my love I don't want her to go.

Me: But bbe I will be there.

Sam: I don't like it. I don't want her to go.

Me: Okay. If that's what you want I will respect your wish.

Sam: Thanks Nanesh.

Me: Nalo Nanesh wakho bbe owukuphapha.

Sam: [laughing] Alondwe is Nana and you're Nanesh.

I laughed stupidly. Samkelo pinched me.

Me: Samkelo!

Sam: Musa ukuhlekisa okohlanya. [Stop laughing like a crazy man]

Me: Ngizokuthuka njalo Mina. Bese uyakhala mama's boy.

He mimicked the baby's cry. I put on a sad face and I kneeled down before him.

Me: My honey bear is your heart aching?

He nodded like a child.

Me: I am sorry baba ka Owami okay?

He spoke like a baby when the baby talks while she/he is crying.

Sam: Kiss\_\_ me\_\_ first.

Me: But you said I laugh like uhlanya.

He faked a loud cry. I looked at him.

Lady: Miss what's wrong with your husband? Do you need help?

Me: [giggles] No we're having a small biscope.

She laughed.

Her: Love. It's makes you do stupid things.

I laughed. She continued walking. I looked at Samkelo.

Me: You heard that lady. I was laughing stupidly because of love you dum ass.

Sam: You cockroach ass.

We laughed and kissed each other. I went back to the position I was in before.

Sam: You won't move out?

Me: I will when Uyabongeka turns 1. Themba doesn't want to let her go because he felt labor pains for her.

Sam: He felt labor pains?

Me: Yes. Don't ask me how because I don't know.

Sam: Yoh! I bet he wasn't going to agree to have more kids after that.

Me: That would've been one hell of nonsense.

Sam: How many kids were you planning on having with him?

Me: We were planning on having Four kids. That would mean Five including Nana.

Sam: Okay.

Me: Themba doesn't want to divorce me.

Sam: Uyahlanya! I want to make you my wife nje.

Me: Wee! Make me your wife?

Sam: Hawu. Thandeka uyazi nje. You have always been Mrs Ndunakazi. I was always hoping that you will come back to me.

Me: Can we not talk about marriage?

Sam: Are you scared to get married again bbe?

Me: No I am not.

Sam: I love you.

Me: I love you too.

I sang "Playground love" – by AIR. He hummed along. I sang the song softly til end.

Sam: I am certain that you're the truest love I have ever known.

I smiled. We looked at each for a long time without a word. We kissed each other. We broke the kiss. We spent the last few minutes taking pictures.

After that he drove me straight home. He parked the car outside the gate on the other side of the road.

Me: I had a great time today. Thank you.

Sam: I had a great time too Nanesh.

Me: I love you honey bear.

Sam: I love you too Nanesh.

We stepped out of the car. We shared a hug.

Sam: Umuhle [You're beautiful]

Me: Umubi! [You're ugly]

He tickled me. I laughed non stop.

Me: Samkelo!

He stopped and stepped back.

Me: You can't run away now.

Sam: Watch me!

He ran away. He wanted me to run away. I gave him the satisfaction and I ran after him. He changed and ran after me. I ran as fast as I could. I was laughing while running. He catch me. He held me by my waist and spun me around. I giggled non stop. He kissed me while I was

still up. He put me down.

Me: Usile!

Sam: Tell me you didn't enjoy that.

Me: Okay I did.

He laughed. We hugged and kissed once more. We walked back to the car. We arrived. I opened the door for him, he smiled. He stepped inside. I closed the door and stepped aside.

Sam: I love you.

Me: I love you too.

He drove off. I watched the car until it disappeared. I smiled and I walked inside the house I walked inside the house Uyathandwa was crying. Alondwe was sitting on the couch with him. I put my bag down and I ran up to them. I made him sit on my lap.

Me: What's wrong my baby?

EJ: Baby\_\_ Alv\_\_is not\_\_moving.

Me: What?

Aloe: Daddy said he is dead. He said that means we will never see him again.

Me: I am so sorry baby.

EJ: But mommy you promised that we were going to take him to the hospital. You didn't keep your promise. You didn't keep your promise mom.

Me: No baby we couldn't take him to the pet Doctor on a Sunday. I was going to go with you on Monday. Okay boy?

He nodded.

Me: Where is your father?

Aloe: He's sleeping with Uya.

Me: The nanny left?

Aloe: Yes. Daddy told her to leave.

Me: Okay. Come let's go and eat something nice with mommy.

They stood up and we went to the kitchen. I took chocolates and crashed them into tiny pieces. I poured them on a yoghurt.

EJ: But mommy why don't eat the chocolate as it is.

Me: So that you can run around the whole house. No.

Them: Please mommy!

Me: No!

Them: Please!

Me: Okay!

They screamed "Yeah!". I took the chocolate and we ate it. A few minutes later they were hyper active. They dragged me out of the house. We played indigenous games. Alondwe was teaching us. We went back inside the house because I was tired. We sat down on the carpet on the lounge. Themba came downstairs looking fresh and dressed up. He had his phone and the car keys on his hands. He looked at us.

Themba: And then what happened?

Me: We were playing outside.

Themba: Can I talk to you in private?

Me: Okay.

I stood up and we went to the kitchen.

Themba: When did you come back?

Me: Cha Themba I don't report to you. You can't ask me where are you going? When did you come back? It doesn't work like that. Remember I am here for my baby not you.

Themba: But you're my wife.

Me: I quote " We are not in a relationship" you said that. I am just wearing the wife name. You dumped me. So please do me a favor divorce me and leave me alone.

Themba: You know I won't do that.

Me: Hayi ke anghazi.

Themba: I will come back later.

Me: You don't have to tell me. I don't care about your whereabouts. You can tell your son maybe not me.

I walked away. I went upstairs to shower. I wasn't going to let him drive me like a GPS. "Destination to Empangeni" the GPS will direct his ass to Empangeni. "You have reached your destination" He'll change his mind immediately and he'll want to go Eshowe. I wasn't going to do that like I am some stupid programmed computer system. I was with Samkelo and I was going to stick by decision no matter what! I was going to try and be a better woman for him. I was going to buy books and learn more about respect and relationships because hearing it from my granny and adults didn't work. Maybe if I was going to hear it from some stranger talking about it in my favorite language. I was going to listen and apply it in my life. Because truth be told I speak my mind and I am disrespectful. I wanted to change. I was going to do that for myself, my children and Samkelo. I finished showering and I bathed my three kids. I fed Uyabongeka. She loved eating. I wasn't going to survive if I was going to feed her according to theory. After feeding her. I gave her formula and I made her rest on my shoulder so that she can burp. After she had burped I put her down and I went to take the clothes on the washing line. I put them on the washing basket on the laundry room making a mental note to iron them later. I went to cook. I left my pots and I took crayons, a pencil and papers. I switched off the TV.

Ej&Aloe: Mommy!

Me: No! Just because it's December that doesn't mean your minds must sleep. Laa Laa write myself here.

Aloe: I can only say it mommy. I don't know how to write it. I can write my name.

Me: Your dad must ask for refund. Write your name. Uyathandwa colour in this picture.

Aloe: Why can't he write his name?

Me: He'll learn that next year. We must not rush the development of children. Remember he's your baby brother?

Aloe: Oh! He will do it after me?

Me: Yes my angel.

EJ: Give me my paper mommy.

I gave them the papers. I gave Uyathandwa crayons and Laa Laa a pencil. They started working. I left them and I went to check on my pots. I kept on checking them and my pots until I finished cooking. I marked their work and gave them stars. They were happy. We ate and we went to bed. They fell asleep first. I sat on the bed with Uyabongeka slowly drifting off on my lap. I was chatting with Samkelo. I was sleepy. We said our goodnight and I put my baby on her cot. I drifted off to sleep.

>>>>>>>>>>

Days went by. I bought a novel "To Sir, With Love" by E.R Braithwaite. It was a good novel and I was enjoying it. I was fixing myself up. I was basically giving myself therapy. My own personalized therapy. It was Thursday during the day. Themba was at work. It was his last day. He was going to close for the holidays. Samkelo was going to fetch Alondwe. She was ready and we waiting for her daddy. We were fixing up a puzzle. Uyabongeka was on her carrier. She wasn't sleeping. Samkelo called. I picked up.

Me: Ndunakazi.

Sam: Mama ka Nana. I am outside the gate.

Me: You won't come in?

Sam: No. I don't want your ex to think you are disrespecting his house because if he can happen to see me inside his house he'll think otherwise. Just come to me.

Me: Okay.

I hung up the call. I stood up. I took Uyabongeka. I told the kids to stand up. I took her bag and we walked out of the house. Samkelo walked up to us. He hugged the kids. He took the bag and he half hugged me because I had Uyabongeka on my arm. We didn't want to be too intimate in front of the kids because all they knew was that Themba was my husband. He opened the door for Alondwe and he put on the seat belt for her.

Sam: Boy we will see you when you come back okay?

EJ: Okay uncle.

Sam: Sure

EJ: Sure

Sam: Nanesh have a safe trip neh?

Me: Thanks. Drive safe with with our Nana.

Sam: I will.

He squeezed my hand. He played with Uyabongeka's cheeks. Themba's car drove through.

Sam: Let me go then.

Me: Bye my Laa Laa.

Aloe: Bye mamami. Bye Uya and Uya.

EJ: Bye Laa Laa.

We walked back inside the house. Themba was on the phone. Uyathandwa ran up to him. He picked him up with his free hand. I sat on the couch with Uyabongeka. Themba came to us.

Themba: We're leaving within the next 30 minutes. The cab will be here.

Me: I thought we were leaving tomorrow.

He didn't answer me. He walked up to his room with Uyathandwa. I stood up and I went to fix ourselves up with my daughter. Within 30minutes the cab was at the gate. We took our bags and went to the car. It drove us to the airport. Where we took a plane. I wasn't even ready to go there because I didn't help out when Silumko's wife needed my help.

After hours we were home. Makhulu was not well seriously. But she tried to smile through her pain when she saw us.

Grandma: I am happy to see you my children.

Themba: Grandma why don't you go to the hospital?

Grandma: I am old now. I have lived and I saw my children, my grandchildren and great grandchildren.

They continued talking. I didn't say a word. I was quite sad that as old as she was she was feeling pain. They took our kids because grandma wanted to speak to me and Themba.

Grandma: Makoti are you alright?

Me: Ewe Makhulu.

Grandma: Don't lie to me.

I was tired of pretending. I wanted to live my life as it was going to be.

Me: My marriage failed and it's all my fault.

Themba: Yandiswa?

Me: No Themba I don't want to pretend anymore. I didn't give my husband the respect he deserves therefore our marriage failed.

Grandma: If you had forgiven him fully for not reaching out to you for two years in America. You were going to have a healthy relationship. I told you baby that you must free your heart.

Me: He forgot about me makhulu. He forgot about his son. I forgave him but I didn't forget.

Grandma: That's where you're wrong. He didn't forget about you. He had to buy time and I personally persuaded him to do that. I couldn't let him kill his father and go to jail for years.

I looked at Themba.

Themba: Makhulu? You promised.

Grandma: Hhayi Gqibelo Mani! If you still want your marriage to work you can fix it. But if

you don't it's your Choice. Go and talk about it.

We stood up and went to the room we generally use when we were home. We sat down on the bed without a word.

Me: I have given you too many chances. Yes I wasn't perfect most of the things I pushed you too far. For an example Ava. If I didn't lie about the pregnancy none of that would've happened but I can't carry on like this. You gave up on me but I don't remember a single day where I gave up on you. You have Kimberly she's beautiful, young, humble and well mannered. The characteristics that I don't have. Thanks for trying your best to get to us. I should have understood that with a father like yours it was hard for you to act immediately. You were stuck between a rock and a hard place.

Themba: You told grandma because you want me to divorce you.

Me: No. But I do want you to divorce me Themba.

Themba: That's the last thing I am going to do on planet earth!

Me: Fine! I will leave your house Themba.

Themba: You're in that house because of our children.

Me: Yes I was but I can't keep on seeing your face everyday.

Themba: You leave, you will leave my son behind.

Me: Uyathandwa can talk for himself. He'll say who he wants to stay with. You won't choose for him.

He stood up and went to the door.

Themba: Even if he can choose you that doesn't mean I will give you a divorce. And one more thing stop playing happy family with Samkelo using my kids. If I see you again I swear you will visit him in the hospital.

He said on a soft threatening voice. He shut the door behind him.....

I stood up and I went to the kitchen to help where I could help. Vathiswa was there too. I went close to her.

Me: Hi.

Vathiswa: Hi Yandiswa. I heard about your son and I am sorry that you had to go through that pain. I understand if you didn't get time to talk to Themba.

Me: Can we go and talk outside.

She nodded and we went to talk outside.

Me: You're still a house wife?

Vathiswa: Yes and I hate every second of it.

Me: What is your husband's reason for not allowing you to work?

Vathiswa: [mimicking his voice] Who will clean and cook. Who will look after Nyameko. Who will look after our home because I don't want a maid in my house.

I laughed a little. She laughed too.

Me: I am not Laughing at your situation but the way you mimicked his voice hayi!

Vathiswa: It's Okay.

Me: You don't have to hire a maid just because you're working. I don't have a maid. I have a nanny only and since I am still in maternity leave I used to call her in when I have somewhere to be and my husband was not around to stay with them. Or when we want to go out while I was still pregnant we couldn't leave Uyathandwa alone. I clean my house myself. It will be easy for you because you clock out around 14:30. I clock out at 16:00 but I still have to dust up a few rooms, cook and look after the children. I clean the whole house properly during weekends. You just have to make your husband understand and you must be willing to do this so that at least your marriage can work. If he doesn't allow you after suggesting that I will talk to Themba.

Vathiswa: Yoh! Thank you so much. I never thought of that. But I will try and bring that

suggestion up. Thank you so much Yandiswa.

Me: No problem sisi.

Vathiswa: I was wrong about you. You look luxurious and mean but you do have a kind heart.

I giggled and tapped her shoulder. We went back to the kitchen and started cooking. I thought about what I just said to Vathiswa and I thought to myself. I have done everything in my power to keep my marriage together but I failed to respect my husband. And it was over just like that. It didn't even last a year. I was going to be humiliated but at least I will be happy again. After helping with cooking. I went to bath my children. Grandma Smith was taken to the hospital. Though she was stubborn but Themba forced her to go. And she agreed to it. It seemed like everyone in the family respected Themba why? I don't know! And at that stage I didn't care about finding out. After bathing my kids I fed them and I did the same. My mother-in-law took Uyathandwa. He was going to sleep in his grandparents room. Themba and I were going to sleep with Uyabongeka. We fell asleep with my daughter. Themba was not back yet.

The following morning I woke up. Themba was not beside me but his things were there. And it did look like he was sleeping with us. The door was opened. I took my phone out of charger and check the time. It was still early. I had a dozen of missed calls from Samkelo. I called him back. He answered.

Me: Ndunakazi?

Sam: Mama ka Alondwe. Alondwe is sick.

Me: What? What happened?

Sam: She has a sore throat. She started telling me yesterday that she doesn't feel well on her throat I didn't think it was serious. I gave her panado for kids.

Me: Yoh! Jesus! My daughter Samkelo. I think she has tonsils.

Sam: What? That's impossible.

Me: Yes. You have to check her. Tell her to open her mouth widely and check if does she have black or brown or yellowish spot on the walls of the entrance to the **esophagus**. If she has any of those spots it's tonsils but if it's red that's a sore throat it is the beginning of tonsils and you have to make her gargle with warm water mixed with salt. And go buy antibiotics for her. Don't force her to eat but give her yoghurt or ultramel.

Sam: Yoh! So much info how do you know all this things.

Me: I had tonsils when I was young.

Sam: Is there a cure for them?

Me: No but when she will be alright bbe we have to take her to the Doctor and get them removed.

Sam: How are they going to remove them?

Me: They will take her to theatre and they will operate her.

Sam: Bemhlinze emankankeni?

Me: Yes.

Sam: No Thandeka we can't allow that. Alondwe is my only child. What if I loose her. And afterwards? She will feel pain. No! [He sounded sad]

Me: Hey Hey. My honey bear please trust me. I did it too. I was 15yrs old. Dad forced me to do it and yes it was painful afterwards but I never go through that pain again.

Sam: No she'll be fine.

Me: Samkelo. Our daughter will feel this pain periodically. Tonsils don't disappear unless you remove them. They always come back if you don't remove them. We can not let Alondwe feel that pain. She won't be able to eat. She won't be able to swallow saliva. That one time pain is better than the pain she will feel periodically.

Sam: Eish! Being a parent is hard. But we have to talk to her about the operation before she

do it.

Me: She'll be scared Samkelo.

Sam: Yah you're right. Let me do what you said then.

Me: Okay. Take good care of her please. Don't be hard on her.

Sam: I am not a tough Dad.

Me: Okay send my love to her and your heart.

Sam: I will Nanesh. I love you yezwa.

Me: Ngiyakuzwa kahle. Nami ngyakuthanda futhi. Have a nice day.

Sam: Thanks you too.

We hung up the call. I stood up.

I didn't realize Themba was inside the house. He was eating.

Me: Morning?

Themba: Morning.

I wore my gown and wore my slippers. I went to get water. I wanted to bath. Themba was still eating.

Me: Do you mind if I bath now or I should wait? I can wait if you have a problem.

Themba: No problem you can bath.

Me: Thank you.

Themba: Mmm.

Me: What?

Themba: Nothing.

I nodded and I sat down. I didn't want to seem rude or make him uncomfortable. Specially after that "mmm" I didn't know whether he was thinking about me being disrespectful I didn't know.

Themba: Why are you sitting there? Are you shy?

Me: No I am not shy. I will wait for you to finish. Imagine me bathing while you're still eating. I wasn't thinking straight and to bath in front of you is not right.

Themba: You've done it before.

Me: I don't mind I will wait.

Themba: What's wrong with Alondwe?

Me: Nothing is wrong with her.

Themba: You know that is not true. I heard you talking about operations.

Me: It's just a minor thing.

Themba: You still have the tendencies of keeping secrets.

I didn't answer him. I wasn't going to tell him. "Play happy family with Samkelo using my kids you'll visit him in the hospital" And he ask about Samkelo's daughter. Even if he care about Alondwe I personally didn't care about that. He looked at me. I didn't answer him still. He stood up and walked out with the plates. I stood up and bath. He came back a few minutes later and he got inside the bed with Uyabongeka facing my side. I turned back and gave him my back. I finished up bathing quickly. I lotion and wore my clothes. I brushed my teeth and I cleaned up the whole place. I bathed Uyabongeka. I changed her. I walked out. I saw Uyathandwa talking to a guy I didn't know in the gate. I called him. He ran up to me.

Me: Who is that guy?

EJ: I don't know him but he gave me money. He said I speak nicely.

Me: Were you going to go away with him because he gave you money?

EJ: No mommy.

Me: Don't talk to strangers they will take you away from your mommy I told you that before.

EJ: He wasn't going to take me away.

Me: Listen to me Junior please. Do you want your mother to cry?

EJ: No mommy I don't want that.

Me: What will you do when the stranger steal you?

EJ: I will call 911 emergency right away. You see mommy you must buy a phone for me. I will call them and scream HELP! HELP!

I laughed at him and I picked him up.

Me: Firstly you don't call 911 in South Africa. But you call 10111. And mommy is not buying you a phone my baby you're still young. If you a stranger wants to take you don't agree but if they steal you. And someone finds you tell them my number because you know it okay? EJ: Okay mommy. It's 10111. Thanks mommy.

Me: Good boy now let mommy go and feed her baby.

EJ: My baby sister?

Me: Not her. You.

He giggled and nodded. I smiled and walked up to the kitchen...

The weekend passed but we didn't go back home. I was worried about Alondwe because Samkelo was helpless. He couldn't take her to his parents because he was still sorting out his things to start working the following year. And on the other hand Andile was pressuring me about visiting them. Grandma Smith was still sick. Silumko agreed that Vathiswa can go back to work. She was more than happy. We started being close and she was quite a nice person. It was a Monday night. We were in bed with Themba and Uyabongeka. He was busy chatting. I cleared my throat.

Me: Themba?

Themba: Yah?

Me: I need to go back to KZN my daughter is sick. I have to be with her.

Themba: You said she's alright and all of the sudden she's sick. Those are your lies to be with your boyfriend and I can't tolerate them. You're going nowhere.

Me: I am leaving tomorrow. In that way maybe you will be able to explain to your family that I am not the right woman for you and I want you to divorce me.

Themba: If you leave please leave alone.

Me: I am taking Uyathandwa with me.

Themba: Uyangdakelwa.

I didn't answer because I was going to give him the rudest answer alive that's if answers do live. I stood up and I packed my clothes. I didn't pack Uyathandwa's clothes but I was going to leave with him. All I wanted was to be out of the miserable marriage I was in. He looked at me packing up my clothes. He didn't say anything but he kept on looking at me. I finished packing and I went back to sleep.

Themba: How about I do you a little favor and you leave now?

Me: Excuse me?

Themba: I said leave now!

Me: I only have a plane tickets for tomorrow.

Themba: I want you to leave now! I will tell my family that you ran away because you want to be with your baby daddy.

Me: I can't even say goodbye to my son?

Themba: No! Leave now!

Me: It's dark outside and you can't expect me to walk in the place I don't know.

He stood up and opened the door. I had tears streaming down my face. I stood up and changed my clothes. I wiped my tears away and I went to my daughter. I kissed her cheek.

Me: I love you baby.

I took my bag and I went to the door. I looked at Themba. I walked up to the gate. He followed me and opened the gate for me. I walked out. I looked around and I didn't know where was I supposed to go. I took out my phone. Themba was looking at me.

Themba: Don't stand anywhere near our premises. All I wanted from you was "I will try Themba to be a better wife. Tell me how?" I was going to tell you but because you're the mighty Thandeka Dhlomo you beg no one. You went to Samkelo. It's better this way. And if you arrive in KZN please move everything that belongs to you in my house.

Me: Okay. Divorce me ke.

Themba: That will happen in your dreams with your boyfriend.

I didn't respond.

I walked away from the premises. I sat down on the other side of the road. I texted Silumko's wife an essay explaining my situation and I begged her to help me get my son. I wasn't going to leave without Uyathandwa even if I had put on a musk and steal him I was going to do it. She responded and promised to try. I told her to delete the messages and I did the same. I thought about where to go and I remembered my grandmother and my uncle who lived eLusikisiki. I was desperate. I called uncle Lunathi and he promised to come and get me. I waited in the dark and I saw two guys approaching my way. I started saying a short prayer. I was praying that God can give me a break through like the last time my dad threw me out. They came to me and looked at me. One guy lighted me up using his phone. He moved his phone all over me from head to toe. I looked at him.

Guy1: What are you doing here at this time of the night?

Me: I am waiting for my uncle.

Guy2: While waiting for your uncle how about you us give that phone you're carrying and some cash.

One of them took out a knife. I started crying.

Me: I don't have cash with me bhuti.

Guy2: Bring the phone damnit!

Me: Please you rather take my wedding ring. It's more expensive than my phone.

Guy1: What will I do with a ring?

Me: Sell it and you'll get cash.

Guy2: How about you give me both those things now. Or separate your legs for me. I could use a fuck right now and my bitch is not around. I don't know where she is.

Guy1: Yeah and you are pretty.

I quickly took off my ring and gave it to him.

Me: I will look for some cash please don't take my phone. Please. And don't hurt me.

I said opening the phone and taking out my sim card and my memory card. They didn't see all that because the light was on my face. I put it back together and I gave it to him. He took it. Me: It's off. The battery is dead.

Guy1: Good girl!

He moved the knife to my face and kissed me roughly. I pushed him off.

Me: You said you'll let me go!

Guy1: Relax Baby! I was kidding. Ta Lu. Hold this staff.

He pushed me off and I laid back by his force. I cried and he held my mouth with his hands. I tried to make my eyes look around if there was someone coming but there was no one coming. He ripped my dress off using a knife. He ripped my bra and panties. Tears didn't stop streaming down. I tried to fight using my hands the other guy held my hands. He then separated my legs roughly and I closed my eyes. I cried. After a few minutes I felt his lips on my neck and his breath was bad because he was a little drunk. I then felt his hard dick trying to go inside me. It was painful.

Guy1: The bitch is tight as hell!

Guy2: Hurry up before her uncle rock up here. I want to try my luck too.

He fucked me hard and very quick. The second guy did the same.

Guy1: Thanks bbes.

Guy2: Yeah sure. You're nice!

They then ran away after.

I was crying and shaking. I tried to sit but I couldn't. I remained on that position. I waited for about 30minutes. My uncle was where I was. I heard his voice calling my name. I cried even louder. His foot step approached my direction.

Lunathi: Yoh! Bawo!

He opened my bag and looked for my clothes. He took out my gown and he tried to dress me up. I was shaking. He picked me up and put me at the back of my car. He went to take my things. I gave him my memory card and sim card. I didn't let it go. He took it. He stepped inside the car and he drove off.....

My uncle drove for hours on the road and all I could see was those men on top of me. I couldn't stop crying. Finally we parked in front of the hospital. He picked me up and rushed inside with me. He explained everything and after about an hour the Doctor examined me, gave me the necessary pills, she took blood samples and she gave me an injection. I passed out.

I woke up in a different room or different hospital I didn't know. My uncle Lunathi, his wife, Andile, my dad, and Samkelo. They were all inside the room. It was a private room. I looked at them and they were all written "worry" on their faces. I tried to think what must have happened and I finally remembered what happened. I was raped not by one guy but two. I remembered that I was gang raped. I didn't have the strength to cry. I just stared at the blank spaces of the wall.

Dad: Thandeka my baby it's your father. You're in the hospital in Johannesburg.

Andile: How are you feeling Thandeka?

I looked at him and I didn't answer him.

Lunathi: She's still in shock.

I looked at Samkelo he was crying. I didn't say anything at all. I silently let my tears out.

Andile came to me and he hugged me tightly. I sobbed loudly.

Me: Why? Why me Bhuti wami Why me? What have I done to deserve such cruelty?

Andile: You didn't do anything wrong MaDinangwe.

Me: Why me?

Andile: There's no answer to that sisi wami. But you're strong okay? This could've happened to anyone out there. But it happened to you because no matter what, the Lord trust you that you will overcome this.

Me: No! I can't! The Lord is wrong. I can't! I want to die!

Andile: Hey! Hey! Look at me.

I looked at him with tears streaming down my face.

Andile: You're more than a conquer! Do you remember when mom died in that terrible accident you used to tell us that verse.

Me: I did?

Dad: Yes my angel. You used to say "Phatlikhi khayeyani manje? Uzhobuya umama. Uzhothethisa eshethi unqobi phezhu konqobi. Nqobi akakhayi!!" You were young but you were too clever and talkative. Look at that girl now? You're a big woman. The Lord is on your side my baby. He will see your pain.

Uncle's wife: Uthe ezwini lakhe yeyi nina enikhatheleyo nenisindwayo phonsani imithwalo yenu kimi ngizoniphumuza.

Lunathi: And more than 1 verse in the bible says "Zungoyiki nto" He said do not be afraid for I am with you. I will never forsake you.

Me: Even if I am like this? God is with me?

Uncle's wife: Yes. That's why there's a verse that say ngibize ngosuku lwenhlupheko

ngizoba nawe.

I closed my eyes right there, I cried, I folded my hands and I prayed: Heavenly Father I come to you as I am. I am feel dirty and useless oh Lord. Uyinyang'enkulu Nkosi yami a song writer once sang that wena Jesu ungumlulamisi. Father I need your presence with me no Doctor can take away the pain I have and I feel. No psychiatrist can heal me. No justice served by the law can bring back the person I was. I invite you as you said we shall in your word. Don't forsake me. I give you my burden but above it all I thank you for the second chance in life that you gave me because those men could've done more. In Jesus Christ name Amen"

They all chanted "Amen". They came close to me and they all hugged me. Samkelo remained. My uncle's wife was the last one to hug me. She breath on my neck and I screamed. She backed away.

Dad: Thandeka?

Me: [crying] I am scared daddy. I am scared. I can't. I can't. I am not strong.

Samkelo stood up. He was sitting down on the floor. His head was buried on his hands. He stood up and left the room. I cried even louder. Andile sat on the bed with me and he held me tight. My uncle went out to call the Doctor.

Andile: Don't cry now Thandeka.

Me: Why isn't he –

Andile: Ever since he heard what happened to you. He never spoke to anyone. Nor leave the hospital. We moved you to Johannesburg the following day. You were traumatised so they had to drug you. It's been three days since you have been here.

I held his shirt tight and I cried silently until the Doctor came. She checked me up and injected me.

Doc: I think we have to let her rest. She's under a lot of pressure.

They nodded and left. I was slowly drifting off and finally I fell asleep.

I woke up the following day. Samkelo was beside me. He was holding my hand. He was sleeping. I closed my eyes and said a short prayer. I looked at him, I shook him awake and he stood up. He gave me a tight for a long time. He sat down and he tried to smile.

Me: Don't do that.

Sam: What?

His voice was horrible and it was full of nothing but pain.

Me: Don't smile.

Sam: How can I not smile you're beautiful.

Me: You still think I am beautiful? [My voice became shaky]

Sam: You'll forever be beautiful in my eyes Thandeka. Even if you can turn green.

I laughed faintly.

Me: You've always known how to make me laugh when I am at my lowest.

Sam: And you always think I am going leave you when you're at your lowest. Remember when you lost the function of your legs?

Me: Yes. I was the first to ask "So you won't leave me" and you never did.

Sam: I couldn't. But Thandeka what came over you that night? Why did you run away at night?

Me: He told you guys that?

Sam: Your uncle said he called in the morning just to ask generally and Themba told him that you ran away because you wanted to come back to me.

Me: Did my uncle tell him that I was raped?

Sam: No he didn't. But yesterday night your dad called him and told him.

Me: I didn't run away Samkelo[ I told him everything]

Sam: Beside being the wife he doesn't need. You're the mother his two kids. How can he

throw you out at night?

Me: I don't know. Let's not talk about him please. Where is Laa Laa?

Sam: She's on the children's ward.

Me: Doing what?

Sam: She was dehydrated and she was weak because she wasn't eating nor drinking water. She couldn't even talk because of the pain. I had to let them admit her because we had to come here.

Me: Oh my lord. Can I go and see her.

Sam: Are you sure? I mean –

Me: I am sure.

He stood up and called the nurse. They put me on a wheelchair and Samkelo went to the ward with me. We arrived on her bed. She was sleeping. She had a drip on her.

Me: Oh my baby. It's your mother. I am sorry that I wasn't there for you Nana. I am sorry baby. I –

I started crying.

Samkelo: Shhhhh! She'll be fine.

Me: We have to get them removed Samkelo she's so pale and I don't like it. She's just a baby.

Sam: We will remove them don't cry.

He wiped my tears and I nodded.

Me: Take me back to my room. No I want to walk.

Sam: No Thandeka.

Me: I have to. I don't think it will be painful.

I stood up and I had no pain. Just that I was scared to walk it's like people were going to see that I was raped. I held Samkelo's arm tightly and I walked. Tears streamed down but I didn't want to cry. I wiped them away quickly. We arrived in my room and he helped me get inside the bed.

Sam: Can I get you something to eat?

Me: No.

Sam: You have to eat Thandeka.

Me: [crying] No! Not when their images exist in my mind.

Sam: Can you describe them to the police?

Me: I didn't see their face clearly it was dark.

Sam: I will get you a fruit tree juice at least.

Me: Go home and freshen up. I will eat if you come back.

Sam: But –

Me: Look Samkelo you're being stubborn.

Sam: I can't leave you alone.

Me: I will be fine trust me. I am strong remember?

He nodded but I could see that he was worried about me. He squeezed my hand and he stood up. He left. I was left all alone. That night kept on replaying itself. I looked around the room and it looked like it was spinning. I buried my head in my knees and prayed silently while crying. I ended up crying loudly.

Someone tapped my shoulder and called my name at the same time. I jumped up because I was frightened. He stepped back quickly. I looked at him with no emotions expressed in my face..

Themba: Thandeka?

I didn't say anything. I looked around and I remembered that I had no phone.

Themba: Thandeka I am really sorry for what happened to you. I am sorry.

I looked at him still. He looked down.

Me: Please go.

I said on a low tone. He looked up at me.

Themba: I know you blame me for all this and please believe me I am sorry.

Me: Just leave Themba!! You wanted to see the Almighty Thandeka Dhlomo useless and down. You wanted to see me wasted right? Because I was too high for you right?

Themba: No –

Me: Well here I am. I am useless, stupid, dirty, wasted and I am everything you can imagine. I hope you're happy now. So please leave!

Themba: I can't leave you like this.

Me: Leave! Leave!

He tried to hold me. I pushed him off.

Me: Leave me alone!

Samkelo came in, he was clean. He held me very tight.

Sam: Thandeka don't be this upset.

Me: [crying] I want him to leave. I want him to leave me alone Samkelo.

Sam: Themba please Brah.

Themba: She's my wife.

Sam: Who doesn't know that?

Themba: Clearly you don't!

Sam: Oh.

Themba: I brought the kids with me. I will bring them now.

He left. Samkelo gave me a face cloth. I wiped my face. He sat down.

Me: Do I look like I was crying?

Sam: Yes but you look fine.

I nodded. Themba walked in with his sister from the another father. Themba had Uyabongeka on his arms. Uyathandwa had an arm concrete whatever they call it.

Me: What happened to my son?

Themba: Uhm – He was playing with other kids and he got injured.

Me: You know those kids don't like Uyathandwa but you let him play with them.

His sister: It was a mistake.

Me: Baby how are you?

EJ: You left mommy.

Me: I am sick boy.

EJ: But Bhonaini [Bonani] said you ran away. He was laughing at me. Saying I don't have a mother. I have a father only.

Me: I didn't run away. I am not stupid.

EJ: But he said dad said you ran away.

Me: Did you ask your father?

EJ: I was scared.

Me: [I spoke Afrikaans] I am taking my son.

Themba was shocked to hear me speak Afrikaans. He looked at me.

Me: [I didn't change] Speak!

I was angry. I didn't want to leave Uyathandwa because I knew that those kids don't like him.

Themba: [he spoke Afrikaans] I didn't know you speak Afrikaans.

Me: Themba?

Themba: [he spoke the same language] We are not going back home.

Me: No please leave my son and go with your daughter now. Just leave. I don't want to see you.

Themba: Me and my daughter?

Me: You!

Themba: That won't happen. Uyathandwa boy you will stay with your mother.

EJ: You won't live with us anymore?

Themba: I won't boy but I will visit you. I love you okay?

EJ: Why are you leaving us?

Themba: I am not.

Themba gave me Uyabongeka. I held her closer to me. She was sleeping peacefully. I kissed her slightly opened lips. I wiped my tears away.

Themba sat down and he made Uyathandwa sit on his lap. He asked Samkelo and his sister to leave. They did because he wanted to speak to Uyathandwa.

Themba: I am not leaving you. Mom and dad are not on a good state that they can live together.

EJ: You're no longer close friends who tell each other "I love you" and mommy will kiss you?

Themba: No baby we're no longer those close friends. Therefore we can't live together. You will understand one day when you're much older. But that doesn't mean we don't love you. We do love you and your baby sister.

Uyathandwa cried. Themba brushed his back.

Themba: It's Okay boy. Don't cry.

EJ: Mommy?

Me: I am sorry baby.

EJ: Let's go back to America mom. We were happy there mommy. Uncle Mark took care of us. He made us laugh mom.

Me: But you wanted to see your father Uyathandwa we can't go back to America. He didn't say anything.

Themba: I have to go now. I will visit you anytime. Okay?

EJ: Yes.

He stood up and took Uyabongeka.

Me: I want a divorce.

Themba: Not now.

He left. Uyathandwa cried. Samkelo came back and he made him sit with me.

Sam: I will give you two time. I want to go and check on Alondwe. Her Doctor said she can talk now. She's much better.

Me: Okay. Please get a nurse to get me a Doctor. I want to leave this hospital.

He nodded and left. I kissed my son's forehead. I wiped his tears away.

Me: Baby don't cry.

He nodded and rested his head on my shoulder. My dad came in and he discharged me. My Doctor was not around.

Me: Who will drive us home?

Dad: Samkelo will take my car. [He changed the language] I want to talk to you at home.

Me: Themba was lying I didn't run away. Our marriage is over. I am divorcing him.

Dad: Why?

Me: He said I am disrespectful.

Dad: Why are you being disrespectful?

Me: Dad please. There's nothing to fix and he never said he wants to fix all this.

Dad: If he lied why did you leave?

Me: He chased me out [I told him everything]

Dad: You'll divorce him right away. Tomorrow my lawyer will come to you with the divorce papers. He's mad! Tsk! He threw you out because he wanted respect? You were supposed to

stay there and play wife while your daughter is sick? That's why I never wanted you to get married. Tsk!

Me: It's Okay dad.

Dad: And Samkelo?

Me: Uhm. He's my boyfriend.

Dad: Thandeka!

Me: I love him dad.

Dad: You're not making him a rebound?

Me: No I am not. I love him. I have always loved him but Themba came and saved me from loosing myself. I fell in love with Themba. Things didn't work out. Samkelo wanted a relationship with me. And I agreed because I never stopped loving him and I want to fix my past mistakes. I will try by all means to give him the respect I didn't give Themba.

Dad: You must stop telling yourself that you know it all and you must stop thinking that everything must go your way. Don't be independent if you want this relationship to work. Work together with him in everything.

Me: I will try dad.

Dad: But for now try and heal baby. You need to see someone.

Me: No I won't. I will be fine.

Dad: But my baby. I am worried about you.

Me: You don't have to worry dad. I want to see Alondwe now and go home.

Dad: Okay. My grandson is sleeping now.

Me: His father told him about us. He was crying.

Dad: Thandeka? You young people get married and get divorced soon. You hurt children in the process.

Me: There's no other option.

He nodded and left. I stood up and I changed my clothes. Samkelo came and he carried Uyathandwa carefully. I went to see my daughter. She was a lot better but she looked weak.

Me: Hello baby. Are you alright?

She smiled and nodded.

Me: I am happy to see you. Mommy was worried about you. Can you swallow your saliva now?

Aloe: I can now. How did the Doctor do it?

Me: They gave you an injection while you were sleeping.

Aloe: Daddy was crying too because I was crying.

Sam: But I said don't tell your mother that.

Aloe: [she smiled] I am sorry daddy. I forgot.

Me: [laughing] We love you baby Okay?

She nodded and said: I love you. I will go home now?

Sam: No but tomorrow. Okay? Mommy and daddy will come and visit you. Just sleep now okay?

Aloe: Okay daddy.

Samkelo fixed her up and we kissed her goodbye. We left her

3 Weeks later.....

Samkelo and Alondwe had to leave for KZN because his mother had an anniversary party and family gathering. They didn't come back, dad told them not to come back because I wasn't talking to anyone. I was eating too much to avoid stress only. When I eat I used to think about the meal I was eating. I did shower but I used to spend long time scrubbing my body and crying. Andile, His son Luzuko, Shemah and Uyathandwa they all went to PE for the holidays. I was left with my dad and Evelyn in their house. Dad had a house around the

same neighborhood as Andile. I was having nightmares and I was always scared. I was scared of the dark. Dad tried to get a therapist for me but I wasn't interested in talking to that therapist. I didn't even want to open a case because it was going to be useless. I didn't see them clearly that I was going to be able to describe them. There was nothing nice about my December holidays. Dad consulted my boss and told him about my situation. I was going to go back to work when I have recovered. Dad bought me a new phone. It was the same as the one I lost. I still had my old memory card and sim card but I wasn't using it. It was off. It was 2nd of January. It was a new year. I was sleeping. I woke up and I went to the bathroom. I changed and wore my pyjamas. The helper came and gave me breakfast. I took it and ate. Dad came inside my room.

Dad: Baby Evelyn and I, we are going somewhere. We will come back later Okay?

I nodded and he kissed my forehead. He left. I placed my plates aside, I went to brush my teeth and I went back to sleep. I woke up when someone was shaking me. I jumped off the bed. It was Samkelo.

Sam: I am so sorry. I thought I was soft.

I wanted to talk to him and tell him what I feel and how broken I am but I couldn't. I nodded and sat on the bed under covers.

Sam: Can I join you?

I nodded and smiled faintly because he was making a puppy face. He smiled, he took off his shoes and joined me.

Sam: I know you will talk to me. You can't resist my charm.

I laughed faintly for the first time after three weeks. I smiled and looked down.

Me: Who told you I am going to talk to you?

Sam: [smiling] You see? What do you call that?

Me: I was just asking you a question not talking. Hawu.

Sam: Whatever you call it. How are you holding up.

Me: I don't know.

Sam: Thandeka you have to see someone who will help you.

Me: No I don't.

Sam: I can be your psychologist if you scared because maybe they might find an ugly psychologist for you.

I laughed out loud.

Me: You're not professional.

Sam: But I know how they work.

Me: How do you know?

Sam: I have done my research. And I asked my stepfather's friend to train me. He's a psychologist. I told him that I want to help the woman that means the world to me.

Me: Okay. You're hired.

Sam: When can we start?

Me: How about now?

Sam: Okay let's go to your father's office.

Me: Is Evelyn's daughter home?

Sam: No. I didn't see her.

Me: Okay maybe she went to her father. Let's go.

I stood up and wore my slippers. Samkelo wore his shoes. Samkelo took a bag that he had with him.

We went to my father's office. We sat down on the side that had small couches and coffee table. We sat on the opposite direction. He opened his bag and took out a notebook and a pen. He smiled and pulled a straight face immediately. He looked cute. I blushed and looked down.

Sam: Good day mam my name is Samkelo Matthew Ndunakazi. I am your psychologist. Everything discussed here is confidential and I would you like to introduce yourself?

Me: I am Thandeka Trinity Dhlomo.

Sam: Why are you here?

I closed my eyes and I spoke to him.

Me: I am here because I want to get rid of this burden that I have in my shoulder. I keep on seeing them. Every night in my dreams. I can see them. Their smell and the way they were touching me. They were rough. I am scared that they might find me again.

Sam: By “they” who are you referring to?

Me: Those men. The two bastards who took away my life. My happiness and the light that I had. They raped me. Though my life was upside down but I was going to be happy again.

Sam: How was your life upside down?

I opened my eyes and looked at him. He gave me a tissue paper because I had tears. I took it and wiped my tears. He was writing something down.

Me: My husband. He wanted no relationship with me because of disrespect. I didn't beg him because I don't usually beg.

Sam: Do you see something wrong with begging?

Me: Yes. When you beg someone they think they are above you. And they turn to think that you can't do a thing without them. I wanted to prove him wrong. Because not that I have never begged him before. Just that as soon as we got married he thought he owned me and I had to do everything he said.

Sam: Who do you blame for your marriage failing. And why?

Me: I blame myself. Because I should've known better and tried to change. But I wanted to do things my way. I was told how to behave but I never applied any of those things. I blame myself.

Sam: And for being raped?

Me: I blame myself. If I didn't kiss Edward Jones none of this could've happened. I was happy with Samkelo but I messed it up with just a stupid act.

Sam: Samkelo is?

Me: My second boyfriend after Nhlanzeko. I went through a lot with Samkelo. And I was deeply in love with him but him leaving me led me to Themba. He was the right guy I needed that time and I ended up falling in love with him but our relationship was toxic. It all led me being raped. But sometimes I blame Samkelo.

Sam: Why?

Me: Dad chased me out one day because of Samkelo and I was almost gang raped. Themba chased me out because Samkelo was involved in the situation and this time I did get gang raped. Where there is Samkelo there is gang rape.

He didn't say anything. I looked at him. His eyes were closed and he was taking a deep breath. He opened his eyes.

Sam: Do you think this Samkelo is good for you?

Me: Yes.

Sam: Why?

Me: I love him. I never stopped loving him and he never stopped loving me. Being with him again made me realize that sometimes two people have to fall apart to realize how much they need to fall back together. And I am not willing to do something that will make him leave me again.

Sam: Now do you think you can overcome this dark cloud in your heart?

Me: With Samkelo by my side I can. And I trust myself now.

Sam: That's all for today. Thank you. We will meet again next time.

Me: Thank you Sir.

I stood up and he stood up. We did handshake. I sighed heavily.

Me: That was. I feel like something has been lifted off my chest and shoulder.

Sam: Really?

Me: Yes Thank you.

I gave him a tight hug. He hugged me back. He kissed my forehead.

Sam: What is the wildest thing that you would like to do with me?

Me: Thing like?

Sam: Anything. Dancing, racing, whatever.

Me: I would like to race but how about scooper diving?

Sam: You mean going under the water? The sea?

Me: Yes! Please Let's do it.

Sam: Uhm. Bbe ain't you scared of the shark attack maybe?

Me: No! There's no shark attack. Please.

Sam: Uhm bbe. You know –

Me: [laughing] You're scared?

Sam: What? Me? No! No!

I laughed really hard. He looked scared. He sat down. I sat next to him.

Me: You have to face your fears.

Sam: Okay bbe I am scared.

I laughed out loud.

Dad and Evelyn came in running inside the study. I didn't stop laughing. I buried my face on his lap. Tears came out from laughing. I eventually calmed down.

Dad: Thandeka? Is this you? My daughter?

Me: Samkelo is scared of scooper diving daddy. Look at him right now.

Evelyn: She can talk now.

Dad: Samkelo what did you do to her?

Sam: I charmed her.

Dad: My daughter.

I smiled and he hugged me. I hugged him back. He let go and kissed my forehead. I hugged Evelyn.

Dad: How are you my little baby?

Me: Daddy I am turning 24 years this year I am not a little baby.

Evelyn: But you say "Daddy" like a child.

We laughed.

Dad: You'll always be my little baby.

Me: I love you daddy.

Dad: I love you too my angel.

Me: Samkelo is my psychologist.

Dad: You studied Psychology?

Sam: No but I asked my stepfather's friend to train me so that I can help her. He was training me for the whole three weeks.

Evelyn: You really love Trinity?

Sam: Yes I do.

I blushed looking down.

Sam: Baba, Thandeka wants to go and scooper dive.

Evelyn: You have to go to Durban.

Dad: I will organise it for you.

Sam: Can I take her out now?

Dad: Yeah sure. Anything to cheer my baby up

I smiled. Samkelo gathered his things together and I went to my room. I changed and

Samkelo took me out....

We arrived in a restaurant in Sandton. It was beautiful and fancy. We sat down and the menus were given to us. We ordered.

Me: How is my baby?

Sam: She's fine. But she misses you.

Me: How did the operation go? Dad told me that they operated her after a week.

Sam: It was a huge success but afterwards she was crying non stop. I was starting to regret it. But she eventually got better and she's fine now.

Me: I wish I was there for her.

Sam: Don't do that to yourself.

Me: I love you Samkelo.

Sam: I love you too Thandeka.

His phone rang and he took it out. He looked at me. I gave him a go ahead. He picked up.

Sam: "Samkelo Hello \_\_ Yeah \_\_ Sure"

He gave me the phone.

Me: Who is it?

Sam: Themba.

Me: I don't want to talk to him. What does he want from me?

Sam: "She doesn't want to talk to you \_\_ Oh" He wants to talk about the divorce.

Me: Thank you Lord.

I took the phone and I spoke to him.

Me: Thembaletu Smith.

Themba: I got the divorce papers are you around your house?

Me: [sarcastic laugh] I see you think I was mugged. I recovered after two days. I will call you when I am ready to come back.

I hung up the call. I gave the phone back to Samkelo. I clicked my tongue. The order arrived. We started eating in silence.

Me: I am sorry he had to call you.

Sam: It's cool. Maybe he called your father and he told him to call me –

The lights went off on the restaurant. I started shaking and I looked around. The fucking restaurant had no candles. I screamed. Someone tried to hold me. I pushed them off but they didn't let go.

Sam: It's me bbe. It's Samkelo.

Me: [crying] Take me home please.

Sam: We can't go. The lights are off, the doors are closed and we haven't paid.

Me: I am scared.

Sam: I am here for you Thandeka. No one will do harm to you.

Me: I am scared of the dark.

He didn't respond. He then light up my face with his phone. I got a flashback. I pushed him off. I stood up trying to run away. He eventually go to me as I was heading to the door. He held me. He tried to shook me back to reality.

Sam: Thandeka it's me bbe. I am no monster. Please come back Thandeka.

The lights went back on. I looked around and people were looking at us. I looked at Samkelo and I hugged him. He held me tightly and he brushed my head softly. I calmed down. I looked at him.

Sam: You want to go home?

Me: Yes.

He nodded. He went to pay. He came back with my things and we left. We arrived in the house it was quiet.

Sam: Goodnight.

Me: Can you please come and hold me until I sleep?

He nodded and we walked to my room. We went inside my room. I took my pyjamas. I was scared to take off my clothes. I don't know why.

Sam: I can come back when you're done.

Me: No. It's okay.

He nodded. I took off my clothes and wore my pyjamas. He took off his shoes and we got inside the covers. He held me close to him. I placed my head on his chest. He brushed my hair. I was slowly drifting off.

Sam: I love you Nanesh.

Me: I love you too honey bear.

I drifted off to sleep.

I woke up the following morning. Samkelo was not next to me. I kneeled down and prayed thanking the Lord because I had no nightmares that night. I finished. I stood up and I fixed my bed. I went to do my daily routine. I finished and I went to the kitchen. My family was having breakfast. Samkelo was there too.

Me: Morning.

Them: Morning.

Me: You slept here?

Sam: Yes in the guest room.

Me: Okay.

Dad: You two are leaving in two hours.

I smiled and I started eating. After eating. I went to pack my suitcase. Samkelo assisted me. We finished and dad drove us straight to the airport.

Dad: I told Samkelo all the details of your trip. Your house. Those people left. I gave them notice because I knew that you were going to have to go back there because of the divorce.

Me: Thanks.

I hugged him. He handshake with Samkelo. Samkelo took my hand and went to the line.

After the process. The plane flew to Durban.

We arrived in Durban and we took a taxi to La Lucia. We arrived in my house. We paid and walked inside the house. My house was still the same. They had unpacked my things and hanged them as they were.

Me: Please go with me to get my car and my things in Themba's house. It's just around the corner.

Sam: Okay.

We walked out of the house. We walked on the street holding hands.

Sam: I thought you said it's around the corner.

Me: [ giggled] Are you tired?

Sam: No. Never.

I looked at him and laughed. He laughed and looked at me too. We smiled. He held my waist and kissed my forehead. I could see that he was scared to kiss me. Everytime when he wanted to kiss me. He kissed my forehead. I smiled and I held his face close to me. I kissed him slowly. He kissed me back on the same pace. He held me closer to him. I broke the kiss when feel him hard on me. I didn't want to go that far. I wasn't ready. I baby kissed him.

Sam: I love you.

Me: I love you more.

We walked a short distance and we arrived. Themba, his friends, and Kimberly were outside the house. Themba saw us and he went inside the house. He opened the gate for us. Samkelo held my hand.

Sam: Is it necessary that I go inside with you?

Me: Yes. My things?

Sam: Themba is not my favorite person.

Me: Okay wait for me here. I will take them and we will leave just now.

Sam: Okay.

I kissed him and I walked inside the yard. They were sitting on the table outside eating. Kimberly had my daughter on her arms. I went close to them.

Me: Hi.

Them: Hi.

Me: Can I take my little sunshine.

She smiled and passed her over to me. I looked at her.

Me: Hello Nkosazana.

I kissed her smiling lips.

Themba: Why did your boyfriend stay behind?

Me: My things did you pack them or?

Kim: I packed them all for you. Smith and I didn't know whether to pack wedding gifts that people gave you or what?

Me: You mean the dishes?

Kim: Yes.

Me: You can keep them or give them up for charity it's your house your rules.

Kim: And the house. It's in your name?

Me: Your boyfriend bought the house for me –

Kim: Actually fiancé

She said showing me her engagement ring. I giggled softly.

Me: I am sorry I didn't notice mam. Your fiancé should just change the owner and write the house under my kids. Uyabongeka and Uyathandwa. The house was mine after all right Themba?

Themba: Yeah it was yours.

Me: Good. So please do that for my kids. And let's go and help mom get her things Okay?

She screamed, the baby scream.

Me: That's what I am talking about.

I went inside the house with her. Everything was different. Our wedding pictures were off the wall. It was just the kids pictures, Themba and Kimberly, my drawings that I drew of Themba and the kids even the one with Alondwe. I placed Uyabongeka down and I unhooked that one of the wall. I went to the kitchen and broke the frame nicely. "Ungijwayela kabi lo. He puts my daughter on his wall for what? Tsk!" I took out the drawing. I placed the frame back as broken as it was. I looked around and sighed.

Me: Yeah hey! This is really goodbye but I don't regret anything anymore.

I fold the paper and put it inside my coat's pocket. I looked at my daughter.

Me: Let us ask Samkelo to borrow us his phone. We will speak to your brother.

I picked her up and I walked out with her. I approached the gate.

Themba: Where are you going with my daughter?

Me: Stop making it look like you made this child alone because you didn't. It was your dick inside my vagina not in the air. Just because you felt labor pains that doesn't mean you carried her for nine months so nje awuphole kancane. Sit your hot ass down. Tsk!

I went to the gate and called Samkelo. He came to me.

Sam: Hello there?

Uyabongeka screamed.

Me: You love people neh? Bbe please borrow me your phone I want to video call Andile.

Sam: Okay.

He gave me his phone.

Me: Don't let white women steal you.

Sam: [laughing] They won't.

I smiled and I walked back inside.

I sat on the couch and called them.

Andile: Ndunakazi.

Me: I ain't no Ndunakazi!

Andile: THANDEKA!

Me: Yeah! It's me.

Andile: Wow. I thought dad was lying. Samkelo is serious neh?

Me: He's not just a cute but a serious psychologist. MINE only kodwa.

Andile: Alright! Alright! I get that. I guess I am not cute enough.

Me: Oh please! You look like Vho Mushasha.

He laughed really hard.

Andile: I will get you!

Me: I will tell daddy. [We laughed] Bhuti please go on Skype I want to talk to Uyathandwa.

Andile: Okay.

I hung up the call and I logged in on Skype. I video called Andile. Uyathandwa appeared on the screen.

Me: Hello my boy.

EJ: Hello mommy. You're fine now?

Me: Yes boy I am fine. How is your arm?

EJ: Uncle and I went to the hospital and they removed the arm concrete.

Me: Okay baby I am happy to hear that. Do you see who is this?

EJ: My baby sister Uyaa. Mom we can come back now? I miss you.

Me: I miss you too. And Yes you can come back.

Andile whispered something to him. Uyathandwa smiled.

EJ: Uncle taught me a song. I will sing it for you now.

Me: I am listening.

EJ: [singing] "Mama you know I love you\_\_\_ [wadla amazambane] Loving you is like food to my souuul"

Me: Wooooh! What a nice song. Thank you my baby. I love you too.

EJ: He taught me another one that I will sing for daddy.

Themba: [in my back] Can I hear you sing for daddy?

EJ: Hello daddy.

Themba: Hey boy. Please sing.

EJ: "I love you daddy. You're my hero and [wadla amazambane] You're my superstar"

We both clapped hands for him.

Themba: I love you too my boy.

Me: I have to go now my baby. Bye.

EJ: Bye.

Us: Bye.

I dropped the call. And smiled.

Me: Please take her I want to take my things.

Themba: I will take them for you.

Me: Thanks.

He stood up and did everything for me. I was left with my daughter. I stayed with her until she fell asleep. I went to her nursery and put her down. I went back downstairs. Themba was outside.

Me: Thanks my keys. And the divorce papers?

Themba: Okay.

He went inside the house.

Emma: I never thought you guys will end up like this.

Me: Argh. It's life. But I never thought so too.

He came back and gave me the papers and my keys.

Me: Take care of our daughter Themba. I trust you to bring the best in her.

Themba: I trust Kimberly will –

Me: I don't trust her but I trust you. And I don't want you to trust her with bringing up my daughter but I want you to trust yourself and be the best father to her because you weren't there for Uyathandwa when he was that young. That opportunity was taken away from you so please do the best with her or else?

Themba: I will have you to deal with.

Me: At least you know that. Bye everyone.

Them: Bye Mrs Smith.

Me: I am Miss Dhlomo! [I smiled]

Brandon: You'll always be Mrs Smith in our eyes.

I laughed and walked to my car. I drove out of the gate. I stepped out of the car. I gave Samkelo the keys. I had tears in my eyes. He held my chin up.

Sam: You'll be fine bbe.

Me: I know. I know but she's my child leaving her doesn't feel right.

Sam: Shhh.

He hugged me tightly. We backed away from each other. He wiped my tears.

Sam: You know that I love you right?

Me: Yes and I love you too.

He kissed my forehead and we drove straight to my house...

5 Months Later.....

I settled back in my house. Samkelo and I went for scooper diving. He was scared but I put pressure on him and we did it together. It was so nice. We did a lot of things together. We were basically finding ourselves. And revamping our love. We found ourselves again and I was happy. He started working as a Junior Accountant. I went back home and spent time with my family and kids. After a week we went back to Durban. We registered Alondwe in a school around La Lucia. Themba brought back Uyathandwa's rabbits. Alvin was alone, his family died. Themba and Kimberly didn't take care of them I suppose. Samkelo continued helping me deal with my fears. Sometimes I used to throw tantrums at him during the sessions but he was strong for me. I was living with Alondwe and Uyathandwa. Samkelo had a flat in Glenwood but it was more like he was living with us. He was always with us. February I went back to work. My kids were going to school. Beginning of March. We were going to court for our divorce. It wasn't a hard divorce. The terms that we agreed on were I take the custody of Uyathandwa and Themba takes the custody of Uyabongeka. Grandma Smith died. She gave Uyabongeka a name Sesethu. I made peace with everything and I had a fresh start. Samkelo and I bought new cars.

It was June. Uyabongeka was 9 months. She could sit and crawl. I had fully recovered in everything though it was hard to be intimate at first but I didn't allow the past to hold me back. Samkelo and I made love like every normal couple out there. It was a Friday morning. We woke up early in the morning. Samkelo and Alondwe were going to Alondwe's school. She had a swimming day. It was the first time Samkelo went there with her. We always argued about that because he was always busy at work to make time to see his daughter swim. Themba and I were going to Uyathandwa's preschool. They were having an athletics day. Uyathandwa was going to run. He was happy about it and Themba was training him during weekends. We went to shower together and brushed our teeth.

We went to lotion.

Sam: But still I believe you should start by showing me where to go because I don't know anything about this.

Me: You're being unfair. If you are always present on her swimming day you would've known where to go.

Sam: But Thandeka my work takes all my time. Me: I have work too Samkelo. You're not the only one working here. I am working too but I do ask time for our daughter's swimming program.

Sam: I know. I asked time today. All I am asking for is: Please go with us and leave us there.

Me: Okay mama's boy I will go with you.

Sam: Thank you daddy's little girl.

I smiled and looked down. He held my waist and kissed me. We kissed for a long time and I broke the kiss. We held each other's hands and he hugged me. We let go. I went to bath the kids while he made breakfast for us. I went to clean up my room and I joined my munchies for breakfast.

Me: How do you feel my babies about today?

Aloe: I am ready mommy.

EJ: I am scared.

Me: Don't worry you'll be fine. Even if you don't win but just know that you're champions Okay?

Them: Yes mommy.

Samkelo's phone rang. He looked at it. Then he looked at me.

Sam: It's work.

Me: Don't you dare answer it please bbe don't.

Sam: But sthandwa sami –

Me: No today it's about your daughter not work. Please don't make things complicated.

Sam: I won't answer.

Me: Thanks.

I washed the dishes. Themba came. Samkelo was taking his things. Uyathandwa ran up to his dad. He picked him up. He walked inside the house.

Themba: Hello Laa Laa.

Aloe: Hello.

Me: You two will go alone. I will join you in a few minutes.

Themba: Why?

Me: I have to babysit my older son.

Sam: Bbe I –

Me: You what?

Sam: Sawubona.

Themba: Yebo.

Sam: I can't find my white Jordan sneaker

Me: Nana tell daddy what you told me about his sneaker.

Aloe: [giggles] My doll doesn't have a car so I used your sneaker daddy. I know you're a nice daddy.

Sam: You test my patience everyday Laa Laa.

He said tickling her. She laughed.

Me: Stand up and take your Father's sneaker on the clean clothes washing basket with clean shoes.

She stood up. Samkelo followed her.

Me: Sorry to keep you waiting. But you two can go. I will meet you there.

Themba: I brought Thembeka with me.

Me: Okay. Thanks.

He nodded and he stood up. I kissed my baby. They left. Samkelo and Alondwe came back. I took my car keys and I led Samkelo. We arrived at Alondwe's school. We stepped out of our cars. I held Samkelo's hand. Alondwe ran up to her teacher. I walked with him to the area where the parents stay when looking at their children. I gave him a hug.

Sam: I will be bored lana mina.

Me: Oh you didn't want to come here because you'll be bored?

Sam: No that's not what I am saying. But if you're here It would've been better.

Me: Let me leave bbe before I kiss you. Your lips I love the way they move when you talk.

Sam: You can kiss me now.

Me: There are kids around.

I gave him a baby kiss. And I left. I drove straight to Uyathandwa's school. Having two baby daddy's is hard. For me it was hard. The children had started running but Uyathandwa's turn hadn't arrived. I took Uyabongeka from Themba. She screamed.

Me: It's your beautiful mother my beautiful daughter.

She smiled and raised her arms.

Me: Waphapha wena Nkawu. uMakhulu wathi wena Sesethu.

Themba: Yoh! I forgot that name.

Me: Awu.

I didn't know what to say.

Themba: So Samkelo stay with you in your house?

Me: Why are you asking?

Themba: I have to know who my son stays with. Don't you think?

Me: Uyathandwa stays with me.

Themba: Is Samkelo staying with you or not.

Me: Musa ukungijwayela kabi mina Themba. My personal life doesn't concern you. I am telling you that your son stays with me but no! All you want to know is where Samkelo lives. Why don't you ask him?

Themba: I am not used to him.

Me: You better keep it that way forever.

His jaw tightened. I didn't say anything further. Uyabongeka fell asleep and I had to sit down with her. Themba cheered for Uyathandwa. My mood was ruin. Uyathandwa came 3rd place. He was happy. We had to wait until it was all over.

Later we stood up and went to Uyathandwa. His father picked him up. I kissed his face all over. He giggled.

Me: Well done Smith. You're the man.

EJ: I did it mommy.

Me: Say thank you to daddy because he was training you.

EJ: Thank you daddy I love you.

He hugged his neck.

Themba: I love you too. Let's go and celebrate.

EJ: Really?

Themba: Yes if mommy doesn't mind.

Me: Okay let's go.

EJ: Thank you.

I drove Themba's car with Uyabongeka. Themba drove my car with Uyathandwa. We drove to Gateway. Uyathandwa chose the restaurant of his choice. We ordered, waited and the order came. We ate. After that Uyathandwa wanted to go and play games.

Me: Can you borrow me your phone. I want to call Samkelo and tell him that I am running late because surely they are home now.

Themba: I don't have airtime.

Me: Oh. You can't even buy it?

Themba: No let's go. We won't be long.

It was winter so the sun goes down early. It was going to be dark soon. It was already late.

Uyathandwa went to play. Uyabongeka was busy screaming. Around 5pm Uyabongeka was crying. She was probably feeling cold. I went close to Themba and Uyathandwa.

Me: Uyabongeka is feeling cold. Please let's go now.

Themba: But my son is still having fun. Here give her this.

He gave me his blazer. I took it and covered my daughter. I seriously wanted to be home.

Uyabongeka fell asleep. She was much warm. About 5:30pm. Themba took Uyabongeka and I took Uyathandwa. We went to our cars.

EJ: Bye daddy.

Themba: Bye big boy.

I opened the door and he sat on the front with me. Themba gave me my bag that was inside his car.

Themba: Goodnight Thandeka.

Me: Goodnight.

I started my car and drove off. I arrived in my house. There was no one home. I took my phone and I charged it. I had missed calls from Samkelo. And a voice message. I listened to it.

Sam:" I tried calling a several times but you were not picking up until your phone was off. I didn't know whether you were not planning on coming back or what so I took Alondwe. We went to my flat."

I sighed and call him back but his phone was off. I took Uyathandwa and bath him together with me. We lotion and wore our pyjamas.

Me: Let's go baby.

EJ: Where are we going?

Me: We're going to sleep with uncle Samkelo and and Laa Laa at Glenwood.

EJ: Okay let's go mommy.

I turned the alarm on and I locked up. We went to my car and I drove straight to Glenwood.

We arrived in Glenwood. I didn't have to explain myself too much. The security knew me. I went to Samkelo's flat. It was a beautiful apartment and it was open nicely. It had two bedrooms, lounge, kitchen and two bathrooms. I knocked on the door.

Aloe: Who is it?

I whispered to Uyathandwa that he must answer.

EJ: It's me.

Aloe: [giggles] You who?

EJ: Me your brother.

Samkelo opened the door. He took Uyathandwa from me. He threw him up on the air and catch him. Uyathandwa laughed.

Aloe: Daddy you never do that to me.

Sam: You're heavy.

We laughed at her. She sulked. I closed the door. We went to sit down on the couch. They were watching a movie which was cartoons. We covered ourselves with a blanket. It was cold.

Sam: Have you ate boy?

EJ: Yes. Uncle I won today. I became 3rd.

Sam: Well done boy! High five.

They high five.

Me: Laa Laa did you win?

Aloe: No. If my daddy trained me like Uyathandwa's dad I was going to win.

Sam: But Alondwe we spoke about this. I said I am sorry.

Aloe: [crying] But I didn't win because I didn't train. Dad doesn't help me with my sports.

Me: His work takes all his time my love but he will train you.

Aloe: But Uyathandwa's dad is also working.

Me: Don't compare your dad to your brother's dad. They are not the same baby okay?

Aloe: Okay mommy.

Sam: I am sorry Nana I will train you for next year okay my baby?

She pouts and said nothing.

Me: Alondwe ukhuluma nawe ubaba wakho awuzwa yini? [Alondwe your dad is talking to. Can't you hear that?]

Aloe: Ngyezwa. It's Okay daddy.

Sam: Thank you Nana.

I looked at Uyathandwa. He was sleeping. I stood up and took him. I put him on his bed. They had two single beds. I went back to the lounge. We watched TV until Alondwe fell asleep. Samkelo went to put her in bed. I stood up and went to his bedroom with my phone. He came inside the room.

Me: Bbe about earlier I am sorry neh. My battery died.

Sam: Your phone rang Thandeka and you didn't pick up.

Me: We were still on the sport grounds. I wasn't paying attention to my phone.

Sam: And then afterwards you don't come back home because?

Me: Themba wanted to go and celebrate. I thought it was going to be a short thing but it lasted long.

Sam: And you didn't bother to call me and tell me Thandeka?

Me: My battery was dead and Themba had no airtime. I am sorry Samkelo my love.

Sam: Do you remember when Alondwe was living with you. You told me not to call you but to call her nanny and whenever I want to spend time with her, the nanny was always there not you. Because Themba didn't want me to talk to you. How about he does that too. And if you want Uyabongeka you will speak to his fiancée.

Me: I don't have a maid.

Sam: You want me to get you one?

Me: I don't want a nanny.

Sam: Because you –

My phone rang. I took it and looked at it. It was Themba calling. I didn't answer it. Samkelo looked at it.

Sam: Why is he calling you at this time of the night?

Me: I don't know maybe something is wrong with Uyabongeka.

Sam: Okay.

He stepped inside the covers. I picked up.

Me: Is everything alright?

Themba: I wanted to check if did you guys arrived home safely.

Me: Yes we did. Is that all?

Themba: Yes. What were you expecting? I miss you or I love you. No dear I don't miss you at all and I don't love you.

Me: Ayi Fusegi wena Tsk!

I hung up the call and I rejected his number. I deleted it. Samkelo was angry and I didn't want to talk to him when he was like that. I was going to wait for him to cool down. I fell asleep.

I woke up the following morning. It was still early, just that I couldn't sleep. I went to take a

shower, brushed my teeth and lotion. I wore my panties and my gown. It was cold. I went to make breakfast and I put it inside the microwave after I was done. I checked up on my kids and they were sleeping. I went back to Samkelo's room. He was under the blankets lotioning his body. He does that everytime when he doesn't see his remote control of the air conditioner. I looked for it for him and I found it. I turned on the heat and I joined him in bed. He kissed my cheek.

Sam: Thank you bbe.

I smiled. I was lying on my back. He went under the blankets and separated my legs. He kneeled down in between them and he pulled my panties down. He shove his tongue inside my vagina creating sensation that made me feel like I was on cloud infinite. I moaned "Mmm" he carried on starting with slow sensation and then continued with more harder licks. My heart started beating fast and my breathing escalated. He put his hands under my ass lifting my body up, supporting my weight. He carried on with his tongue and my moans became louder. He made my hair at the back of my neck stand up that gave me the courage to push his head deeper. I moaned louder. He stopped and he came up to me and took off my gown. He kissed me and positioned himself in between my legs. He kissed me harder. The kiss made my body to start all over, as he made his way inside me. My toes curled up and my heart beat faster. I dug my nails at the back of his skin as he started moving forward and backward. He changed and moved in circular motion making me loose control completely. I reached my climax and soon after me he withdrew. He wiped me clean and laid on his back next to me. He pulled me closer to him making my head rest on his sweaty chest. He kissed my forehead.

Sam: Please don't do what you did yesterday again. I don't like it.

Me: I won't do it. It was a mistake and I am sorry. When he wants to talk to me about Uyathandwa or Uyabongeka his wife can do that. I will do the same.

Sam: Thank you. I love you.

Me: I love you too.

Sam: Thandeka?

Me: Hm?

Sam: If I want to pay the bride price for you should I pay to Themba's family?

Me: Yes.

Sam: Yoh! That's hectic hey. Themba won't be there?

Me: I don't know.

He nodded and kissed me again.

Sam: Alondwe's favorite movie is on cinema today at 11am. I want us all to go and watch it.

Me: Okay. At least for a change you won't be in front of the computer.

Sam: I am sorry about that bbe okay?

Me: Okay. Let me go and wake them up.

Sam: Okay.

I stood up and just when I stood up. My phone rang. It was an unsaved number. I answered.

Me: Thandeka speaking.

Themba: It's Themba. I am calling with Kimberly's number because it looks like you blocked my number.

Me: Okay what do you want?

Themba: Can I take Uyathandwa. We want to go out with him today. I will bring him back tomorrow.

Me: Time?

Themba: 10am.

Me: Okay we will drop him by. Look if you need him or you have anything to say about my daughter just tell your fiancée to call me. We will communicate through her.

Themba: Why? Samkelo thinks I want you back maybe?

Me: [sarcastic laugh] Did you think he wanted me back when you told him to contact the nanny about Alondwe.

Themba: He wanted you back vele but sisi I don't want you back. Ngryt ngawe nokweyisa kwakho. I found someone who give me the kind of respect I deserve as a man. I just feel sorry for that Samkelo because you'll make him feel useless.

Me: Okay is that all Prophet Smith? I won't talk further because ngizokudelela ukhale. Ungaphinde ucabange nokungikhulumisa. I see awudelanga the time sisashadile neh?

Themba: Tsk!

He hung up the call. I clicked my tongue and put my phone away. Samkelo looked at me.

Me: Don't defend him uyangidina.

Sam: I see why he divorced you. Uyameyisa strong.

Me: I don't do it intentionally. You know me Samkelo better than anyone. Since high school I have been like this. Just that Themba wants to control me and I hate that.

Sam: But he's the man. I don't say he must control you though.

Me: Yeah I know. Anyway he wants his son by 10am. We will drop him by. He will bring him back tomorrow.

Sam: Okay let's get ready.

We stood up. Samkelo bathed Uyathandwa and I bathed Alondwe. We had breakfast and we went to change. We had clothes there. I wore navy jeans, a maroon top, a brown coat and brown ankle boot. It was a heel. I put on a maroon scarf. And put on a red lipstick. We drove straight to La Lucia. We arrived at Themba's house.

Me: Baby I will see you tomorrow. Your father said you will sleep with them and your little sister Sess.

EJ: And the new mommy?

Me: Yes. You don't like her?

EJ: I like her she's nice.

Me: Okay that's good..

I stepped out of the car. I buzzed the gate.

Themba: Who are you?

EJ: It's me daddy.

Themba: I am coming now boy.

I went down on him.

Me: Okay my baby. Kiss Sese for me.

EJ: Sheshe will vomit in my mouth.

Me: Sese doesn't vomit Uyathandwa. You did that when you were baby too.

EJ: No I didn't!

Me: Yes you did!

EJ: No I didn't!

Me: Yes you di –

Themba: Okay that's enough both of you!

We both looked at him. I stood up and brushed Uyathandwa's hair.

EJ: Mommy you're ruining my hair.

Me: Don't you love me?

EJ: I love you.

Me: Okay bye.

EJ: Bye. Bye Laa Laa and uncle.

Them: Bye.

I went back to the car. I stepped inside and we drove straight to Gateway.....



Me: My daughter! And you're here dealing [I said on a low tone] drugs with my child?

Kim: We're not dealing.

Me: Yes you're dealing you bitch! Tsk!

I ran away with Sese. I buckled her on the baby's seat. Kimberly came running to me. I quickly stepped inside my car. I drove off. I couldn't stop crying. Thinking about my involvement in this. I didn't know Themba was doing drugs. Sese didn't stop crying. I passed by La Lucia mall. I tried to calm Sese down first and we walked inside the mall. She was sucking on her thumb. I bought her food, soap, diapers and clothes. She had other things in my house. I drove back home first, I took the letters on my post box, and my bags inside the house. I went back to my car and took Sese. I took my kids to my next door neighbor. They wait for me there. Samkelo paid the woman who stays with them. They came out of the house running screaming "Sese! Sese!"

EJ: Mommy Sheshe will stay with us?

Me: Yes. Let's go home.

I said my farewell to the family and We went home. I closed the gate and I made them sit down with Sese. I went to make something to eat for them. I finished and I gave it to them. They ate. I took Sese and I fed her. I called Samkelo while at it.

Sam: My bbe.

Me: Honey bear please come back home early. You're coming to La Lucia?

Sam: Yes. You know I hate being without you.

Me: Thank you. I love love love YOU!

Sam: I LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE YOU!!

I laughed and I heard his assistant laughing at the background. He had an assistant because he was no longer a Junior Accountant but he was an Accountant. I sat on the floor with my kids.

Me: Take out your homework.

They took out their homework. I made Sese sit down and I helped my kids with their homework. Sese was crawling around.

EJ: Sheshe! You'll ruin my homework book! Mommy look now!

Me: Don't shout at her Uyathandwa. She's just a child.

Aloe: No! She's a rat mommy! Look she ate my book too. Sese!

Sese cried. I picked her up.

Me: I am leaving you to do your homework alone because you are shouting at my daughter!

Aloe: Fine we will ask daddy.

EJ: Yes!

I pouted and sat on the couch with Sese. They laughed and closed their books. They took off their uniforms and threw them down. They ran outside and they played with Alvin.

I went to bath Sese and put her on warm clothes. I put her on my back. I went to start cooking. Uyathandwa and Alondwe came in running. Samkelo was running after them.

Me: They will fall.

Sam: No they won't. Oh we have Sese here that's why her daddy is on the lounge.

Me: Oh okay. You piggy rats go and change. It's cold.

They laughed.

Sam: Why are they running around like this?

Me: Their uniforms is on the floor. They were mad at Sese for ruining their books.

Samkelo laughed and he picked them up both.

I switched off the stove and I went to put Sese down.

Themba: Don't go away with her. We're here to take her home.

Me: This is my house you won't tell me what to do Themba.

I went to put her down on her nursery. I locked the door and put the key on a vase in my bedroom. I went back to the lounge.

Me: How can I help you?

Themba: I am here to take my daughter home.

Me: You ain't taking her! You're doing drugs and you involve my child in that mess. How could you Themba?

Themba: That doesn't concern you. I want my child Thandeka!

Kim: Give us our child.

Me: How about you go and get pregnant for him. And give him babies. Maybe he can deal drugs with your babies not mine!

She looked down and she looked sad.

Themba: Don't talk to her like that. She's my wife. I won't look at you disrespect her.

Me: What are you going to do?

He gave me one hot slap. I held my cheek. I felt my head burning.

Themba: Now can I have my child back?

Me: Over my dead body. You're not taking my daughter. The terms of our divorce allows me to take her if you do something bad to her or with her.

Themba: I will say you kidnapped her to the police.

Me: I will tell them that you are doing drugs. Themba: You'll go to jail too. That money you saw was for drugs that I gave you. You thought you were giving Robin your food but I always changed it and you were giving her drugs. Tell the police. And we will both go to jail and who will look after our children?

Me: I don't care! I will go to jail but I will tell the police the truth that I didn't know that you were giving me drugs. And your Robin will testify to that.

Themba: If she testify she will die. I will tell her what to say. Now give me my daughter before you loose your property and your cars.

Me: My mother bought this house. My dad bought my first car and I am still paying for my second car. Now how can they take those things? I bought the car after the divorce and I didn't take your money. So go ahead and tell the police that I took Sese then I will tell them that truth.

Themba: Then I will have to kill your boyfriend.

Sam: [coming in] Then kill me.

Me: [standing up] No! This man is crazy! He will kill you serious.

Sam: I will be protecting your daughter.

Me: No. You can't leave me. The police will handle this.

Themba: No police. I will kill him now. I've always want to do it. And this is my chance.

We looked at him. He was pointing a gun to Samkelo. It had a silencer.

Me: Themba please don't do this to me and my daughter please.

Themba: So you can beg now.

Me: Themba please!

Themba: If I couldn't have you neither will he have you!

Me: Themba please!

I then heard silent two gun shots. The next minute Samkelo was on the floor. Themba grabbed Kimberly and they left. I screamed "Samkelo! Samkelo! Please bbe hang on! Hang on my honey bear please!"

## Chapter : 5

I moved closer to his nose and he was still breathing. I looked at his whole body and he was bleeding on his thigh and his arm.

Aloe: [crying] Mama why is daddy bleeding. I saw your daddy shooting my dad.

EJ: You're lying! Daddy didn't do that.

Aloe: I told you to come and look but you were busy playing with your robot.

EJ: Mommy did daddy shoot him?

Me: We have to take him to the hospital. Come.

I didn't want to answer the question because I didn't know whether to tell the truth or lie. I went to my bedroom and I took a key to Sese's nursery. I opened the nursery. I packed up a few things and I took my daughter. Samkelo must've been shocked because he wasn't moving. I went to my kids. Alondwe was crying next to her father.

Me: Laa Laa stand up.

Aloe: Is daddy leaving us mommy? He's going to live in heaven now?

Me: No. Come.

Aloe: It's your daddy Uyathandwa!

EJ: No it's not my dad.

Me: Can you please shut up both of you!

They didn't say anything. I went to next door and explained to Mrs Williams that my fiancé was injured I have to take him to the hospital. She had no problem to stay with the kids. I rushed back to my house. I dragged Samkelo out of the house. I put him on the backseat. I drove straight to the hospital. My clothes had his blood and I didn't care. I arrived in the hospital. I left him in my car and I rushed inside for help. They assisted me. They took him inside. I waited in the waiting area. I was literally going crazy. The waiting was hard on me.

On the other hand I had a massive headache.

My phone rang while I was still waiting. I took it out. It was Thobelani calling. I answered.

Me: Ntwana?

Thobe: Skhokho are you alright?

Me: No but how are you?/

Thobe: I am good what's wrong?

Me: Samkelo was shot. He's in the hospital.

Thobe: What? I am sorry. You still care about him?

Me: Uhm he's my fiancé.

Thobe: What? And Themba? Sanelisiwe?

Me: Themba and I got divorced. Sanelisiwe left for Dubai.

Thobe: Wow! So fate does exist and you didn't even tell me.

Me: I am sorry. I had a lot going on.

Thobe: I will see you soon guys. I moving to Durban. I got a transfer.

Me: Wow! That's nice. At least I will have a friend again.

Thobe: Yeah ntwana. I have missed you. We will talk soon. Speed recovery on your fiancé.

High school sweetheart.

Me: [giggled faintly] Thanks.

Thobe: Sho.

We hung up the call and I stood up. I wanted something to eat and some grandpa for my headache. I bought food and I ate. I bought the grandpa and I downed it there. I went back inside to wait. I called my brother. He picked up.

Andile: At least she can still call.

Me: Don't be silly. How are you?

Andile: I am fine and you?

Me: I am not okay. Samkelo is in the hospital.

Andile: What happened?

Me: He got shot. And I brought him to the hospital. I am praying and hoping that he'll be okay Andile. I don't want to loose him.

Andile: He'll be fine sisi don't worry. Who shot him?

Me: Themba.

Andile: What?

Me: Yeah I know. It's a long story.

Andile: This Themba is crazy. How can he do this like seriously?

Me: I don't know.

Andile: So are you guys gonna come for dad's wedding this weekend?

Me: Hopefully. I don't want to miss it.

Andile: Okay. We will put him on our prayers.

Me: Thank you. I love you.

Andile: I love you too Joy.

We hung up the call. I tried to sleep on the chair. The headache was killing me. I woke up in the morning by 2am when the Doctor was calling my name. I stood up quickly.

Me: What happened Doctor.

Doc: Your?

Me: Fiancé.

Doc: Your fiancé didn't get shot on the bad parts of the body. It was an arm and thigh injury. We managed to take the bullets out. He was just shocked that's why he was out. He's awake now you can go and see him.

Me: Thank you so much.

He nodded. I went to Samkelo's ward. He had his eyes closed. I touched his hand. He opened his eyes quickly. He tried to smile.

Me: Morning.

Sam: Morning.

Me: How are you feeling?

Sam: I am feeling better but I do have pains. How are you and the children?

Me: I left them with Mrs Williams. I was worried about you Samkelo.

Sam: Don't worry I am fine.

Me: I am sorry for all this. I know that it's all my fault.

Sam: You don't have to blame yourself.

Me: Are you going to press the charges?

Sam: I know that he's the father of your kids but he tried to kill me Thandeka. He wants me dead in fact.

Me: I know.

Sam: But I won't press the charges.

Me: Huh?

Sam: We will use this video and this shooting against him.

Me: What video?

Sam: I took a video of everything you were discussing in there. About the drugs and all that shit he was saying.

Me: What? Really?

Sam: Yeah. So we gonna strike a deal with him. It's either we report him to police for selling drugs and for trying to kill me or he gives you the sole custody of the kids. The choice will be his.

Me: Wow! Thanks.

Sam: I am doing this because I love you and I want to see you and your children happy.

Me: Thank you. I love you too Samkelo.

I stood up and kissed him...

I left Samkelo and I drove back home. The headache was killing me. I went to Mrs Williams and I took my kids. They were sleeping. I put them in their beds. I went to shower and I lotion. I wore my pyjamas and I went to eat. I cleaned up the blood in my house. I finished and I looked for painkillers. I downed them and I went to sleep. I woke up in the morning and I bathed. I was worried about Uyathandwa and Alondwe. I didn't want them to fight. I brushed my teeth and I went to my room. My phone rang. I took it. It was Kimberly. I answered.

Me: Hello?

Themba: Am I having my daughter back?

Me: Excuse me?

Themba: You heard me right!

Me: Don't shout at me. You're no getting my daughter. I won't change my decision. I trusted you Themba. But you disappointed me. How could you take my daughter to that kind of place?

Themba: It was Kimberly's stupidity you know I wouldn't have done such a thing. I love my children Thandeka and you know that.

Me: You love them I know but you didn't protect them so I am keeping my child. You should get busy and sex Kimberly.

I hung up the call. I called the agency and asked for a nanny. They were going to send her. I went to wake the kids up. They woke up.

Me: Come and bath you'll be late for school.

They followed me. Uyathandwa took off his clothes but Alondwe didn't.

Me: Alondwe take off your clothes.

Aloe: I won't bath with him. His father was shooting my father yesterday.

EJ: No he didn't.

Aloe: Yes your father did.

EJ: No he didn't.

Aloe: Don't lie for him.

She slapped Uyathandwa. Uyathandwa slapped her back. Alondwe pushed him. I stepped aside and looked at them. I didn't even have courage to stop them. My headache was killing me. I left them to fight. I went outside to pick a wet stick. I went inside they were still fighting. I grabbed Alondwe's arm and I whipped her up.

Me: I told you not to fight with your brother. Awuzwa. Usheshe ulwe.

She cried but she didn't say she she's sorry. I continued beating her.

Me: You won't say sorry?

Aloe: I am sorry mama.

I stopped beating her. I went to Uyathandwa. I grabbed his arm and did the same to him.

Me: Didn't I tell you that you shouldn't beat girls?

EJ: You did. But she started it.

Me: Even if so Uyathandwa. Boys don't beat girls. Don't ever do it again.

EJ: I am sorry mommy.

I stopped beating him. I was tired.

Me: Now get inside the tub.

I put them inside the tub. I bathed them. I lotion their body and they brushed their teeth. They wore their underwears. I went to make cereals for them. We ate together. The nanny came. I showed her my daughter. She was a grown woman. I went to help my kids wear their uniforms. I went to change too. I went to warm up the food I cooked the previous night and I dished it out on a lunchbox for Samkelo. I kissed my daughter goodbye and I drove my kids to school first. They were awfully quiet. I kissed them goodbye.

I drove straight to the hospital first. I was tired and sleepy. I went to Samkelo's ward. It

wasn't visiting hours but I begged my way in. He was awake. He was looking at the food in front of him.

Me: I am going to be your wife soon you know. You should have just told me you don't want the hospital food.

Sam: I thought a wife should think for the husband's needs.

Me: That's why I thought about them too. I should make my husband happy right?

I gave him the lunch box with food.

Sam: You're the best wife ever.

I giggled and I fed him because his right arm got injured so he was holding it. He couldn't use it.

Me: Who was going to feed you anyway?

Sam: I was going to use my left hand.

Me: You poor thing.

Sam: Bbe why do you sound so down?

Me: I have a headache but I will be fine.

Sam: Did you take painkillers?

Me: Yes but nothing helps.

Sam: Maybe you must see a Doctor. It might be a serious headache.

Me: I will.

Sam: Good.

I finished feeding him and I gave him juice.

Me: I have to go to work. When are you going home?

Sam: I will go home tomorrow. The Doctor said so.

Me: Okay. Let me go. I love you my honey bear.

Sam: I love you too my Nanesh.

I kissed him and I left for work. I passed by his work place first and I reported him. I then drove to work. I passed by the reception.

Yonela: Morning Miss Dhlomo. You're late for your meeting with the building team.

Me: Snap! I forgot. Are they in the boardroom right now?

Yonela: Yes mam.

Me: Thanks.

I walked up to the lift.

Yonela: Are you fine?

Me: Yes. It's just a minor headache.

Yonela: I will fix up something for you.

Me: Thanks.

I smiled and I went to my office. I took my things for the meeting and I went to start the meeting. After the meeting. I went to my office. There was disprin and a glass of water. I took it and drank them. I started working. I was sleepy so I decided to lie my head down on my desk. I woke up when my boss was shouting at me.

MrK: Why are you sleeping during work hours?

Me: I am sorry Sir but I have a very painful headache.

MrK: You have to see the Doctor because you can't sleep during your working hours. It's unethical.

Me: I am sorry Sir.

MrK: Anyway. You have a new project. Here.

I took the envelope and I started reading it. He left my office. I yawned and I started working.

After work. I went straight to my car. I called my house. The nanny answered. The nanny was a Zulu woman. Her name was Nancy.

Me: Hello mama Nancy. I am sorry, I forgot to tell you about the kids. I didn't tell them to come to the house after school. Mrs Williams's son fetch them together with his sons. Please take them. I am going to the hospital to check on my fiancé.

Nancy: Okay I will do that.

Me: Thank you.

I hung up the call and I drove to the mall first. I bought food for Samkelo and I drove to the hospital. I went to his ward. He was with the Doctor.

Me: Evening.

Them: Evening.

Sam: Are you feeling alright now?

Me: No.

Sam: Doctor can you please check her up.

Doc: What's wrong with her?

Me: I have the headache. It started yesterday til now it's very painful.

Doc: Okay I will run some tests. Please follow me to my office.

Me: Okay. Bbe I will come back and feed you after this.

Sam: Okay my love.

I followed the Doctor. We went to the office.

Doc: Are you on birth control? Sometimes a pregnant woman does have a headache and I wouldn't want to give you something that can be harmful kanti you're pregnant.

Me: I am on birth control injection Doctor.

Doc: Okay.

The Doctor took some tests. He injected me. He gave me medication.

Doc: I will call you after three days to get the results.

Me: Okay thanks.

He nodded. I stood up and I went to Samkelo.

Sam: Did he tell you what is wrong?

Me: No. He said he'll call me after three days.

Sam: Okay please be better.

Me: Don't worry my honey bear.

Sam: I should worry.

I shook my head. I fed him until he was full. I gave him a cold drink.

Me: Are you able to walk?

Sam: I use a stick to walk. I spoke to mom.

Me: Yoh! I suppose she is mad.

Sam: I told her I got mugged. I didn't tell her it was Themba. She was going to be dramatic. But she's happy about our engagement.

Me: Samkelo you told her already?

Sam: Yeah. You know mom loves you just that sometimes she used to side with me with the Alondwe saga.

Me: I thought maybe she was going to be mad. Does she know that I have two kids with Themba.

Sam: Don't worry! She knows. My happiness is what matters to her. Ukuthi who I am going to marry shouldn't worry her.

Me: Okay. But I don't think your stepmother will be like that.

Sam: She's a nice person. Dad is a hard person but if I want you I want you.

I smiled and nodded. I was worried because his stepmother doesn't like me special after giving her water that day.

Me: Bbe I have to go home to the kids. I will see you tomorrow.

Sam: Okay. Thanks. I love you.

Me: I love you too.

I stood up and I kissed him. I drove back home. I was feeling better.

I arrived at home and my kids were on the lounge eating. They saw me and ran up to me.

I went down to them and I hugged them. Sesethu followed them crawling. I picked her up. I kissed her and she giggled. I went to sit down with them. I told Nancy to go. She left.

EJ: Mommy how is uncle?

Me: He's feeling much better.

EJ: Mommy did my father shoot him?

Me: It was a mistake baby. He was trying to shoot an evil guy who was behind the window. He wanted to kidnap us.

Aloe: But he ran away with aunt Kimberly mom

Me: They were running after the evil guy. They found him and got him arrested.

EJ: You see it was a mistake. My daddy would never do such an evil thing to your daddy.

Aloe: I am sorry.

EJ: Okay. Mommy Laa Laa wants a puppy and I want a puppy too.

Me: You can't have puppies because they will eat Alvin. Dogs and rabbits are not friends.

EJ: Really?

Me: Yes.

Aloe: We will lock Alvin up mommy.

EJ: No. We will let him go mommy. We want puppies now.

Me: Okay baby. We will talk to your father first about the puppy Okay?

Aloe: Okay mommy. I want Uyathandwa to call my father his father because I called his father my father when we were living with him.

Me: Uyathandwa?

EJ: I will call him daddy too.

Aloe: Thank you.

She smiled and they high five. I shook my head and stood up with Sese. I bathed her and changed her clothes. I took her baby walker and I put her inside. I bathed both Uyathandwa and Alondwe. Sese was walking around the bathroom with her walker. I lotion them and they wore their pyjamas. I went to warm up the food in the fridge. I dished up for them. I fed Sesethu her baby food. She was playing with it. She was spitting out the food.

Me: Uyabongeka! Stop it!

She got a fright and looked at me. She laughed. Uyathandwa and Alondwe laughed too. I stopped feeding her and I ate my food.

Me: Have you done your homework?

Aloe: Yes aunty helped us with it.

EJ: The Teacher asked us that what do we want to be when we grow up.

Me: And what did you say?

EJ: I want to be a drawer like my mom.

I laughed and kissed his cheek.

Me: I am an Architect baby.

EJ: Really? What is that?

Me: A person who draws building for construction companies and build up the drawn building using cardboard boxes and plastic containers.

EJ: Oh! I want that mommy.

Me: Okay baby and you Laa Laa?

Aloe: I want to be a Doctor.

Me: That's nice. You have to love school in order to be whatever you want in life okay?

Them: Yes mommy.

We finished up eating. Sese was crying. She was sleepy. I walked around the house with her

and I went to put her down when she was asleep. I washed the dishes and we went to bed with my kids. They were all sleeping with me. My phone rang. Dad was calling.

Me: Daddy?

Dad: How are you baby?

Me: I am fine daddy and you?

Dad: I am fine. How is Ndunakazi and the kids?

Me: He's fine daddy. He didn't get injured endaweni ebucayi.

Dad: The kids?

Me: They are fine but they are driving me crazy. They want puppies now.

Dad:[laughing] Do you blame them. They take after their mother.

Me: Me and puppies?

Dad: You had two dogs. A big and a small dog.

Me: I don't remember.

Dad: You wanted a horse after your dogs had died. You said the small animals are quick to die. But we couldn't get you a horse.

Me: [laughing] No wonder my kids love pets. I will see you at the wedding.

Dad: Okay but you will come on Friday?

Me: Yes.

Dad: Okay goodnight.

Me: Goodnight daddy I love you.

Dad: I love you too Bhelesi.

I giggled and we hung up the call. I drifted off to sleep.

The following afternoon. Samkelo and I drove to Themba's house. He buzzed us in. Samkelo was walking using a stick. Themba looked at him with disgust. He told us to sit down.

Themba: I see I didn't shoot the right place.

Me: That's not why we're here.

Kim: Why are you here?

Sam: We're here to offer you a deal.

Themba: I am listening.

Sam: You [he told him to whole deal]

Themba laughed really hard.

Themba: Are you serious?

Us: Yes.

Themba: For my daughter I will go to prison.

Kim: Baby?

Themba: Yes I am going to prison. I can't let her have the full custody of my daughter. So Samkelo press the charges. Thandeka forget it you can't have it all! You can see your way out.

Me: Bbe let's go. Themba please come tomorrow and take your daughter. So that uzoyeka ukungibangela iscefe empilweni yami. [You will stop being a nuisance in my life]

He looked at me. He was surprised.

Sam: Thandeka you can not do that. Sese is your daughter.

Me: She's my daughter. I am not denying that. But Themba won't leave us alone unless we give him Uyabongeka back. I am tired of this man and his drama. If it was easy I would've leave KZN so that I won't see his face ever again.

Themba: I know you don't mean that.

Me: Oh believe me Smith [he smiled and looked down] I mean every word.

Kim: I promise we will find a nanny for her. We won't –

Me: Keep it to yourself. Let's go Nophiko.

Themba: So are you going to press the charges Samkelo?

Sam: That's non of your business.

Samkelo held my hand. We stood up.

Themba: Did he propose?

Me: Who?

Themba: I see the ring on your finger.

Me: Oh. Isn't it clear as daylight?

Themba: Phapha nje kanje wena. You might not see that wedding happening.

Me: Are you threatening me?

Themba: No I am not. Don't forget that your fiancé must come home to pay lobola for you and if I tell my family not to accept that bride price they won't. And you'll come here begging for me to let you marry him and I won't agree! So nje ungasheshi uphapha Mrs Smith!

I looked at him and I clicked my tongue. I walked out of the house. Samkelo stepped inside the car and I drove to my house. Samkelo was awfully quiet. I kept on looking at him. He looked like he was angry.

We arrived in the house. The kids were running around the yard with Alvin. They were wearing only panties and underwear. We stepped out of the car.

Me: Can't you feel the cold weather?

Sam: You'll get flue and the Doctor will inject you.

They both ran up to him screaming "Daddy". They hugged his legs. I left them and I walked inside the house. Sese was screaming on her walker. She pushed it towards me. I took her out of it and kissed her face.

Me: Hello little Princess. You look dirty Brah.

Samkelo and the kids walked in.

Aloe: Daddy Sese ate our homework books.

EJ: Yes. Our Teachers won't be pleased with those books they are ruined. She must be punished.

Sam: Sese is a child and parents don't punish their children. They discipline them.

Aloe: That daddy she needs discipline.

Sam: Let me go and look at your homework books now.

Them: Yeah come.

They stuck their tongues out for Sese and they followed Samkelo. Sese looked at them until they disappeared. I went to the kitchen and found Nancy eating.

Me: Sawubona mama.

Nancy: Hi. How was your day?

Me: It was exhausting yours?

Nancy: Just a day. Tomorrow Uyabongeka must go to the clinic for vaccination.

Me: Okay. I will come and we will go together.

Nancy: Okay. I suppose it's my time to leave now dear.

Me: Yes. Thanks.

Nancy: Okay. Bye Uya.

She kissed her cheek and waved goodbye. Sese waved goodbye too. I smiled. I went to take off my heels and coat. I put Sese on my back and I went to cook supper. Alondwe and Uyathandwa came back smelling fresh and they were on their pyjamas.

Me: Who gave you a bath?

Aloe: Daddy taught us how to bath ourselves.

EJ: You must teach us too mommy.

Me: Okay I will teach you.

They nodded and left. I finished up cooking and I went to bath Sesethu. I changed her and fed

her because she was sleepy. After eating she was sleeping. I buckled her on her baby cot. I went back to the kitchen and dished up for everyone. They came to the table. We prayed and ate. I washed the dishes afterwards. I went to shower and I took my medication. I was tired. I went to bed.

Samkelo came inside the room. He went to the bathroom and came back later. He changed and joined me inside the blankets.

Sam: Can we talk?

Me: About?

Sam: What were you thinking telling Themba to come and fetch Sese here?

Me: I want him to come and take her. I am tired of Themba and his drama.

Sam: So you're selling your daughter to the devil himself because you're tired of his behavior?

Me: He's not the devil. Kimberly was stupid to go with Uyabongeka in that place.

Sam: Are you defending him Thandeka?

Me: No I am not.

Sam: That's what you're doing!

Me: Samkelo you don't have to shout to be heard. I can hear you.

Sam: I am expressing my anger towards you for what you did. What will Sesethu think of you when she's older. How could you do something like this to her?

Me: Themba won't do anything to harm her.

Sam: Sesethu will not leave this house. Vele Themba is going to lose custody anyway if he goes to jail.

Me: That's because he knows that he won't stay long there. But it will be best if he takes Sesethu.

Sam: You behave like you don't care about your daughter. Can you please put her first in all this. I am begging you woman! Please!

Me: I am putting –

Sam: Thandeka! Tomorrow when I come back from work. I want to find Sesethu here. She'll stay here with her siblings. Themba can go to hell for all I know. If he wants to kill me fine let him do it but you're not giving him Sesethu. I am not asking but I am telling you. If you can't think for Sese's well-being I will do the thinking for you. I have spoken. I hope we're clear?

Me: Yes we're clear.

Sam: Good. Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight.

I switched off the lights and I left the bedside lamp on. One thing I couldn't do was to sleep in the dark room.

I couldn't sleep. I was thinking about the easy way out of the situation that I was in but I couldn't find one. I thought of packing my things and leave but I wasn't going to take an easy way out. I was going to fight for my happiness with Samkelo. I wasn't going to let Themba stand in the way of my happiness. Because it was clear that he didn't want me to be happy. He was going to use our kids to do that. I sighed heavily.

Sam: Thandeka are you alright?

Me: Yes but I am struggling to sleep.

Sam: Do you want me to hold you?

Me: And your arm?

Sam: I will hold you with left one.

I shifted close to him. I placed my head on his chest. He brushed my head.

Me: You'll do anything to make me happy right Samkelo?

Sam: Yes and you'll do the same right?

Me: Yes. Promise me you won't let anything come between us again. I am not willing to do that. I don't want to let you go again.

Sam: I don't want to let you go again too. And I promise I won't let anything come between us again. Only death must tear us apart now.

Me: But I don't want you to die Samkelo.

Sam: I will hold on for you Nanesh if you will do the same for me.

Me: I will hold on my honey bear.

He kissed my forehead.

Me: Ndunakazi? Alondwe and Uyathandwa want to adopt puppies.

Sam: [laughing] But a dog will eat up the rabbit that Uyathandwa owns.

Me: He's willing to give up Alvin.

Sam: We will go with them Friday morning before we go to Johannesburg for the wedding.

Me: Okay bbe thank you.

Sam: You don't have to say that. Bbe let's own a bike now.

Me: A bike?

Sam: Yes we have cars now. We will both learn how to ride and we will but a bike. And get a license.

Me: [giggled] Why not?

Sam: Is that a yes?

Me: Yes honey.

Sam: Okay we will start after your father's wedding.

Me: Okay no problem.

Sam: I love you Nanesh.

Me: I love you too honey bear.

I kissed his lips and I drifted off on his chest.

The following morning we woke up together. We went to the bathroom. I took off his pyjamas top.

Sam: I want to take off this thing now.

Me: I have to clean your wound and the Doctor said you will take it off when you he says so.

Sam: I don't want to go to work with this thing.

Me: I listen to you Samkelo can you please listen to me too?

Sam: Eish okay. I will listen to you bbe.

Me: You're the best.

I kneeled down before him and I took off his pyjamas pants. He sighed. I giggled.

Sam: You've never done that to me before.

Me: I don't remember doing it to anyone.

Sam: You're a stingy wife.

Me: I will stop ke!

Sam: Don't! Don't stop.

I giggled and closed my eyes.

Sam: You don't have to close your eyes.

Me: Bbe don't coach me please.

Sam: Imagine a lollipop.

Me: Lollipop enjena!

He laughed. I held his d\*ck and I didn't close my eyes. I placed it inside my mouth. Hhaybo! I felt like chewing it. I started sucking on it. He sighed and moaned. I closed my eyes and held his waist. And I went on and on until he remove my mouth by pushing off my head and he released his semen on the floor.

Sam: That was magical bbe. Stand up please.

Me: I have the magic in me.

I giggled and stood up. He held my waist and he kissed me intensely. I was turn on badly but how do you sex a man who's injured. He tried to lift my leg up.

Me: Bbe you can't support my weight.

Sam: Are you trying to say I am skinny.

Me: [giggles] No. But you're injured.

Sam: Don't you want me?

Me: I do but on a healthy thigh.

Sam: You're a party pooper.

I laughed. I took off his bandages. We went inside the shower. We took a shower. We finished. I cleaned up his wound. I did all the necessities and I put on a clean bandage. I went wake the kids up and I bathed them. I put them on their uniform. I went to prepare breakfast. Samkelo called me in. He asked me to help him. I helped him and I wore my clothes too. We had breakfast. Samkelo took the kids to school. Nancy was around.

Me: Mama if someone comes here don't open up for them. Themba or Kimberly. Tell them to come if I am around.

Nancy: Okay madam.

Me: Yoh! Please call me Thandeka mama.

Nancy: Okay baby.

Me: Much better.

I rushed to the nursery and kissed my baby goodbye.

I took my bags and I drove to work. I arrived in my work place.

Yonela: I have missed you Thandeka.

Me: Excuse me?

She came out of her desk and she ran up to me. She hugged me tightly. She backed away and smiled. I looked at her. She had a bump. I held my mouth. The lift swung open and I ran up to it. I left her there. I looked at the woman next to me.

Me: Have your enemy fall pregnant and you'll be her favorite person?

Woman: Yoh! That has never happened.

Other girl: Usenkingeni. Uthandiswa wena?

Me: Oh Simakade.

We all laughed. I went to my office and I started working. The day was a drag. It was almost lunch time. There was a knock on my door.

Me: Come in.

Yonela: Can I sit down?

Me: What do you want Yonela?

Yonela: Can I be your P.A?

Me: Excuse me?

Yonela: My child likes you. Look I even made your picture my wallpaper.

Me: Oh. Your brother told me that you have a degree in Dramatic arts.

Yonela: I am not making this up Thandeka you have to believe me. Please. I just want to be close to you for my baby's sake.

My phone rang. I answered.

Me: Thandeka Dhlomo Hello.

Doc: I have your results back please see me lunch time.

Me: Okay Doctor.

I hung up the call.

Me: I have to go and see the Doctor

Yonela: Can I go with you. I will check up too.

Me: Okay. Let's go.

I took my handbag and she stood up. She followed me to my car. She was talking non stop. I was annoyed.

We arrived in the hospital.

Me: I will call you after my appointment.

Yonela: Okay.

I went to the Doctor's office and he let me through. I sat down.

Dr: I will get straight to the point.

Me: Okay.

Dr: You're under a lot of stress and pressure. It's now depression that causes your headache. You have to rest and exercise. If you keep on stressing yourself. You'll end up suffering from migraine headache. And believe me you don't want that. I will write a medical report for you. You will take a two weeks leave.

Me: I can't take a leave Doctor. I have a new project I am working on. And I have to finish it.

Dr: If you don't listen to me I will have to talk to your fiancé.

Me: You can't do that. That's not ethical.

Dr: That boy loves you. When he was here he was worried about you instead of his wounds. And I am sure that he doesn't want to see you dead. And a healthy relationship is when partners can discuss everything together.

Me: I know but I am still taking care of him. If I tell him. He'll exaggerate. I don't want that.

Dr: It's your choice.

He signed the two weeks leave and he gave me medication. I took everything and I left.

Yonela: Don't leave me behind please.

Me: Come.

I stepped inside the car and Yonela did the same. I was flying on the road. And I couldn't hold my tears back.

Yonela: Are you alright dear?

Me: Leave me alone please!!!

She shut up immediately. We arrived at our workplace. We stepped out of the car and I went straight to my office. I drank water and I breathed in and out. "I can do this. I can do this" I said. I prayed and I continued working.

After work I gathered my things together and I locked my door behind me. I went to the lift passing by the reception area.

Yonela: Hey Thandeka. Wait.

Me: What?

Yonela: Can I come to your house and visit my brother's kids?

Me: You can visit them when they are at their father's house. I don't need visitors in my house.

Yonela: I turn to miss you sometimes.

Me: Just look at my pictures because we can't be friends. Bye.

Yonela: Bye.

I walked out of the building. I went to my car. Kimberly was leaning on my car.

Me: What do you want?

Kim: I went to your house the nanny refused to give me Thembeke.

Me: I changed my mind dear. I am no longer giving him my child.

Kim: What? Why?

Me: I changed my mind.

Kim: You can't do that. Themba wants his child.

Me: Don't you want your own child with him?

She didn't answer me, a tear escaped from her eyes. She wiped it soon. That was a little sad

to me.

Me: You can't give him kids?

Kim: Please bring back Thembeke.

Me: I am sorry but I won't. I don't understand because on your CV it was written that you have a son. Or you lied just to get the job?

Kim: This is not about me.

Me: Eish I am sorry Mrs Smith. My daughter is not going to stay with you.

I stepped inside my car and I drove straight to my house.

I arrived at home and my kids were on the lounge watching TV. I sat down on the couch.

Me: Hello my babies.

Them: Hey mommy.

They didn't look at me. They were watching Tom and Jerry. That's how they were when watching cartoons.

Me: Where is Uya?

Them: Sleeping.

I took my letters from the mail box and I read them. Samkelo and I had an invitation card inviting us to Themba's wedding which was going to be on the 16th of July on my birthday. I sighed and read my other letters. Nancy came in the lounge.

Nancy: You are home?

Me: Yes. You can go now.

Nancy: I took Uyabongeka to the clinic for vaccination.

Me: Didn't you say tomorrow?

Nancy: I was talking about today.

Me: I am sorry I thought you said tomorrow. Let me give you the taxi money that you used. I took out the money and gave it to her. She took it and said her goodbye to the kids. She left. I stood up and I went to change my clothes. I went to check up Sese she was sleeping. She was clean and she smelled nice. I went back to the lounge. Samkelo was home. He was reading the invitation card. I sat next to him and I kissed him.

Sam: How was your day?

Me: Long and tiring yours?

Sam: Just a normal day. I am happy that I don't have to carry my arm like a baby.

Me: You went to the hospital today?

Aloe: Daddy did –

Sam: Awume kancane can't you see that your mother is still talking to me?

Aloe: I am sorry.

Sam: Yes. The Doctor said it's okay if I want to take it out.

Me: You better be telling the truth.

Sam: I swear. Themba is getting married on your birthday?

Me: Yes.

Sam: Are you going to the wedding?

Me: I ain't crazy. I won't stop celebrating my birthday and go to the wedding of my ex husband. Never!

Sam: Okay. Did you go to the hospital?

Me: Yes. It was just a headache nothing much

Sam: Yoh! I was worried. I don't want anything to happen to you. If it was something serious I was going to make sure that you take it easy.

Me: There's nothing to worry about. Let me go and cook.

Sam: My treat. I am taking my family out.

Me: Mm Okay.

Sam: Laa Laa what were you saying my baby?

Aloe: I was asking about the puppies. Did mommy tell you?

Sam: Yes she told me. We will buy them tomorrow morning before we leave.

EJ: You don't have a problem with it daddy?

Sam: No I don't.

He smiled and nodded. I stood up and I went to take Sese. We all went to the car and Samkelo drove to La Lucia mall.

We went to the restaurant of the children's choice. We ordered. We waited. The order arrived and we prayed and ate.

Aloe: I want to have a white puppy.

EJ: I want a brown puppy.

Sam: Are you ready to let Alvin go?

Aloe: He's ready Daddy.

EJ: We did a farewell party for him. Aunt Nancy took a video.

Samkelo and I laughed.

EJ: Mommy there's daddy!

He stood up quickly and ran out of the restaurant. He called him. Themba turned back and he kneeled down before him. He hugged him. They let go and Themba signaled that he will bring him back. I nodded.

Sam: He will bring him back?

Me: Yes. He knows that Uyathandwa is a mama's boy.

Sam: Yeah hey.

Me: Hhaybo don't say it like that. You're a mama's boy!

We both laughed. Uyabongeka laughed after us. We laughed because we thought she was sleeping.

Aloe: Ungibukani wena? [Why are you looking at me] uyahaha. [Directing it to Sese]

Sam: Musa ukuphaphela ingane wena!

Aloe: Uyahaha vele lona.

Sam: Uphendula mina kanjalo?

Aloe: Ngenzenjani uma ehaha?

Me: Alondwe! Stop back chatting your father. We're older than you. You're just five years old.

She didn't say anything.

Sam: You don't say anything when your parents are not happy with you?

Aloe: I am sorry.

Sam: Ngizokushaya ke mina uma usubilelwa yikhanda. I won't even buy that dog if you have attitude.

She didn't say anything. I took Uyathandwa's drumstick and I gave it Uyabongeka because uyahaha vele. I know that she eats a lot. Themba and Uyathandwa came back. Uyathandwa sat on his chair.

Themba: Hello Laa Laa.

Aloe: Hello daddy.

EJ: Mommy who ate my chicken?

Me: I gave it to Sese.

EJ: She's eats everything! She loves other people's things.

Themba, Sam & I: Uyathandwa!

Aloe&EJ: She's a rat!!!

Me: I will bitch slap both of you. You little pigs!

Sam & Themba: Thandeka!!

Me: Hhaysuka! Baphaphela ingane yami laba.

Themba: Come to daddy my angel.

She screamed and opened her arms for him. Themba took her. He grabbed a chair and sat down with her.

Themba: Can I talk to her Samkelo. Please take the kids.

Samkelo looked at me and I nodded. He stood up. He kissed me. He took the kids and they left. Uyabongeka was busy messing up with her drumstick.

Themba: Kimberly told me that you don't want me to take her.

Me: Yes I changed my mind. We're not offering you a deal anymore. I am taking her because of your actions. You can consult the court and I will tell them the reason behind. You will lose everything because you're dealing. And you'll go to jail.

Themba: You're really doing this?

Me: I am trying to protect my children from you. Specially iNtandokazi yakho. You favor her over Uyathandwa vele.

Themba: That's not true. I love them equally. The difference is I wasn't there when Uyathandwa grew up.

Me: That's not my problem Themba. So you mean just because I didn't feel labour pains for Uyabongeka I should do as you.

Themba: But truth be told you don't care about Uyabongeka as much as you do for Uyathandwa.

Me: That's your opinion. I love all my kids equally just that I know Uyathandwa more because we spent more time together. Just the two of us. And Mike. Uyathandwa was my family, my friend and everything For two years so how can I not know him more?

Themba: But Thandeka please give me my daughter.

Me: You can take them both every Friday and bring them Sunday afternoon. That's all I can agree to.

Themba: Thanks. I promise I won't do anything to harm them.

Me: Please Themba.

Themba: I won't. So your boyfriend will press the charges?

Me: I don't have a boyfriend.

Themba: That's what he'll forever be because you won't marry him. I won't allow that.

Me: We will see about that. Please bring her back. I want to go.

Themba: I will take them tomorrow?

Me: No we're going to Johannesburg. My dad is getting married.

Themba: Oh. Let me go.

He gave me my child. He kissed her cheek.

Themba: I love you my baby. Bye Thandeka.

Me: Bye.

I texted Samkelo and they came back. He paid and we went to the car.

Sam: He didn't take her?

Me: No. I said [I told him everything]

Sam: That's a good idea. Because they do need their biological father too.

Me: What if he goes to jail? What will happen?

Sam: If he goes to jail. He will be putting himself there. I won't press the charges anymore. I am doing it for the kids.

Me: Thank you.

Sam: You know I love you?

Me: Yes and I love you too.

I kissed his cheek...

The following morning we woke and we did the hygienic process. We were not going to work and our kids were not going to school. The previous night I had packed our clothes. We

went back to lotion. I gave Samkelo my body lotion and I told him to lotion my body. He took it and moved his hands on my back softly.

Sam: You know my thigh is much better now bbe.

Me: So? [I giggled]

Sam: I want you now.

Me: Not tomorrow?

Sam: No but now.

Me: The kids?

Sam: They can wait.....

He kissed my neck while cupping my breasts slowly. He let go of the lotion. It fell on the floor.

Me: I didn't say loose control Mr Ndunakazi.

He chuckled and he made me face him. He kissed me, walking me to the bed. He made me lie on my back. He got on top of me. He kissed my lips. He slid down his fingers and he rubbed on my clit. I started moaning softly. He kissed my neck while rubbing on my clit. I held the back of his neck. I locked up my legs around his waist. He kissed my neck deeper and my body heated up immediately. The atmosphere of the room changed. My breathing escalated, it turned into tiny gasp of air mixed up with the sounds of my moans. He went down on my nipples. He was taking his time like we had all the time in the world. I was wet enough. He slid himself in and he groaned with every moment. He started moving and I moved along accommodating his rhythm. I moaned louder and scratched his back. He went in deeper and deeper. I felt my climax building it up. It came slowly. My body vibrated and toes curled up. I came and he came right after me. He passed out on top of my body.

Me: [mimicking his voice] But my thigh is much better now bbe.

Sam: But you needed that?

Me: Hell yes. Usisthandwa wena.

He chuckled. I laughed. We stood up. He tried to stand up. He moved back and forth. I looked at him.

Sam: You make me feel dizzy.

Me: Feel dizzy my foot! Your wound is bleeding!

Sam: Really?

He looked at it and clicked his tongue. I held his hand and we went to the bathroom. I cleaned his wound. He groaned in pain.

Me: Nawe you can't control your dick.

Sam: As if you can say no to it.

Me: Mxm! Waphapha!

He chuckled weakly. We took a shower. I fixed his wound up, I put on the bandages and we went to wear our clothes. I closed the windows. I took my handbag. We went to the kids.

Sese was sleeping on the floor.

Sam: Oh Sese is sleeping now.

Aloe: What took you so long mom and dad?

Me: Your dad was having a problem with his wound baby.

EJ: You're alright now daddy?

Sam: Yes boy. Let's go buy the puppies.

They screamed in happiness. Samkelo took Sese. We took Alvin and packed him with the kids. I locked the house and I took the drivers seat. I drove straight to the place where we got Alvin. We put him back there and we drove to a pet shop. They chose their puppies. Alondwe got a white puppy and Uyathandwa a brown puppy. They had small travel cages. We went to have breakfast and I drove to Johannesburg. Sese was scared of the dogs. We had breaks along the way but we finally arrived in Johannesburg.

Samkelo was going to stay in my brother's house and I was going to my father's house with my kids. I dropped Samkelo first but I went inside with my kids. I saw my brother. I hugged him.

Me: Bhuti wami.

Andile: Lil sis. You're fine?

Me: Yes I am fine baby boy and you?

Andile: I am fine. These are nieces and nephew?

Me: They are strangers now?

Andile: No. She's five years. He's four years old and she'll turn one year.

Me: Konje ubuye ube nescefe.

Him and Samkelo laughed. I went inside the house and I went to Shemah. I hugged her. The house was quite full. Even my grandmother was there. I went to sit next to her. I hugged her.

Me: Gogo.

She looked at me and clicked her tongue.

Gogo: You disappointed me by getting divorced Hleziphi.

Me: It wasn't working out gogo.

Gogo: That's not the way of doing things. Look at you now. You're wearing a ring of another man. What makes you think this one will work out?

Me: Because I have seen my mistakes and I am working on them to be a better woman. I don't want anything that will make it go wrong.

Gogo: I am not happy. Where is your ex husband?

Me: He's in Durban and he's getting married. On my birthday for that matter.

Gogo: Niyahlanya nobabili. Go and prepare that good tea you make with your hands.

I laughed and stood up. I went to the kitchen and I made the tea for her. I went to her and I gave it to her.

Gogo: I am going to sleep in your father's house. He said I will come with you.

Me: Okay.

The kids were running around making a hell lot of noise. My headache started paining. I held my head.

Gogo: Are you alright mntanami?

Me: Yes gogo. I am fine.

I stood up and I went to my car. I looked for my tablets. There were not there. I remembered that I have hidden them from Samkelo. I forgot to take them. I sat on my car and I tried to close my eyes. The puppies started barking. I clicked my tongue. I stepped out of the car.

Samkelo came to me with Sese

Sam: Bbe are you alright?

Me: Yes. Why wouldn't I be?

Sam: You don't look fine.

Me: It's just a minor headache.

Sam: I thought the Doctor healed your headache.

Me: He did bbe. It's just the noise. The kids are too loud. I have to go.

Sam: No Thandeka you're worrying me now. You can't just be off.

Andile: Samkelo Brah. Come.

Sam: Okay! Please take her. We will talk later neh?

I nodded. He kissed my forehead. He looked at me.

Sam: Your head is burning.

Me: Just go.

He left. I went inside the house.

Me: Gogo can I put her here with you. I want to take a nap.

Gogo: Okay come baby. You have all the colours my granddaughter.

I smiled faintly and I gave her Sese. I went to the guestroom. I threw myself on the bed and I tried to sleep. I fell asleep at last.

I woke up later. Samkelo was waking me up.

Me: Hm?

Sam: What's wrong with you? Do you care to explain my Nanesh.

Me: You worry too much yazi. I have to go now bbe. Dad is probably getting worried.

Sam: He came and they left with the kids. Your grandmother too. He said I should drive you home when you wake up.

Me: Let's go ke.

I stood up. I was feeling much better. I went to wash my face and I followed Samkelo. Andile was sitting on the backseat. Andile's favorite song played on the radio.

Andile: Please turn up the volume Samkelo!

Samkelo turned the volume up and it made my head spin. I closed my eyes. Samkelo and Andile were very close and whenever they were together it's was like they were stupid teenagers. They were singing along and laughing. That made my head pound. My vision started being blur. They didn't even notice that I was in no mood for their noise. I rested my head on the window and closed my eyes...

I woke up when Samkelo was shaking me. I looked at him. He smiled and I smiled weakly. He gave me his hand. I looked around Andile was no longer inside the car.

Me: Where is my brother?

Sam: He's at home.

Me: What are we doing here at this time of the night?

Sam: I just want you to relax a little bit.

I smiled and nodded. We were in a park. We went to sit on swings. He gave me a bottle of water and painkillers. I took it.

Me: Thank you how did you know my headache is not gone?

Sam: I heard how hot you were. So I thought maybe if I can bring you here you'll be fine. The wind is cold and it's quiet. We can just talk about our future.

Me: Thank you bbe.

Sam: I can't wait to make you my wife.

Me: I can't wait too. And you'll be my husband.

Sam: Where do you want us to stay?

Me: [giggles] I want a big house in Durban North. Not a double storey but a triple.

Sam: Yoh! You aim high. I thought you'll say you want us to live emlazi.

Me: [laughing] I have never lived in a township full time before.

Sam: There's first time for everything.

Me: Umlazi has the vibe neh but no for me.

Sam: So Durban North it is?

Me: Yes bbe.

Sam: A triple storey house with how many children inside?

Me: How many do you want?

Sam: Two more so that they can be five?

Me: Mmm. Okay. I don't mind as long as I won't have those babies now.

Sam: [laughing] Yeah. Sese is still young. Do you think Themba will stop us from getting married?

Me: He doesn't have that power. I will talk to his father and his mother. I know they are reasonable parents.

Sam: I think he still loves you.

Me: We're not here to talk about Themba and I am over him. I am with you. Let's talk about

our future.

Sam: When will we get married?

Me: How about we get married on our daughter's birthday next year?

Sam: It will be on Thursday.

Me: So? Is it wrong?

Sam: People will be working.

Me: I don't mind.

Sam: You don't want a big wedding?

Me: I want an intimate wedding with a few guests. You know but if you want a big wedding we can get married on a Saturday of that week.

Sam: As long as you'll be my wife. Big or small it's the same difference to me.

Me: 1st of September it is. So bbe you brought me here with what to eat?

Sam: A lollipop.

Me: A lollipop Samkelo??

Sam: Yes my love.

He laughed. I took the lollipop and I opened it. He did the same to his we sucked on it.

Me: I want yours Samkelo.

Sam: No. Uyahaha.

I grabbed it while he was laughing. I ran off with it. He followed me. He ran after me. I was laughing while running away. He catch me. We laid on the ground and laughed. He held my hand. He kissed me intensely. We broke the kiss after a long while. We looked at the sky. The fresh air was so peaceful.

Sam: I wish it can be like this forever.

Me: Life can be so easy.

He held me closer to him. He kissed my forehead. We spent a few minutes there and we stood up and went to the car. He drove me straight to my father's house. We arrived and I kissed him goodnight. I walked inside the house.

The house was full. My family from my father's side. They were there. I went to greet them.

Me: Sanibona [greetings]

Them: Yebo ntombi. [Greetings]

Me: Daddy? My groom. [They laughed]

Malumekazi: Wakuhlula owakho umkhwenyana. [You failed your husband]

Gogo: And she's having a second husband.

Me: This day is not about me I suppose.

Malumekazi: I have been married for 20 years and I have never thought of giving up.

Dad: Marriages are not the same.

Me: Where is the bride?

Dad: She's with her family.

Me: Okay let me leave the family.

I walked away before they started talking about me again. I looked for my kids. They were playing with the puppies. Uyabongeka was crawling after them. She was laughing and there I was thinking that she was scared of the dogs but it turned out I was wrong. I went to her and picked her up. She cried and pointed the dogs.

Me: Sese. The dog will hurt you.

Aloe: Let her play with us mommy.

Me: No. I have to feed her.

She cried some more. I put her down and she stopped crying. She laughed and crawled after them. I left them and I went to dish up the food for Uyabongeka. I went out of the house with it.

Me: Uyabongeka!

She looked at me. I showed her food. She looked back at Uyathandwa and Alondwe. She crawled up to me. I picked her up. I went to the kitchen with her and I fed her. I finished feeding her and I went to bath together with her. We lotioned and wore our pyjamas. I wasn't in a mood for family vibes. I went to play with my daughter in bed and we ended up falling asleep.

The following morning. It was my father's wedding day. We all woke up and got busy. I fixed up my kids and gave them food and I got ready too. I wore my outfit for the day and I styled my hair. After getting busy we all made our way to the venue. It was beautiful and my stepmother was more than beautiful. She looked young that day. The wedding vows ceremony took about an hour and we went to the reception where speeches took place. It was lovely and my dad was happy. The traditional wedding was quite funny because white people had no clue of what we were doing but all in all it was a beautiful day for my dad and his wife. We took a lot of family pictures. I went to my dad's room. I wanted to talk to my new mother. I knocked. She let me through.

Me: Hey beautiful bride.

Evelyn: [laughing] Hey my beautiful daughter.

Me: You were beautiful today.

Evelyn: I suppose I am ugly on other days.

We laughed.

Me: Let's just say today it was more than other days.

Evelyn: Thank you baby.

Me: So you're my mother now?

Evelyn: Yes and I would love to have a relationship with you. You don't have to go through things alone while I am here.

Me: I am happy to hear that. Sometimes it's hard to confide in my father because he's a man. That's why I wish my mom was around maybe things would've been different.

Evelyn: But I am here now. Things will be different. I will love you like I love Patrick and my daughter. Though you're far.

Me: Thank you mom. [I giggled]

Evelyn: Come here.

I went close to her and she gave me a hug and she kissed my forehead. I left her and looked for my children. That day I didn't really get time to talk to Andile or Samkelo. Shemah and I bathed the kids and we fed them. I took my kids and we went to sleep with. I was tired. The following day dad and mom went to their honeymoon. Samkelo and I drove back to Durban together with our kids....

The kids didn't go back to school because the June holidays began. I didn't stop working. I wanted to finish off the project that I had. I didn't tell Samkelo about my health. I didn't want to bother him. It was a Wednesday night. I was inside my blankets reading a novel about marriage and relationships. Samkelo and the kids were playing with the dogs outside. They didn't want to come back and sleep so I let them be. My phone rang. I took it. It was an unsaved number. I answered.

Me: MaDhlomo speaking hello.

Voice: Hello. It's Samkelo's mother.

Me: Oh.

Her: Biological mother.

Me: Oh. Eish I thought it was his stepmother. I was a little bit surprised.

Her: No it's me. I haven't spoke to you ever since you and my son got back together.

Me: Yeah hey. The last time we spoke it wasn't good at all.

Her: Yeah but that's a long gone past. I am just happy that my son is getting married and to

you of course. Loosing you was one of the hardest things on him.

Me: I know. And it wasn't an easy break up.

Her: Yes but fate brought you back together. But anyway how are you my daughter in-law?

Me: I am not a so healthy daughter in-law.

Her: What's wrong?

Me: I have depression. I have been through a lot with my divorce and fighting with my ex husband about the kids. As a result I suffer from a server headache. The Doctor said I might end up having a migraine headache.

Her: Hhaybo! Did you tell Samkelo?

Me: No mama I don't want him to get worried over this. I know he worries a lot.

Her: That's nonsense. He's your fiancé, he should worry about you. If he doesn't who will?

Me: I know but Samkelo will treat me like a baby.

Her: Ain't you his bbe?

Me: [giggles] I am.

Her: Then tell him. Keeping secrets is not healthy for a relationship.

Me: Okay mama.

Her: I wanted to know that do you know that my son has to pay lobola to your in-laws?

Me: Yes I know. I will speak to my mother about it.

Her: Okay baby. His uncles have written the letter. We just want you to tell us their address.

Me: I will call her and get back to you.

Her: Okay baby goodnight.

Me: Goodnight mama.

I hung up the call. I sighed. I didn't know how the parents were going to react because Themba didn't want me to get married.

I said a short prayer before calling her. I dialed his number and she answered after a few rings.

Mrs Smith: My daughter.

Me: Hi mama. How are you?

Mrs Smith: You left us and you never looked back. How do you think I am.

Me: I am sorry mama. This divorce was quite something. Firstly it took me by surprise. I never thought our marriage can end so soon.

Mrs Smith: I was also surprised but it will be alright. I heard you're getting married too and your ex husband doesn't want that.

Me: Yes. I suppose he told you.

Mrs Smith: He told his father. But don't worry baby. We won't stand in the way of your happiness. After everything that you've been through with our son you deserve to be happy again MaDhlomo.

Mr Smith: "Let me talk to her please"

I heard shuffling sounds.

Mr Smith: How are you Makoti.

Me: I am fine tata how are you?

Mr Smith: I am fine. Don't worry about your marriage. You will get married Thembaletu won't do anything. You're our daughter not his daughter.

Me: Thank you tata.

Mr Smith: Okay. I hope my grandchildren are coming for their Father's wedding?

Me: Yes they will come. He will take them tomorrow. [I heard Mrs Smith shouting something]

Mr Smith: Your mother asked if they can stay with her for the rest of the holidays?

Me: It's Okay. But please tell her to keep a close eye on Lelethu. I don't want him to get hurt again.

Mr Smith: I will make sure that I get them a good nanny. I won't allow him to play with these kids. I heard he has a puppy now?

Me: Yes.

Mr Smith: Okay bring it with him.

Me: Okay. Everything will be done in your house tata because you're my parents now. I wanted to get the postal address.

Mr Smith: I will send it now.

Me: Okay tata. Thanks. Goodnight.

Mr Smith: Goodnight Makoti.

We hung up the call. I placed my novel away. He sent the address and I forwarded it to Mama ka Samkelo.

I stood up and I went to check on Samkelo outside. Uyabongeka was sleeping in her room. I stood by the door they were still playing.

Me: Don't let the kids fool you bbe. You're working tomorrow and they are not going to school.

Sam: But we're having fun bbe.

The kids stuck out their tongues at me.

Me: Okay. I was just saying that qha.

I walked back inside the house. My phone was ringing in my room. I ran to it. Kimberly was calling. I answered.

Me: Hello.

Themba: Hi, How are you?

Me: I am good and you?

Themba: I am more than good. Who wouldn't be good when marrying the woman of his dreams?

Me: A fool wouldn't I guess.

Themba: You got that right!

Me: Oh. Okay you were calling because?

Themba: I wanted to –

Samkelo came inside the room running. I looked at him. He was sweating. He looked cute though. He came to me and kissed me. I pushed him off. I giggled.

Me: I am on the phone Samkelo Ndunakazi!

Sam: Who are you talking to?

Me: Ubaba ka Uyathandwa.

Sam: Okay. Let me go and shower.

He said kissing me. I pushed him off and giggled. He left.

Me: I am sorry about that you were saying?

Themba: Tsk! I wanted to tell you that I will take the kids at 8am.

Me: What's the rush?

Themba: Our flight leaves at 10am. I don't want to be late.

Me: Okay sure. You will get them at 8am sharp!

I hung up the call. I put my phone away and I went to check up on my babies. They were bathing. I assisted them. And they went to bed. I kissed them goodnight. I went back to my room. Samkelo was looking at the mirror.

Me: Are you alright?

He nodded and walked up to bed. I joined him.

Me: Ndunakazi is everything okay?

Sam: Yeah. Goodnight.

Me: Oh okay. Goodnight.

I let him be because I didn't know what his problem was.

In the morning Samkelo woke me up. I looked at the bedside clock. It was still 5am.

Me: What's wrong?

Sam: Wake up I am taking you for a jog.

Me: A jog? Why?

Sam: You know what the Doctor said to you. I will help you do it so stand up.

Me: What are you talking about?

He went to my dressing table. He opened the drawer and took out some papers. He threw them on my face.

Sam: I am talking about this!

I took them and read them. It was my Doctor's medical report. I looked at him.

Me: Bbe I was going to tell you.

Sam: I said wake up and change.

I stood up and I went to the bathroom. I washed my face and brushed my teeth. I changed and I wore clothes comfortable for jogging. Samkelo was watching me the whole time.

Me: I am done.

Sam: Put on this. It will help your mind be at ease.

It was his iPod. He put it on me. The music playing was soft. He gave me a bottle of water. He held my hand and we prayed a short prayer. We went out for a jog. We jogged a short distance because it was my first time. It was quite a destressing exercise. We then jogged back home. Samkelo went to the shower. I checked up on my kids and they were still sleeping. I went to bath and I brushed my teeth. I went back to my room. Samkelo was wearing his clothes.

Sam: I will give the medical report to your boss.

Me: But I am going to work.

Sam: You might not need us but we do need you. Me, our kids and your family. The Ndunakazi family who would like to know you more as their daughter in-law. I won't let your stubbornness take you away from us. Just rest. I will make breakfast for you.

Me: I have to fix up the kids Themba is coming to take them.

Sam: Mam' Nancy will do that.

He left the room. I threw myself on top of my bed. I took a pillow and placed it on my face. I screamed. I didn't want to be treated like a child!!!!

Samkelo came inside the room with breakfast. I sat up straight and he put it on my lap.

Me: You know there's no need for all this.

Sam: Yazi you don't care about my feelings.

Me: I care about you Samkelo but if I will stay here I will go mad. I can't just stay at home.

Sam: Laa Laa is home. You won't be alone.

Me: She'll be busy with her dog and you know that. At least let me work at home.

Sam: No. Just rest.

Me: I will call your mother. We will visit her.

Sam: And leave me alone?

Me: Yes. At least there is Melokuhle and Simthande. And I will visit my grandmother. That's the only break I can get.

Sam: I hate being without you Thandeka.

Me: I know but please let us go bbe.

Sam: I will think about it.

He took his things and he left.

Me: Mxm.

I ate my food. I stood up and I went to my kids. The Smiths were clean and ready to go. I sat down and I made Uyabongeka sit on my lap. She rested her head in my chest.

Me: Hey my nanas.

Them: Hi mama.

They were sad. They had long faces.

Me: And then what's up with the tension?

Aloe: They are leaving me mama.

Me: Don't cry they will come back.

Aloe: But Nursy and I will be bored. Why don't spring stay behind.

EJ: I can't leave my dog.

Me: We will go and visit your grandmother Empangeni if your father agrees.

Aloe: Really?

EJ: Can I go too?

Me: You're going to Cape Town baby.

EJ: They will break my arm again.

Me: They won't. Don't play with them. Your grandfather will have someone who will take care of you.

He sulked. I kissed my angel. She was fast asleep. There was a knock on the door. Nancy rushed to the door.

Nancy: I think it's not a problem that I opened up for his father?

Me: It's Okay.

She opened the door. Themba walked inside the house with Kimberly.

They sat down. Uyathandwa didn't even run up to him. He sat there and brushed his dog.

Them: Morning.

Us: Morning.

Me: Their bags are right there.

I pointed them but they didn't stand up.

Themba: Why is everyone sad? Did Samkelo die or?

I boiled up with anger inside. Alondwe looked at him. He looked at me.

Me: You may be too excited about the wedding but please keep your excitement out of my house. Take the kids and leave.

Themba: Take my daughter Kimberly.

Kim: Okay bbe.

She stood up and she came towards me.

Me: Take the bags. I will buckle her myself.

She nodded. I stood up.

Me: My baby boy come.

EJ: I don't want to go.

Me: You will fly baby come.

He sulked. His father looked at him. I stood by him. He looked at me.

Me: I ain't leaving you here stand up. And you Kimberly don't take too long to get just two suitcases and a baby's bag?

She got up with them and left the house. Themba stood up and followed her. I didn't want to trust them. What if they plant something in my house. Alondwe hugged her brother. She went to her room. We all walked outside. I buckled my daughter on her sit. I stepped aside.

Themba grabbed me by my arm. We stood far away from the car.

Themba: Are you coming to my wedding?

Me: No I am not coming.

Themba: Why?

Me: It will be my birthday and I don't see a reason for me to come to your wedding.

Themba: Are you jealous?

Me: No I am not.

Themba: What's wrong with Uyathandwa?

Me: He doesn't want to go. Those kids broke his arm remember?

Themba: You poisoned him against me!

Me: What? Why would I do that?

Themba: Because you don't want to see me happy Thandeka. Uyathandwa had no problem when I take him.

Me: How can he have a problem with staying in your house Themba??

Themba: If you get married it will be fair that you give me both my kids. Because you've already poisoned my parents against me.

Me: You know I won't do that! You and your wife should start planning your own family.

Themba: Kimberly can't give me kids! She can't conceive.

Me: I am sorry. But you can get second opinion. A surrogate mother maybe.

Themba: Why should I get a surrogate mother when there is you available?

Me: Excuse me??

Themba: I have two kids with you. I just need them with me to make my house comfortable. Or I can fuck you and you'll give me another baby.

Me: Do you hear yourself right now? You're making Kimberly your wife. She should come with options. She's the precious pearl right?

Themba: And she'll forever be that. I don't need you. In my eyes you'll forever be a baby making machine!

That cut deeply inside me. I was filled with nothing but anger. I gave him two hard slaps that made his face turn pink immediately. He looked at me with shock written on his face.

Me: Fuck you! Leave my house now you dog! Tsk! Leave!

I pushed him to his car. I had tears in my eyes. Kimberly stepped out of the car.

Kim: What's wrong?

Me: Take this fucking husband of yours and leave my house.

Kim: What's going on Themba?

Me: Hey you bitch I said leave my house!

Kim: I ain't no bitch.

Themba tried to slap me. I went close to him.

Me: Try and do it. So that the product that I made can see you for who you are. Try and slap me Themba! I am punching bag right?

He clicked his tongue and he took his wife and they left. Uyathandwa waved goodbye at me. I waved it back and I quickly wiped my tears away. They left. I was going to leave La Lucia and I was going to make sure that I don't contact Themba ever again. I was going to wait for him to bring back my kids. I didn't want him to suspect a thing. I went inside the house and I changed my clothes. I wore black pants, a maroon top and a black coat. I wore maroon stilettos. I fixed my hair and I took my handbag. I went to Alondwe's room.

Me: Stand up baby. We are going out.

Aloe: We will leave Nursy?

Me: No we will go with him.

I made her wear the same colours as mine. I combed her hair and tied them up. She hooked Nursy on a string. I told Nancy to go home. I took my daughter and her puppy. We went to the car.

Me: Mama come I will drop you at the rank.

Nancy: Okay.

She stepped inside and I drove to Nanda rank. I dropped her off and I drove straight to getaway. We shopped around with my daughter. Just having some retail therapy with my baby. I was thinking about moving back to Richards bay. If Samkelo agrees. I was going to

leave Durban. I was willing to quit my job if possible. I wanted to stay away from Themba because he brought nothing but stress in my life. He was acting like a bitter ex husband...

We went to steers and bought lunch for daddy Sam. I drove straight to his workplace. It was already lunchtime. I went to the reception desk. I spoke to the receptionist. She was a white woman.

Me: Hello mam.

Her: How can I help you?

Me: I am here to see Samkelo Ndunakazi.

Her: Who are you?

Aloe: She's my mommy and we're here to see my daddy. Please let us through?

Her: You're Mr Sam's daughter?

Aloe: Yes and this is my mommy.

Her: Oh. You're so pretty. I am Becca. And you're?

Aloe: I am Alondwe but you can call me Laa Laa.

Her: Laa Laa from Teletubbies?

Aloe: Yes! You know them?

Her: Yes my daughter loves them.

Aloe: Where does she live?

Her: We live at La Lucia. And you?

Aloe: We live there too.

I was bored and they were talking like they've known each for a long time.

Her: I will give your mom my number and she can call me. Maybe you can watch them together with my daughter. She doesn't have friends.

Aloe: Mommy did you hear that?

Me: Uhm yeah baby. I did.

The receptionist gave me her number. I took it.

Me: Can we go now?

Becca: Yes.

Me: There's no problem if she goes in with the puppy?

Becca: Uhm no she can go.

Me: Thank you. Laa Laa carry Nursy please.

Alondwe carry her dog. Becca told someone to show us Samkelo's office.

We knocked on the door.

Sam: Come in.

He was so serious on the computer. His assistant was on her own desk. I cleared my throat.

He looked up. He smiled.

Me: Don't tell me you have to be in bed. What are you doing here?

Sam: I wasn't going to say that you know.

He stood up and came up to us. He kissed me. He stopped when his P.A cleared her throat.

We laughed. He kissed Alondwe's forehead.

P.A: I guess it's lunch time. Sir I would like to excuse myself.

Sam: Okay.

P.A: Mam it's nice to finally see you and your little angel.

Me: Thank you. Nice to meet you too.

She left. I sat down and Alondwe did the same. I opened up the food and gave it to Samkelo.

Sam: Thank you.

Aloe: Daddy can we go and visit grandma?

Sam: I should have known.

Me: That's not the reason we are here.

Sam: I know that's why you're here.

Me: But you should let us go.

Sam: No and leave me alone?

Aloe: But daddy?

Sam: No you –

Us: Please!!

Sam: No.

Me: What kind of a father are you?

Aloe: Yeah! What kind of a daddy are you?

Sam: No you're not leaving me.

We sulked. And he ate. We looked at him hoping that he will say "yes" but he never said yes.

We sat there looking at him eat. He finished and drank the juice.

Sam: You're such a lovely family. Thanks. I was starving as hell.

Aloe: But daddy?

Sam: Yes baby. My lunch hour is over. Let me walk you out.

We sulked and stood up. He took Alondwe's puppy. We went to the lift. We passed by the reception. We said our goodbyes to the receptionist. We went to the car.

Me: You don't want us to go seriously?

Sam: Yes.

Me: I won't talk to you.

Alondwe: Yeah me too daddy.

I took Alondwe's puppy. We stepped inside the car.

Sam: That's unfair. You're my girls, who will I talk to?

We didn't answer him. We pouted and I drove off.

Aloe: You did good mommy. We won't talk to him right?

Me: Yes my Angel.

We giggled and we continued talking.

We arrived at home. Alondwe was fast asleep. I took her inside the house. I took my phone and I went to my room. I called Samkelo's mother. She answered after a few rings.

Mama: Hey baby.

Me: Hi mama how are you?

Mama: I am fine baby and you?

Me: I am fine but sad.

Mama: What's wrong?

Me: My fiancé doesn't want us to visit you. Alondwe and I wanted to visit.

Mama: [laughing] What did he say?

Me: He said we can't leave him alone.

Mama: [laughing] He's being a baby.

Me: Can Smithande and Melokuhle visit me? It's 1 o'clock now by 4 o'clock they'll be here.

Mama: Okay. They are home. Melokuhle is on university vacation so there's no problem at all. I will tell them to get ready.

Me: Thank you. They will tell me when they are at Durban station. I will come and get them.

Mama: Okay. Bye.

Me: Bye.

I hung up the call and I went to cook the great feast. I was trying to keep the bad vibe out of my system. I was even baking. There was a buzz on the gate. I went to attend it.

Me: Talk to me.

Thobe: Mind opening up for me?

Me: Bitch man!!!

I opened the gate and I ran outside. He drove through. He stepped out of the car. I ran up to

him and hugged him tightly.

Me: Look at you.

His daughter stepped out of the car.

Thobe: I am big now hey.

Me: Yes! And this little Miss. Hello Zenande.

Zee: Hello.

I picked her up and kissed her forehead.

Me: Please come inside.

They followed me. I put Zenande down. Nursy came running to them. He barked. Zenande cried and ran up to her father.

Me: Nursy! Stop! Out!

He stopped barking and he went out of the house. They sat down.

Thobe: Really? A dog?

Me: It's my children ntwana.

Thobe: Tjo!

Me: I am cooking in the kitchen please come this side.

They followed me. I fixed up something for them. Alondwe woke up. Zenande went to play with her. Thobelani assisted me with cooking.

Me: So any woman? A potential madam maybe?

Thobe: No. She refused to move to Durban with me.

Me: I am sorry hey. But there are plenty of roses in the garden right?

Thobe: Yeah sure. I will find the one.

Me: That's the spirit!

We cleaned up the whole place. Around 16:35. Melokuhle and Simthande texted. We all drove to Durban station. Zenande was 6yrs old. They were getting along with Alondwe. We arrived in Durban station and I spotted my sisters in-law. I went to them.

Me: Hey ladies.

Melo: Mama ka Alondwe.

We hugged each other.

Me: How are you?

Them: We're fine and you?

Me: I am alright. Come let's go.

We went to the car. They sat at the backseat. They greeted others.

Aloe: Hey aunty.

Them: Hello Laa Laa.

Aloe: I have a puppy now.

Simthande: Really?

Aloe: Yes. It's a white puppy.

Melo: Yoh! Sis Thandeka you should've told me. I am scared of the dogs.

Me: Relax dear he's a good dog.

I drove straight home. We arrived at home. Samkelo was home but there was another car inside the yard. We stepped out of the car and we walked inside the house. Samkelo was on the lounge with his friend Phumlani. He smiled when he saw his sisters. He stood up and went to hug them.

Sam: You didn't tell me that you're coming!

Melo: Yeah! You didn't want them to come so we came here instead.

Simthande: Mama ka Alondwe invited us.

Sam: Bbe that's lovely.

Me: Yeah but I ain't talking to you!

Sam: Nana?



Me: You don't feel pain now?

EJ: I am better now. I wish we can leave South Africa mom. Why did we come back?

Me: You wanted your father baby and I wanted to see my family.

Themba: Boy you know that I love you.

EJ: No you don't. You told me to stop to being a snob and that I should go and play with other kids.

Me: A snob?? Do you know what a snob is baby?

EJ: Aunt told me that it is a person who doesn't respect people on low classes and that person thinks he's better than others.

Me: How can you say that to him?

Themba: Can we talk inside.

Me: You're not coming inside my house.

Themba: I am sorry boy okay. But don't convince mom to take you back to America.

Me: I think you should go. You've done enough damage. Please leave.

He went to his car. I called Samkelo to take the bags for me. He came out of the house.

Sam: Woah! Buddy what happened to your leg boy?

EJ: I fell off the tree.

Me: Bbe please get those bags for me.

Sam: Okay.

I opened the gate. Themba drove off. Uyathandwa limped inside the house. We followed him.

Laa Laa held my skirt. We sat down on the couch. Samkelo came inside the house.

Me: What happened baby?

EJ: Daddy told my grandmother that the nanny must babysit my sister not me. We flew to the other home there was a party for dad and aunt Kimberly. I was alone with my dog. Daddy told me to go and play with other kids and stop being a snob. I went to play.

Me: But baby I told you not to play with them.

EJ: Daddy shouted at me. We went to climb a tree and they pushed me. I fell down it was painful. Grandpa took me to the hospital. The Doctor said my leg bone is broken but I will be fine because I am still a baby.

Aloe: Sorry little brother.

EJ: Thank you. Mommy can I go and sleep?

Sam: I will take you to bed.

He stood up and picked him up. I sighed and kissed Sese's forehead. She was fast asleep. I went to put her down on her cot. I walked out of her room. I meet Samkelo on the passage.

He gave me a tight hug.

Me: Do you think he's using drugs?

Sam: I doubt he'll ever do that. Maybe he wants him to be like every child in their family.

Me: That's crap! But my baby will be fine right? Sam: He'll be fine bbe.

Me: I love you bbe.

Sam: I love you too.

He kissed me. I kissed him back for a long time. I wrapped my hands around his neck.

Aloe: Mom and dad I can see you!

We broke the kiss immediately.

Sam: You're a bad child!

We laughed. Samkelo picked her up. She held our necks. She was in between us. We held her hand on each side.

Aloe: I love you mom and dad.

Us: We love you too Nana..

It was a Friday evening of the following weekend. I was on the lounge with my kids. They were building puzzles. I was expecting Themba to come and fetch his kids. Uyabongeka was playing with her toys. Samkelo came inside the house running. He had a newspaper on his hands. He was coming from work. He sat next to me. He kissed my cheek.

Sam: Kids!

Them: Daddy!

Sam: Wifie!

Me: What's up did you get a raise maybe?

Sam: No but I got a house that I think you will love but it's not a triple storey house.

Me: I don't mind now. A beautiful house will work for me. I just want to leave La Lucia.

Sam: Here!

Me: [looking at it] mmm mmm wow! It's beautiful! When are we viewing it?

Sam: You love it?

Me: Yes! I love it.

Sam: I am buying it?

Me: Yes!

Sam: Okay. I will contact them and we will go and check it out and I will give them my payslip so that they make quotation. I am done paying for my car.

Me: Okay. Mr Ndunakazi.

Sam: I was thinking that how about we get married on the 1st of January.

Me: But that's a holiday bbe.

Sam: Yeah. It will help me a lot.

Me: [laughing] So that you won't forget our anniversary?

Sam: Yeah! [He laughed] And it would be nice that every beginning of the year it's our anniversary.

Me: How will I have an intimate wedding on a holiday.

Sam: We will write that "no kids allowed and we want two people per household" how about that?

Me: Very good. So we must start preparing?

Sam: Yeah.

Me: We will get married in Cape Town because Mr Smith will be handing me over to you not my biological dad.

Sam: My family is in Cape Town so there's no problem.

Me: Mmm thank you.

He kissed my cheek.

Sam: Kids?

Them: Daddy?

Sam: Mom and dad are getting married next year.

They made the happy screaming. Uyabongeka screamed after them. We laughed. There was a buzz on the gate. I stood up and attended it.

Me: And you're?

Themba: I am here for my kids.

Me: Okay.

I opened the gate for him. I went to the lounge

Me: Uyathandwa your father is here to take you guys.

EJ: I am not going with him.

Me: What's wrong with going with your daddy?

EJ: I don't like to go with him.

Me: Who will look after your little sister?

EJ: Daddy will. And aunt Kimberly.

Me: But baby you should spend time with your father. Every son should have a relationship with their father.

EJ: Laa Laa's father is also my dad mommy. There's nothing wrong if I spend time with him right daddy?

Sam: No boy there's nothing wrong. But your daddy also need to spend time with his son. He shook his head "NO"

Themba: [standing by the door] It's Okay. I will take Thembeka.

Me: Sorry Okay?

Themba: It's cool.

Uyathandwa didn't even greet him. I took Uyabongeka and I passed him over to her father. I gave him her bag. I kissed her cheek.

Me: Bye baby. Mama uyakthanda.

Sese: Mama.

Me: Huh? Did you hear that Samkelo?

Sam: [laughing] Yeah I did.

Me: Oh. My baby.

I kissed her lips. She screamed, the baby scream.

Me: Okay bye.

Themba: Sure.

He turned back.

Me: So you'll just go like that, you won't say anything to your son.

Themba: No. It's cool.

Me: Nothing is cool Lana wena. Can't you see that nothing is cool?

Themba: Ngeke ngizwe ngawe phela [You won't tell me what to do]

Me: Okay. Hamba.

I opened the door for him and he walked out of the house. He buckled Uyabongeka on her seat. I stood by the door. Tears gushed out of my eyes. I wiped them immediately. He was looking at me. My heart was beating fast. I looked at him. He stepped inside the car. I opened the gate and he left. I sat down on the entrance stoop. I cried silently. Samkelo sat next to me. He held me closer to him.

Me: He doesn't care about him Samkelo why?

Sam: I don't know but you have to be there for Uyathandwa Thandeka.

Me: I have been there for him all my life. I just his father to take his part and be there for his son.

Sam: He will come around.

I nodded. He stood up and held my hand. I stood up too. He tickled me.

Sam: Loosen up a bit!

I laughed. I sat down. He sat next to me. I faced him and I kissed him.

Aloe: Mama your phone! Grandpa is calling.

We broke the kiss. I took my phone.

Me: Daddy?

Dad: Hey my baby how are you?

Me: I am fine daddy and you?

Dad: I am very happy baby?

Me: What happened daddy?

Dad: I am going to have a baby boy?

Me: Huh? A baby?

Dad: Yes.

Me: No daddy! How can you have a baby? I am supposed to be your last born!

Dad: Hawu Thandeka. I thought you'll be happy?

Me: Happy? Kanti how old is Evelyn that you guys can make a baby?  
Dad: She's not that old.  
Me: [crying] I am no longer Trinity daddy?  
Dad: Thandeka you're acting like a baby now.  
Me: I am a baby! I am your baby girl nje.  
Dad: But you're 24yrs old now.  
Me: Oh! You didn't want me as your last born? You don't want me now?  
Dad: You're Thandeka Ndunakazi.  
Me: But I am still your little girl daddy. Now you'll have a little boy. That's unfair!  
Samkelo was laughing at me.  
Dad: I didn't expect this.  
Me: You wanted me to be happy? I am not happy daddy! Hawu! This guy!  
Dad: Calm down baby goodnight. We will talk when you're already.  
Me: I won't talk to you! .  
Dad: Eh! This child!  
Me: Yeah!  
I hung up the call. I pinched Samkelo.  
Me: Stop Laughing it's not funny!  
Sam: I am sorry bbe. But if you saw yourself. Yoh! It was so funny!  
Me: Mxm! He's having a baby. A baby? Hhaysuka!  
Sam: What do you want to make you feel better bbe? Anything say it!  
Me: On our anniversary we will exchange salaries. I will take your salary and you'll take mine.  
Sam: Hawu Thandeka???  
Me: Yeah! That will make me feel better.  
Sam: Don't you have something else in mind?  
Me: No. You're Chartered Accountant so I want your salary every January I will take yours and you'll take mine. Deal?  
Sam: No!  
Me: But you said anything! It's that or else I won't talk to you until daddy's baby is born.  
Sam: Eish! Deal ke!  
Me: Yes!!!  
We did handshake. Samkelo laughed at the baby situation. I sulked. I stood up and I went to bed early. I was seriously sad Mina! My dad was having a little baby???? Hhaybo!

2 YEARS LATER.....

Where to start? Okay!

Themba didn't reach out to his son. I let him be. Uyathandwa had a good but bad heart just like his father. He got along more with Samkelo and he dropped Themba. Uyabongeka was the only daddy's baby. But Themba did take care of his son's needs. He would go to his sport days and ask him about school. Uyathandwa used to visit him once a month or never. And I would be the one who will convince him to go.

Samkelo and I got married on the 1st of January. I was officially Mrs Ndunakazi. I was treated like a Queen. He bought the house and we moved to Durban North. The following year my kids changed school. On the 4th of April my little brother was born. His name was Sanele Christian Dhlomo. My grandmother from my mother's side died. Andile was still married. His son was 3yrs old. I didn't sell my house. People were renting it. We had license for riding bikes. We had two bikes.

Beginning of the year. Samkelo and I were celebrating our 2years in marriage. That year Alondwe was going to be 8yrs old, she was doing Grade 3. Uyathandwa was going to turn

7yrs old, doing grade 2. Uyabongeka was going to turn 3yrs old. She was in daycare. My little brother was turning 2yrs old. Samkelo and I were going to be 27yrs. We were born on the same year. Uyabongeka could speak both Afrikaans and Zulu. The communication in Themba's house was Afrikaans. Uyathandwa and Alondwe knew basics because they did learn it at school.

It was a Sunday. After church I drove straight home. Samkelo didn't go to church with us. He was home sick. He had a slow down and he was always sleeping. Even at work he told me that he got a verbal warning for sleeping during work hours. I was exhausted and I had a little headache. My depression problem didn't turn out to be a big problem because Samkelo made sure that I exercise and I eat healthy. We used to take and fetch our kids to school. Sometimes Samkelo did and sometimes I did. I arrived at home. I was with Alondwe. Uyabongeka and Uyathandwa were at their father's house. It was the end of January. We did the salary exchange though Samkelo wasn't happy. We both stepped out of the car.

Aloe: When will Uyathandwa and Uyabongeka come back?

Me: I think they will come back later.

Aloe: Uyabongeka likes acting like a new born baby.

Me: She's my baby nje.

Aloe: But I wasn't like her when I was three years old mommy. She'll turn 4yrs. I told granny yesterday on the phone. She told me that you and daddy must have a baby she'll stop acting like a baby.

I laughed and we walked inside the house. Alondwe sat down on the couch with her dog. I went my room. Samkelo was sleeping. The curtains were closed. I went to the balcony. I opened the curtains and the sliding door. I opened the windows.

Sam: Thandeka I am sleeping. Please!

Me: You have to wake up and take a shower. Samkelo you've been sleeping the whole day.

Sam: I will wake up.

I opened the cold air on the air conditioner. He woke up reluctantly. I took off my shoes. He went to the bathroom. I made the bed. I cleaned up the room. After cleaning, I went to the kitchen.

Me: Bbe are you hungry?

Aloe: No. But let's eat your chocolates mommy. Daddy brought them home with him yesterday.

Me: He didn't show me. Go and take them.

She stood up and ran up to the kitchen. Samkelo came downstairs shirtless. He sat on my lap.

Sam: How was church?

Me: It was a highly anointed service.

Sam: Okay. Can you give me a highly anointed kiss right now please.

Me: Alondwe will come back just now.

Sam: Two seconds.

I giggled and kissed him. He placed his hand on my neck. We kissed deeply.

Aloe: Mom and dad I am here now.

We broke the kiss.

Sam: Are you stalking us? You're always there.

Aloe: No. Daddy but I was sitting here with mommy and I went to the kitchen to take this.

Sam: Who said take it?

Aloe: Mommy said I must take it.

Me: Is there something wrong if I eat the chocolate?

Sam: They are mine. And mine alone.

Aloe: Caring is sharing.

We laughed at her.

Sam: Sharing is caring Nana.

Me: So honey bear. Caring is sharing? We're eating this chocolates?

Sam: No. Let's wait for Uyabongeka. She told me to buy them. She will open them.

Us: Awu! Please!

Sam: No!

Aloe: The rewards of having two Daddies.

Me: Do you want a second daddy?

Aloe: Yes mommy.

Me: I will get you a second daddy.

Samkelo gave me a dead stare.

Me: What?

Sam: How can you say that to a child?

Me: I am just joking.

Sam: You better.

Me: What? Do you think I will cheat on you?

Sam: I didn't say that.

Me: It's clear that is what you think. By the way I have never cheated on you.

I stood up.

Aloe: Mommy the chocolate?

Me: I don't want it anymore.

Aloe: Daddy let me give one to mommy.

Sam: No leave her like that.

Aloe: That's my mommy. I can't.

Sam: So?

She didn't answer him. I clicked my tongue and I went to cook on the kitchen. I took my phone on my pocket. I called my mother. She picked up after some time.

Mom: Hello.

Me: Hey mom how are you?

Mom: I am fine baby and you?

Me: I am fine. Where's Christian I want to talk to him.

Mom: He went to visit your brother. He'll come back tomorrow. He wanted to come to Durban.

Me: He must come. I miss him though he's too naughty.

Mom: [laughing] Okay talk to your husband first and we can plan accordingly.

Me: Okay mom. Send my love to my old man

Mom: Okay I will. Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight.

I hung up the call and I put my phone back on my pocket. I continued cooking. I looked at my feet they were quite big than usual.

Me: Yoh! Bp!

Uyabongeka came inside the kitchen running. She hugged my legs.

Sese: Mama. Tel my op [pick me up]

Me: No I won't do that.

She sat down and cried. She cried louder. I picked her up because ubebanga iscefe. She wiped her tears away.

Sese: Pappa het gesê ek moet bel jy mamma [Daddy said I must call you mommy]

Me: When were you going to tell me that because you were crying. Themba or Samkelo?

Sese: Themba.

I giggled because the way she pronounced his name was funny and I walked out of the house. I used the kitchen door. Themba was leaning by his car with his hands on his pocket.

Me: Uyabongeka said you're calling me.

Themba: What took you so long?

Me: Your daughter was being dramatic. She told me after tears that you want to talk to me.

Themba: My Princess. [Sese laughed] I wanted to tell you that I won't be taking them for a while. We have a new born baby girl. My wife's hands are full at the moment.

Me: Okay that's lovely. Congratulations on your bundle of joy. You see God has his timing.

Themba: Yeah but we had a surrogate mother. Me: It doesn't matter. What matters is that the baby is yours and you're parents. At least you paid for that baby making machine.

Themba: I am sorry I said that to you.

Me: It's cool. I suppose they will see you when you miss them. Bye.

Themba: Don't say it like that.

Me: Hhaybo like what? Just that I see no reason why they should stop visiting because you have a child. Specially Uyabongeka loves being with you. Alondwe visited me when I had Uyabongeka nothing was wrong with that. But I suppose it is what is. Look I am cooking inside bye.

Themba: Bye. By the way you still look beautiful.

Me: Thanks. You don't look bad yourself.

He chuckled, kissed his daughter and stepped inside the car. I went back to my kitchen with my daughter. She was busy eating chocolate. I put her down. She held my skirt with dirty hands.

Me: Uyabongeka! Look what you have done?

She removed her hands and she ran away. Uyathandwa walked inside the kitchen. He hugged me.

Me: Hey boy. How was home?

EJ: It was nice. Daddy has a new baby girl.

Me: What's her name?

EJ: Sisipho. We call her Sisi. Let me go and take her picture.

He ran out of the kitchen. He came back and showed me the picture. She was so adorable.

Me: She's pretty. She's looks a lot like you when you were a baby.

EJ: She's my half sister right?

Me: Yes baby.

EJ: Will you have another baby with my other dad. Not Ethan.

Me: Yes we will but not now.

EJ: Please ask for a boy now mommy.

I laughed and nodded. I brushed his head. He shook his head and ran back to the lounge. I finished up and dished up for everyone. I called them. They all came to the table. We prayed and started eating.

Sese: Laat my mamma. [Please feed me mommy]

Aloe: Everytime when you come back from your daddy's house you speak Afrikaans.

Uyabongeka stuck out her tongue pointing it to Alondwe.

Me: Iyakuhlula njalo wena. You should ask her to teach you.

Aloe: Woah shame! I won't.

EJ: I will teach you. Daddy taught me.

Me: I know it too.

Aloe & EJ: You're lying mommy.

Me: ek nie lieg nie [I am not lying]

They giggled loudly. I shook my head and we continued eating. Samkelo was awfully quiet.

After eating. He went upstairs. Uyathandwa and Alondwe washed the dishes. I bathed together with Uyabongeka. The others bathed themselves. We wore our pyjamas. We went to watch TV. There was a buzz on the gate. I stood up and I went to attend the gate.

Me: Ndunakazi residents hellow?

Sane: It's Sanelisiwe Thandeka please open up for me.

I kept quiet for a long time.

Sane: [crying] Thandeka.

Me: Okay.

I opened the gate. There was a knock on the door. I told my kids to go and watch TV upstairs. They stood up and went upstairs. I opened the door. Sanelisiwe had an urn on her hands. She cried loudly.

Sane: Where is Samkelo? My son. Our son is dead. SJ is dead.

Me: Who's SJ? Uhm wait you don't have to explain to me. I will call your boyfriend. Come in and sit on the couch.

She cried her way in. I went upstairs. Samkelo was fast asleep. I shook him awake.

Sam: What? What?

Me: Don't give me attitude. Your girlfriend is downstairs. She wants to see you. It's about your son.

Sam: My son? I don't have a son. Alondwe is my only child and I don't have a girlfriend.

Me: Sanelisiwe. The one who left you for Dubai Samkelo.

Sam: Sanelisiwe? A son? Is this some sort of a prank?

I didn't answer him. He stood up and went to the door.

Sam: Ain't you coming with me?

Me: No I am not.

Sam: Okay.

He left. I was just numb. Sanelisiwe had a son with Samkelo? A son which was dead. I tried to sleep but I couldn't. I could hear Samkelo shouting. I stood up and I stood by the stairs.

Sane:" \_\_\_ I didn't know I was pregnant Samkelo. I found out a few months after I left"

Sam:"You didn't think about telling me! You come back with ashes?"

Sane:"I didn't want to come back and ruin your relationship. Someone told me that you and Thandeka got back together. I figured I can raise him myself. And I was not struggling. "

Sam:"So how did he die?"

San:"He joined a swimming class on his school. He died while competing. He drowned. My son loved swimming and I supported him. I didn't know he'll die."

Samkelo placed his hands above his head. I went back to my room. I cried. No young boy deserves to die while doing what he loves. I wiped my tears immediately when I heard Samkelo's footsteps.

Sam: Thandeka can Sanelisiwe sleep here just for tonight?

Me: Oh Okay.

Sam: Thanks.

He stood up and left.....

The following morning. I woke up. Samkelo was dead sleeping. I tried to wake him up but he didn't wake up. I figured I was going to jog alone. I went to the bathroom and washed my face. I went to my room and I changed. I went downstairs. I took my water bottle. I went out. Sanelisiwe was sitting outside with an urn on her arms. She was crying.

Me: Morning.

She nodded. I ran out of the yard. I jogged around the street. I didn't know what was going to happen. My husband's ex girlfriend was in my house with the ashes of their dead son. What if Samkelo goes back to her? Who knows? In life you may never say never but I told myself that I was going to accept whatever that was going to happen. I walked back to my house.

Nancy had arrived. She was my helper because I had quite a big house to clean alone. I went to the kitchen.

Me: Mama.

Nancy: Hey baby how are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Nancy: I am fine. I can see you have a guest.

Me: Yes but I was told that she'll leave today so I don't know. I have to get ready for work.

Nancy: I will wake the kids up.

Me: Thank you.

I walked up to my room. Samkelo was still sleeping. I woke him up.

Sam: Hm?

Me: Wake up you'll be late for work.

Sam: I am not going to work. I will report myself sick.

Me: When will Sanelisiwe leave?

Sam: I don't know. We have to talk about the funeral with her. I want him to be buried back home this weekend. Maybe she can spend a week here. She can sleep on the back room.

Me: What's wrong if she stays in a hotel?

Sam: She's too broken Thandeka. She mustn't be alone.

Me: Okay.

I went to the bathroom. I took a long ass shower. What was wrong if stays in a hotel? Was it really necessary for her to stay with us? I didn't understand but I didn't want to cause dispute because Samkelo was mourning his son's death. I finished bathing and I took my toothbrush and toothpaste. I brushed my teeth. I couldn't continue because the toothpaste had the wired taste. I opened the toilet seat and I threw up. I flashed it down and I closed the seat. I sat on top of it. I buried my face on my hands. I breathed heavily. I stood up and I looked at my breasts. My nipples had changed.

Me: Shit! Why now baby?

I clicked my tongue. I went back to my room. I lotion. I wasn't going to tell Samkelo just yet and I had to confirm with the Doctor but it was quite obvious that I was pregnant. I wore my clothes and I took my bags. I went downstairs. Uyabongeka and Uyathandwa were eating.

Me: Where is Alondwe?

EJ: She's getting dressed in her room.

Me: I will be late for work! Alondwe!

Aloe: I am coming mama. I just need two minutes.

I sat down and drank the milk. I couldn't down it. I vomited on the floor. Nancy gave me water immediately. I finished and I drank the water.

Sese: [crying] Mamma.

Me: I am fine baby don't cry.

EJ: Why are you vomiting?

Me: It must've been the milk baby.

Nancy came back with the cleaning materials.

Me: I will do it myself mama.

Nancy: You're dressed up for work.

Me: I will change mama.

I cleaned up for myself. I went to drain the water. I went upstairs. I washed my hands and I rinsed my mouth. I changed my clothes. I went downstairs. I drove my kids to school. I then drove straight to work.

I arrived at work. I passed by the reception. Yonela wasn't acting up. She was seriously attached to me during her pregnancy. I knew her daughter. Sometimes she used to stay with me in my office after school.

Yonela: Hey Mrs Ndunakazi.

Me: Morning yonela. Any messages for me.

Yonela: Nop!

Me: Thank you.

I went to my office and I started working. I didn't go for my lunch I had a lot of work. I called Samkelo. He picked up when I was about to hung up.

Sam: Yeah?

Me: Are you sleeping?

Sam: What do you want Thandeka?

Me: Oh. I wanted to know if are you going to fetch the kids?

Sam: No I can't. I have fever.

He hung up the call. I clicked my tongue. I took my handbag and car keys. I drove straight to the daycare first. I picked up Uyabongeka. She was asleep. I picked up Uyathandwa and Alondwe.

Aloe: Mommy my swimming classes will begin after Valentine's day.

Me: Okay. You will talk to your daddy about it maybe he'll train you again.

Aloe: Okay mommy.

Me: Uyathandwa? Any sports this year?

EJ: No. I don't want to play.

Me: Why?

EJ: I will play hockey next year.

Me: Okay.

I called Nancy and she came to my car. She took uyabongeka. I drove by the pharmacy first. I bought three pregnancy tests. I bought the ones who were going to tell me the months. I bought a tumbler cup and I drove back to my office. I urinated on a tumbler and I did the tests. They came back positive. They stated that I was 5weeks pregnant. I was going to have a baby. A part of me was happy but sad because I couldn't share the news with my husband because of his son. I continued working until my knock off time.

I drove back home. I arrived at home. I parked my car. I walked inside the house. There were pictures added on the wall. It was a baby boy. He was cute. He looked exactly like Samkelo. One could say he denied his paternity. You know ingane if iphikiwe iba iduplicate. I didn't like the fact that pictures were on the wall without anyone consulting me about it. But I wasn't going to say anything. I went to my room. Samkelo was working on his laptop. He was inside the bed blankets.

Me: Hi.

Sam: Hi.

I changed my clothes and I walked out of my room. I went at the back of the house. My kids were playing with their dogs. Uyabongeka was playing with her dolls. I told Nancy to go home.

Me: Ain't you tired of playing?

Aloe: No. Mommy Nursy and Spring have no food left for them.

Me: I will buy it tomorrow. They will have something to eat tonight?

Them: Yes.

Me: Hello Sesethu!

Sese: Hello Trinity.

EJ: Don't call mommy by her name you little Brat!

Me: Don't call your sister a brat!

EJ: I was looking out for you mommy. You know these kids can be disrespectful. I laughed really hard.

Aloe: You are not calling me a kid right? I am older than you!

EJ: I am the only brother you have. That makes me old.

Aloe: I had another brother. SJ was my brother too.

EJ: But he's no more.

Sese: Mommy stop them. They will fight.

Me: I want to see them fight.

Aloe: I won't fight with an idiot like your brother wena Sese.

Uyathandwa grabbed Alondwe's hair. Alondwe screamed. I looked at them. Alondwe dug her teeth on Uyathandwa's arm.

Sese: Mommy stop them.

Me: No let them fight like cat and a dog.

Uyathandwa screamed and slapped her. Alondwe slapped him back. Their dogs were barking at each other. I sat down by the kitchen stairs. Samkelo came out of the house running. He separated them.

Sam: What's going on here. Why are you fighting?

Aloe: He started it.

Sam: Uyathandwa?

EJ: I was talking to mom and she budged in on a conversation that didn't concern her. And she called me an idiot.

Aloe: And he grabbed me by my hair daddy.

Sese: Mommy didn't do anything daddy. She looked at them.

Sam: Thandeka why would you look at them fight. Uyazi ukuthi indodana yakho iyaluthanda udlame! [ You know your son loves war]

Me: I wasn't going to get in between them. And I am sorry for my son's aggressiveness but he didn't hurt your daughter. Uyathandwa go to your room now!

He picked up his dog and he walked inside the house. I stood up. I walked back inside the house. Alondwe and Uyathandwa loved fighting and I was tired of it. One thing I didn't like about Samkelo is that he loved favouring Alondwe over Uyathandwa when they fight just because my son was coloured. He'll have the mentality that he's the aggressive one but he made sure that Uyathandwa doesn't hear that. But still I didn't like it. Sese followed me. I made something to eat for myself. I went to sit down on the lounge. Sanelisiwe was there. Sese sat next to me. Samkelo came inside the lounge. He had Alondwe on his arms. He sat down.

Aloe: Mommy, daddy said I will not swim again.

Me: Why?

Aloe: Because my little brother died while swimming. He said he doesn't want to loose me too.

Me: Okay.

Aloe: Do you support him mommy?

Me: Yes.

Aloe: Daddy doesn't want another baby anymore. Sese will always act like a baby.

Me: Excuse me? Samkelo?

Sam: I was going to tell you about it.

Me: Like you were going to tell me about hanging this pictures here? We didn't even discuss her staying over. You just told me what you think is right. What happened to discussing things kanti? I thought that was our basic principle.

Sam: I am sorry. I didn't think you will have a problem with it.

Sane: I can leave. I don't mind.

Me: No it's cool Brah you can stay. I guess you are here because you need a shoulder to cry on right?

Sane: We had a son together.

Me: Okay I get that.

I stood up and I went to the kitchen. I drank water. Samkelo walked in.

Sam: I am sorry bbe.

Me: What if I was pregnant already what were you going to do?

Sam: I am not ready to father a child again Thandeka. You were going to have to terminate the pregnancy. I don't think I will ever be ready for another baby. I think we have enough children.

Me: Oh. Okay.

Sam: You're not pregnant are you?

I swallowed hard.

Me: No I am not pregnant.

Sam: [sighs] At least.

Me: Excuse me.

I went upstairs to Uyathandwa. He was in bed with his dog. I sat next to him. I played with his cheek.

EJ: Mommy. I am old for that.

I giggled and kissed his cheek. He wiped it immediately. I laughed. He laughed too. I cuddled him and we talked about a lot of things. Just having a general polite conversation.

Uyathandwa was one child who I used to turn to whenever I was sad. We talked until we both fell asleep....

The following morning I woke up. I was still in Uyathandwa's bed. I woke him up.

EJ: No mommy.

Me: But baby you promised me that you'll jog with me this morning.

EJ: Okay let's go mama.

I stood up and I fixed up the clothes and sneakers for him. He went to the bathroom. I went to my room. Samkelo was sleeping. I washed my face and I wore my clothes. I walked out of my room.

Me: Baby come please.

EJ: I am coming!

He ran out of his room. He gave me his sneakers. I assisted him wear them. We took the water bottles.

Me: Don't jog with your mouth opened.

EJ: Check me out mama I ain't no idiot!

Me: [laughing] This is not America!

EJ: I am not an idiot.

We laughed and walked out of the house. We started jogging. We were taking it slow. We didn't jog a long distance. After jogging, we walked back home.

Me: So how was it?

EJ: Tiring mommy. I thought I was loosing my breath.

Me: You won't do it again?

EJ: No I will do it every morning with you mommy.

Me: That's my boy. You'll be a charmer.

I kissed his cheek.

EJ: Mom!

Me: Whatever!

We laughed. We walked inside the house. Everyone was having breakfast.

EJ: Mom we're late!

Me: Calm down. We're not late. Just go and shower quickly.

We greeted them and I went to shower in my room. I thought about what I was going to do. I had a plan in mind and I was going to do it no matter what. I finished up and I went to my room. I made the bed and I opened the windows. I wore my clothes and I went to look at

myself in the mirror. Nothing showed that I was pregnant yet. I took my bags. I put on my slippers inside the bag. My feet always became big as the day goes on at work. I went downstairs. Uyathandwa was eating with the others. I sat down on the couch. I was craving for a biltong. I seriously needed it but I had to wait for my kids. I stood up quickly I went to the table.

Me: Samkelo can you drop the kids off. I need to go right now.

Sam: What's wrong?

Me: I have an early meeting that I have to prepare myself for.

Sam: So that's why you're crying?

Me: No. I guess it's a morning tear drop. So?

Sam: I will take them to school.

Me: Thanks. Have a nice day my babies.

EJ & Sese: Have a nice day mommy.

Me: Alondwe?

Aloe: What?

Me: Is that a right way you should respond when I am talking to you?

She shrugged her shoulders. She was lucky that I was in a hurry. I wiped my tears.

Sam: Don't disrespect your mother wena! I won't tolerate your morning nonsense do you understand?

Aloe: Yes I am sorry.

Sam: Bye bbe have a nice day neh.

Me: You too have a nice day.

I turned back.

Sam: Are you forgetting something?

Me: Samkelo.

Sam: What?

I turned back and pointed Sanelisiwe with my eyes. He shrugged his shoulders. I quickly went to him and I kissed him because he wanted that. I broke the kiss.

Sam: I love you.

Me: I love you too.

I kissed his cheek. I took my bags and I left. My husband had mood swings. They were not nice but he had them. I passed by the mall and I bought a lot of biltong. I paid and I drove straight to work. I went to my office and I ate them first. I closed my eyes and enjoyed them. After eating them I started working.

As time goes on I went to my boss's office. I knocked on the door. He let me in. I sat down.

MrK: How can I help you?

Me: I need a big favor Sir

MrK: What is it?

Me: I am [I told him my whole situation]

MrK: I am sorry to hear that but what do you want me to do for you?

Me: Is there a company you can refer me to for a while. A company that is outside KwaZulu Natal. Not in Johannesburg or Western Cape and Eastern Cape. I will come back home after birth and continue working.

MrK: And the baby?

Me: I will come back with the baby but he/she will stay in the flat that I have in Musgrave with a nanny. I will give a woman renting it a notice.

MrK: But I think you should tell your husband. What about your kids?

Me: I will go with my son. He can keep a secret and always has my back. My little daughter will stay with her grandparents. Alondwe has her daddy.

MrK: Are you sure you want to do this?

Me: Yes Sir I am sure.

MrK: Okay. I will refer you to one of my friends company in Mpumalanga. But promise me you'll come back home in October! I want you here in my company.

Me: I will definitely come back Sir. I promise.

MrK: I will talk to him tonight. He once saw your work. I am sure he'll be delighted to have you for this few months. When do you wish to leave?

Me: Beginning of March before I start showing.

MrK: Basically end of this month.

Me: Yes.

MrK: Okay.

Me: Uhm Thank you so much. Please don't say a word to anyone because I will tell my husband a different story.

MrK: Relax your secret is safe with me.

Me: Thank you so much Sir.

MrK: My pleasure. Though you're leaving me.

Me: It's just a few months.

We did handshake. I stood up and I went back to my office. I continued with working. I sent someone to fetch my kids because I had to finish up every project before March.

After work I drove back home. I was tired. I wasn't going to tell anyone about my whereabouts. Even Thobelani. I wasn't going to tell him. I didn't want my baby to course more conflict. But I wanted to protect him/her. I arrived at home. Sanelisiwe was cooking. Okay? I greeted her.

Me: Where's Nancy?

Sane: I told her to go home. I wanted to help around the house because I had nothing to do

Me: Oh okay.

Sane: If you don't mind my daughter and my husband will come here on Thursday for my son's funeral.

Me: Did you tell Samkelo?

Sane: I wanted to let you know first as his wife then you can talk to him for me.

Me: Okay I will.

I went to my room. I didn't know she had a family. After that thinking those nasty things. I sighed at the thought. My kids were doing their homework. I went to sleep. I was tired.

I woke up with Samkelo sitting on top of me.

Me: Ndunakazi!

Sam: What's wrong?

Me: I am tired. I had a long day.

Sam: Let me.

He took off my clothes. He took off my bra and left my panties. He went to the bathroom and came back. He took off my panties. I was looking at him the whole time. He picked me up. He carried me to the bathroom. He placed me inside the tub. He was in no sour mood. He was neutral.

Me: What's occasion?

Sam: There's none. I am just treating my wife right. I haven't been feeling well the past few days and I have neglected you. And the whole situation happening now. I know that it doesn't treat you well. I don't want your stress levels to rise.

Me: I am sorry about your son.

Sam: It's Okay. Though I didn't have a chance to know him him but it's life I suppose.

Me: Yeah but it will pass.

Sam: Yeah.

He joined me and we bathed together. We lotion and wore our pyjamas.

Me: Bbe I have something to tell you.

Sam: Okay

Me: Let's sit down.

We sat down. I held his hands.

Me: Bbe you know that I was in America for two years right?

Sam: Yes I know.

Me: I have done some things there that I am not proud of. Now my past is trying to ruin my future.

Sam: Okay where is this going?

Me: I have to go back to America with Uyathandwa. There are things that I have to fix there Samkelo.

Sam: What? Are you going because of Sanelisiwe? She's married. You're my only wife and I am happy with you. Thandeka no. You can't leave. What about us?

Me: I will come back Samkelo. I am not going because of Sanelisiwe. I trust you okay? Though I was a little scared but I know that you love me. It's just a few months. I have to clear my record there otherwise I will find myself in American prisons. You do not want that right?

Sam: No but I don't want you to go either!

Me: I will come back Samkelo.

Sam: When?

Me: I will begging of March and come back beginning of October.

Sam: What? You must be kidding me! 7months without you Thandeka? Did you hear yourself?

Me: Okay what do you prefer 7months away trying to get my shit together. Or 25 or 10 years away in prison? American prison? What do you prefer?

Sam: Seven months is better but I don't want you to go. Maybe there's another way.

Me: There's no another way. I have to go that's the only way. Please Ndunakazi wami. I am doing this for our family. Our future. Please.

He gave me a tight hug. He then kissed me. I kissed him back and he tried to take off my pyjamas.

Me: Is it alright you're still mourning.

He didn't respond. He shook his head and he kissed me. We made love. We laid on our backs afterwards.

Sam: You won't miss that because I will!

Me: I will too bbe but I will come back home to you and you'll have me anytime. I just have to go and fix the mess I created.

Sam: Promise me you'll come back to me safe. You won't delay anything. On the 1st of October you'll be here?

Me: I promise bbe.

Sam: You can go. Only because I don't want you to disappear for years.

Me: Okay.

Sam: And bbe please ask your boss to give you a day off on Friday. We have to go home. The funeral will be on Saturday.

Me: Okay. I will tell my boss. Junior was just like you hey. He was adorable.

Sam: Yeah hey. He was the real copy of the original Samkelo. But it's cool. That's how it is right. God gives and takes.

Me: Sanelisiwe said her husband and her daughter will come on Thursday. Can they sleep here?

Sam: You don't have a problem with bbe?

Me: No I don't.

Sam: If you don't have a problem then I don't have a problem too.

Me: Okay. I love you honey bear.

Sam: I love you too Nanesh.

We kissed once more. We wore our pyjamas and we went downstairs.

Thursday after work. I knocked out during my lunch time. I went home. Samkelo didn't to work that day. He was busy trying fix up things for his son's funeral. I arrived at home. I went to my room. Samkelo was on his laptop. I went to him and kissed his cheek.

Me: Is everything going accordingly?

Sam: Yes though my family is sad.

Me: They should be sad. Who wouldn't be.

Sam: Eish. You'll go and get Sanelisiwe's husband?

Me: I have to go to Themba remember?

Sam: Oh yah yah. I will go myself.

Me: Let me change. I want to take a ride today.

Sam: Please be careful on the road please.

Me: You know I am always careful Samkelo.

Sam: Careful with a bike wena? You always think you're on the road racing with me.

Me: I think we should do it again.

Sam: I don't want you to die on me.

Me: You're coward!

He laughed.

Me: I don't know what to wear Ndunakazi!

Sam: Let me choose for you!

Me: Oh Lord he'll choose brown and black.

Sam: The colours suit you my bbe.

Me: Sengaze ngakucramer.

Sam: But you also like maroon and black.

Me: Those are my ideal colours.

We laughed. He gave me black jeans, cream white top with brown dots and a brown leather jacket. Brown police boots. I wore those things and he tied up the boots.

Sam: I will put the lipstick on your lips.

I giggled. He put on the red lipstick. I brushed my weave. I took my keys. I put my phone on my pocket. I posed for him.

Me: How do I look?

Sam: Perfect. You look like Samkelo's wife.

I laughed.

Sam: Let me take a few pictures.

I did the poses. He took pictures.

Sam: I won't stop until you my favorite wild Lady gaga pose.

I laughed and did it. He laughed. He took a few more pictures. I went to him and I kissed his forehead leaving the lipstick on his forehead.

Me: You look cute. How about a selfie.

Sam: You love making me a doll neh.

Me: My popayi.

We laughed. We took selfies. I kissed his lips and we took more pictures. She was looking like a girl. My girl. I laughed.

Sam: That's enough. Wipe me clean please.

I took a tissue and I wiped him clean.

Me: I will make this pictures. My profile picture on Facebook. The one where you have

lipstick on your face.

Sam: I won't send them to you.

Me: I know your password!

Sam: I will change it.

Me: You will be applying for yourself to sleep with the dogs outside. In their houses.

He laughed. I laughed too.

Sam: But I will miss you bbe wami.

Me: I will miss you too muntu wami.

I kissed him once more and I left. I rode my bike straight to Themba's house in La Lucia.

I arrived and I buzzed the gate. I explained myself. Themba opened up for me. I went inside the house. He was alone with his daughter on the lounge. The house was dirty. I sat down.

Me: Hi.

Themba: Hey.

Me: Are you alright?

Themba: Not really. My wife is in the hospital.

Me: Eish I am sorry. What happened?

Themba: Something to do with her womb.

Me: I am sorry. Let me help you out before we talk.

Themba: There's no need I'll do it myself.

Me: I wasn't asking for your permission.

He smiled faintly and shook his head. I cleaned up the mess around the house. While at it I cooked for him and washed the dishes and pots. I made the baby's formula. I finished up later. I knew Samkelo was going to ask about what took me so long. I asked Thobelani to back me up. If I say I bumped into him. He agreed. I went back to him. I dished up for him and I put the food and drink on the dining table before going back to him.

Me: Uhm. Let me bath her for you. You can go and eat. Don't tell me "I can do it"

Themba: [he chuckled] Thank you.

I took his daughter. I went up to her nursery. I bathed her thoroughly. I lotion her and put her in warm clothes. I went downstairs. I took her formula and I fed her. She fell asleep. I made her sleep on her tummy. I cleaned up her room. I took her dirty clothes and I put them on the washer. There was a room which was opened. I walked inside the room. It was Uyabongeka's room. It was beautiful. It had her pictures on the wall. Our pregnancy pictures with me and Themba. Some were funny but it was a beautiful room. I smiled and closed the door behind me. I went downstairs to Themba.

Themba: So you'll bath me now?

Me: Don't push it haa.

We laughed.

Themba: But anyway thanks for doing all that.

Me: It's cool. Why don't you hire someone vele?

Themba: You know me. I won't do that.

Me: You always think you got this.

Themba: That's because I got this.

I laughed and shook my head.

Me: Anyway I am here because I want to tell you that I am leaving South Africa.

Themba: What have you done now? You're running away right?

Me: Really Themba?

Themba: What can I say.

Me: No it's not like that. I have to go back to America for a few months. I have some things I want to fix. Before they ruin my future.

Themba: Your husband is cool with that?

Me: Not really but I have to do what I have to do. I am leaving with our son.  
Themba: I should've known. Why are you leaving Missy [Uyabongeka] behind?  
Me: No Themba. I don't want America to corrupt her too. And besides uMissy uyaphapha too much.  
Themba: Yeah that's right and she talks a lot. She took after her mother. I don't blame her.  
Me: Mxm. That's a lie. I spoke to your mother yesterday. She agreed to stay with her.  
Themba: Why can't she stay with me?  
Me: No I don't want that. I will come back October. I am leaving at the beginning of March.  
Themba: Okay. I will see them before you leave.  
Me: Okay thanks. I have to go now.  
Themba: Okay. Thanks for everything neh.  
Me: Yeah sure.  
Themba: Your husband trusts you neh. What if I try to make a move on you now?  
Me: You wouldn't your wife is in the hospital for goodness sake.  
Themba: I was just saying. Let me walk you out.  
Me: Vele naye you chowed her while I was on street looking for our son.  
Themba: I knew that is what you thought. Your eyes always had that. But you never confront me about it.  
Me: Vele that's why I chose not to fight for our marriage.  
Themba: I didn't do that. I did it after our break up not before.  
Me: So tell me she's hotter than me?  
Themba: Is Samkelo good than I am?  
Me: Let's not compare.  
Themba: You started it.  
Me: I was kidding. Goodnight Themba.  
Themba: Goodnight Thandeka.  
I gave him a tight hug. He kissed my cheek. I got on my bike.  
Themba: This bike suits you. You look sexy on it. You must forever ride it.  
Me: [laughing] I'll keep that in mind. Speed recovery on your wife.  
Themba: Thanks.  
He opened the gate. I drove out of the yard. I rode my bike straight home. For the first time in history Themba and I had a good conversation without fighting. And exchanging words. I arrived at home and I walked inside the house. Samkelo was with the kids on the lounge. I sat on his lap.  
Sam: Your friend akangiboni neh?  
Me: Sorry but It's been a while since I haven't seen him. And I helped out Themba with a few things his wife is in the hospital. Don't be mad neh?  
Sam: Why didn't you tell me pho?  
Me: It didn't take long. And I didn't want to tell you over the phone because you were going to think otherwise ngiyakwazi phela.  
Sam: Ungowami phela. I once slept on the same bed with you. But we were not dating. So I know that you can be a lot of things but not an unfaithful wife.  
I giggled and kissed him.  
Kids: Mom and dad!!!!  
We broke the kiss.  
Us: Sorry.  
Me: Thank you for trusting me. [I kissed his cheek.] Sanelisiwe's husband came?  
Sam: Yes. They are the back. Tell your son to tell you. Uyathandwa my boy tell mommy about what you saw.  
EJ: Borrow me your phone daddy.

Samkelo laughed and gave him his phone. He stood up and held my hand.

EJ: Come mommy. We will talk in private.

Samkelo laughed. I laughed and followed him.

We went to the kitchen.

EJ: Look mommy. This is Makayla .

Me: Okay and?

EJ: She's pretty isn't she?

Me: Yes she is. She came with her father today?

EJ: Yes and I asked daddy to take a picture of me and her.

Me: Uyathandwa!

EJ: I told her that she's beautiful.

Me: [laughing] And what did she say?

EJ: She said thank you and I am cute too.

Me: You like her?

EJ: Yes. Can she be my friend?

Me: She will leave soon baby. And you'll be sad baby. You can't be close to her.

EJ: But I like her.

He hugged my legs. I laughed. I picked him up. He was heavy.

Me: You're still a baby to like a girl. You're 7yrs old. Just relax you'll find another friend.

EJ: It's unfair. Mxm!

He pouted. I laughed. We went to the others. Samkelo couldn't stop laughing. It was quite funny.

Friday we flew to Cape Town. Sanelisiwe's daughter was really beautiful. And she was a bubbly child. I took Uyathandwa and Uyabongeka to their grandmother's house. I went back to my in-laws for the funeral. It was a sad experience. Everyone was crying about having to know the child when he was dead. I was praying and hoping that no old woman must see that I was pregnant and they didn't. They were not many but few old women around. On Saturday SJ was buried. We had to mix the colours. Not wear black only. We had to be together for five years in order to wear black freely. We had to stay til Monday for something called ukukhishwa kwamageja. After that ritual. We went to take the kids and we flew back to Durban. Sanelisiwe and her family flew back to Dubai.....

Samkelo and I were going to address our kids. Only a few days were left for me to go. I was sad about the whole thing but I had no choice. I had to go. I was doing it for my baby. I was going to tell Uyathandwa the whole truth when we have landed in Mpumalanga. My family was against the whole thing of me leaving but I had made up my mind.

Sam: Hhaybo bbe your face what's wrong?

Me: It's pimples and they are annoying.

Sam: You've never had pimples before Nanesh right my bbe?

Me: Yeah bbe I have never had them maybe I will start my periods soon.

Sam: If you can remove your womb can you be able to get periods again?

Me: I don't know. You want me to remove my womb?

Sam: It's better than having to prevent.

Me: No. There are different types of prevention. You don't have to worry because removing my womb is the last thing I will do. I love babies but I have accepted that I am not going to get pregnant again.

Sam: At least we have them. So let's go and talk to them about your trip.

Me: Yah I will join you just now.

Sam: Okay Mrs Ndunakazi.

He kissed my cheek and left. I sighed. I held my tummy. "At least we're leaving Monday.

Your daddy is starting to ask questions. Hhay this man. Let's go baby." I said. I stood up and I went to my family downstairs.

Alondwe wasn't talking to me because she believed that I love Uyathandwa more than her and Sese. She was angry that I went to jog with Uyathandwa not her. I tried to tell her that's not true but she didn't care about anything I had to say.

Sam: We called you here because mommy is leaving South Africa.

Them: What??

EJ: No! You can't leave mommy.

Sam: She's going with you Uyathandwa.

EJ: Where are we going?

Sam: You're going to America for 9 months because you'll start new school there. You were going to come back on October but you can't because of your school.

Sese: Mommy you can't go.

Me: Come here baby.

She stood up. I placed her on my lap.

Me: Mommy has to go but I will come back with a lot and a lot of presents.

Sese: And chocolates for Themba's Missy?

Me: Yes and chocolates for Themba's Missy.

She screamed "Yeah" I kissed her cheek. I looked at Alondwe. She was quiet.

Me: You will stay with your grandmother.

Sese: And grandpa Smith?

Me: Yes.

Sese: Okay mamma.

Aloe: Daddy can I go and sleep now?

Sam: You won't say anything to your mom?

She shook her head "NO". She kissed her daddy's cheek.

Aloe: Goodnight guys.

Them: Goodnight.

She ran upstairs to her room. I looked at Samkelo. He shrugged his shoulders.

Me: Okay babies go to bed.

Sese: Bhuti can I sleep with you tonight?

EJ: Okay come.

They stood up and went to Uyathandwa's room. I sighed.

Me: I am hurting her Samkelo.

Sam: She'll understand one day. It's better than going away for years.

Me: Let me go and talk to her.

Sam: Okay.

I stood up and I went to her room. I knocked on the door twice and I opened the door. I sat on her bed. She was asleep but awake.

Me: Nana. I am sorry baby but mommy has to go. That doesn't mean I don't love you. I love you but you have to stay with daddy. And look after him for me.

Aloe: Why do you always leave me? You're always not there for me but you're there for EJ.

Me: That's not true.

Aloe: Yes it is mommy. EJ has never left your side. He's always with you and I am always with daddy. Why can't I be with you too?

Me: You grew up with your father and Uyathandwa grew up with me. It's hard. Because your father and I weren't together when you grow up baby. But that doesn't mean I don't love you. I do. You're my first child. Do you want daddy to stay alone here?

Aloe: No I don't.

Me: You know. Nobody can take care of your father better than you right?



pimples. I could see that Uyathandwa wanted to ask. It was a Saturday morning. I wasn't working during weekends. We were having breakfast. I was eating biltong.

EJ: Mommy you must stop eating biltong it's making you fat and your neck very black compared to your skin.

Me: Okay baby I have something important to tell you.

EJ: Okay.

Me: Mommy is pregnant, meaning you're having a baby brother.

EJ: Really?

Me: Yes.

EJ: But daddy said he doesn't want a baby.

Me: That's why we're here. When mommy found out that daddy doesn't want another baby. The baby was already inside my belly. I couldn't tell daddy because he was going to tell mom to give the baby to someone else. And mommy couldn't do that.

EJ: [whispering] So we're hiding the baby?

Me: [whispering back] Yes. Me and you. We will protect him so that daddy won't find out yet.

EJ: When we go back home. Where will keep the baby mommy?

Me: Leave that to mommy.

EJ: I will see him right?

Me: Yes. But you know the secret rule between us?

EJ: Don't tell anyone until mom is ready to tell the truth.

Me: Yeah. Good boy.

We did our own styled high five.

EJ: I will give him a name mommy.

Me: What will be his name?

EJ: Chance.

Me: Chance?? Why?

EJ: We're taking chances mommy.

I laughed really hard and kissed his cheek.

EJ: Don't laugh mommy.

Me: But it's funny.

I laughed some more. He sulked..... I laugh

The following day was a Sunday. Uyathandwa and I were going to church. I had to buy a second hand car because I wasn't used to the place yet that I can use public transport. I was going to sell it when I was going back home. It was hard living there because I knew nobody and I had no friends. Loneliness was eating me up sometimes. I missed my husband a lot. Living without him hurt. The only person that I knew was Daniel. He was my colleague. He was a black man. We lived in the same neighborhood. He was married, wife with two kids. I was waiting for Uyathandwa. We were going to church.

Me: Baby please hurry up do you want us to be late??

EJ: I am coming mommy.

He took about five minutes to come out. He wasn't even dressed up in a proper way. Everything wasn't in place.

Me: Look at you!

EJ: What's wrong?

I shook my head and fixed him up. We went to the car.

EJ: I miss my dog now.

Me: We only have five months to go. Soon we will be going back home baby.

He nodded. I drove us straight to church. We were late but the service was just a blessing to

me. After church. I was just opening the car somebody tapped my shoulder. I turned back and it was Qiniso.

Me: You??

Qini: Yes me! What are you doing here?

Me: This is my hiding place. Look at you? You're married now and you didn't invite us. I looked at his finger.

Qini: I did but you were in America.

Me: Oh my bad. Where is your wife?

Qini: She didn't come today. Your son has grown up.

Me: Yeah. I thought you are in Limpompo.

Qini: I am here.

Me: That's nice. I should come and visit sometimes.

Qini: Why are you saying you're hiding.

Me: It's a long story but nobody knows that I am here and please don't say a word. They think I am in America.

Qini: Okay. I can see the Smith family is growing.

Me: I am no longer a Smith.

Qini: What? You got divorced or he died?

Me: Divorced.

Qini: There is a ring. Let me guess. You're a Ndunakazi now?

Me: Yes.

Qini: I knew it!

Me: What?

Qini: Come on. You were never a Smith Brah. You've always been a Ndunakazi and you know it. What happened?

Me: You know. I failed to respect him qha.

Qiniso laughed.

Qini: So he divorced you?

Me: Yes he did.

Qini: But honestly you didn't see that Samkelo has been the only guy who was able to tolerate and manage to keep your behavior at the standard rate?

Me: Standard rate? Really Qiniso?

Qini: What? It's the truth. That's why I gave up on you because I could see that I had no chance to build something concrete while Ndunakazi was alive. You were not in love. You were dying.

Me: Really? You are going to analyze my love for Samkelo?

Qini: No I am just making you realize that whatever that you're running away from Samkelo can understand. I know that he can.

Me: It's complicated Qiniso. You wouldn't understand.

Qini: That all I was saying. His love for you makes him weak. He can go that far for you. You don't have to run away from him. But Good luck.

Me: I will need it.

Qini: I know that you hardly listen to someone but surely respect happens automatically for Ndunakazi. It's been how long now?

Me: Two years. Next year will be the third year.

Qini: That's nice. Good luck again.

Me: Thanks. It was nice seeing you again.

We hugged each other. He waved his hands at Uyathandwa. Uyathandwa waved back. He left. I stepped inside the car. I drove straight home. I was thinking about what he said. Maybe he was right. Samkelo was going to be angry but not forever. I shrugged the thought.



boyfriend. I was chubby as hell. I had stopped video calling Samkelo. I was just chatting to him on social networking sites. It was the of 1st September. Thursday morning. I was preparing Uyathandwa for school.

EJ: Mommy please fix my shirt.

Me: After school you will catch public transport baby please be careful. I always tell you that. I can't drive now.

EJ: No I ride with Nick and his mom. She said she will pick me up every morning. But today I will use public transport because Nick is going to the Doctor.

Nick was his friend. He lived on the same neighborhood.

Me: Okay. Do you pay?

EJ: No his mom said I must not pay.

Me: Okay. I will thank her. When she comes here tomorrow.

He nodded. I gave him pocket money. I brushed his hair. I held his hand and we walked to the door. I couldn't reach the door my waters broke.

EJ: Mom!

Me: [trying to breath] Go to school Uyathandwa. I will call an ambulance.

EJ: No I am not leaving you mommy.

Me: You have to go. You have a test today baby. Please go.

The contractions began. I screamed.

EJ: No. I am not going to school. I won't leave you alone. Come mom.

Me: The baby will come.

He held my hand and showed me that we have to go back to the lounge. I walked with him but I was walking slowly. He let go of my hand. He threw his school bag on the floor. He ran to my room. He came back with a baby's bag and my phone. I told him the ambulance's number. He called them and told them where we live. I was on the couch. He came and sat next to me.

EJ: What must I do mom?

Me: Go and find a dress for me.

He nodded and ran to my room. He came back with my dress. I took off everything and I wore the dress. He held my hand and brushed my tummy.

EJ: Mommy is crying Chance don't come now please she will feel pain.

I breath in and out.

EJ: Let's go and sit outside mama.

I shook my head NO.

EJ: I will go. And wait for them.

He ran out of the house. After a while the ambulance came and it took us to the hospital. Uyathandwa went to the kids waiting room. I couldn't leave him home alone. After about an hour. I gave birth to a baby boy. I got cleaned up and my son too. Later I was with my son and I asked for Uyathandwa. He came in running.

EJ: Let me see him mom.

Me: He's adorable. He share a birthday with Alondwe. Today Alondwe is 8yrs.

EJ: Yes. His name is Chance.

Me: No that's a bad name Uyathandwa.

EJ: What's his name?

Me: This is Mesuli Ndunakazi.

EJ: What does it mean?

Me: He's a wiper.

EJ: Tears wiper?

Me: Yes. He'll wipe tears, pain, hate, and every bad deed away.

EJ: Mehsuli.

Me: Thank you baby for taking care of mommy.

EJ: Daddy said I must take care of his wife.

Me: Now let me kiss you.

He shook his head “NO”. I laughed and kissed my little boy....

The day came for Uyathandwa, Mesuli and I to go back home. Mesuli was three months. Uyathandwa passed his grade 2. And Alondwe passed her grade 3. I had my old body and beauty back. I signed up to the gym. The previous day. Dennis took me out. I was planning on telling him the truth before leaving. We arrived in a restaurant. Our table was on a romantic setting. My heart started beating pretty fast. I was nervous.

Me: Uhm. This is lovely.

Dennis: For the special woman in my life.

I faked a giggle. I was very nervous about the whole thing. I didn't know where to start. We ordered food.

Dennis: My family wants to meet you.

Me: Huh?

He went down on his knee. I started shaking. He took out a small box and he opened it. It was a beautiful engagement ring. My eyes widened. I was pretending nje. What happened? What did I do to make him want to marry me?

Dennis: Ever since I have known you. There's been nothing but joy in my life. I don't want to let that joy go. Thandeka Ndunakazi will you marry me?

My heart was pounding. I held my chest. People in the restaurant were chanting “Say Yes”. I had to save him the embarrassed at least. I was never a perfect wife material but every guy I met wanted to marry me.

Me: Yes! Dennis I will marry you!

I faked happiness in my voice. People clapped hands for us. He placed the ring on my left finger. He held my hand and I stood up. He kissed me intensely. The kiss was good. Dennis was good with everything but I was so fucking guilty. I was cheating on my husband. I couldn't tell Dennis the truth because he was never a bad guy. He was treating me and my unborn baby with love and care. We broke the kiss and we sat down. Our order arrived. We sat down and ate. We had dessert.

Dennis: You've made me the happiest man on planet.

I giggled and I fed him dessert. After that he paid and we walked to our cars.

Me: I had a wonderful time.

Dennis: Thank you.

I smiled and hugged him.

Dennis: I will see you tomorrow. I am sure that our baby is old enough that we can go out with him.

Me: Yes he is.

Dennis: Okay my love. I love you.

Me: I love you too honey.

We kissed once more and we went our separate ways. I kept on looking at my ring. Tears streamed down. ” I am sorry Samkelo. I am so sorry. Oh Lord!” I arrived at home. The nanny left. And I slept with my babies.

The following day was the 10th of December. The owner of the house came. I gave her the keys. Her son was buying the car. He also came and they took us to the airport. We said our goodbyes and I flew back home with my kids. Thobelani had arranged everything for me. I had to tell him what was going on. When we landed in Durban. He came to get us. He took Mesuli. He hugged me. Fist bump Uyathandwa with his free hand.

Thobe: You're strong Brah!

Me: Finally I smell the air of KZN. Forget about the rest.

Thobe: But Mesuli's daddy must know that his boy is home.

Me: He will but not now. Please take us to his own new house.

Thobe: Okay.

We stepped inside the car. He drove straight to Musgrave. We stepped off the car and we went to the flat. The nanny was already there.

Me: Hello. You're Snothando right?

Sno: Yes. This is the little guy?

Me: Yes. His name is Mesuli. His brother is Uyathandwa.

EJ: Hi.

Sno: Hey.

Me: I will come everyday to see him.

Sno: Okay.

Me: We have to go now. If you need anything please don't hesitate to let me know. Even if it's not about my son. I will take care of your needs Okay?

Sno: Okay.

EJ: Bye bye Chance.

Thobe: Chance?

Me: Ey brah. Ukuzala kwami.

We laughed. I kissed my baby and we left. Thobelani drove us home. I looked at my hands. I still had Dennis's ring. I took it off immediately and I looked for my wedding ring. I wore it. We arrived at home. He didn't drive in.

Me: Thank you so much.

Thobe: You know I got your back.

Me: The best friend I ever had.

Thobe: You're best of all times. [We laughed]

Me: I look better now right?

Thobe: Very much better. You're beautiful like before.

Me: Okay. Bye. We will keep in touch neh?

Thobe: Yeah sure. EJ.

EJ: Bye uncle.

Uyathandwa took the other suitcase. I took the two. I opened the small gate and we went through. I opened the door. Alondwe was on the lounge dancing.

Me: Look who's home?

Aloe: Mommy: [screaming] Daddy your wife is home.

I laughed. I placed the suitcases down and I met her halfway. I kneeled down and I hugged her tightly.

Aloe: Mommy.

Me: Oh my baby.

We let go.

Me: Look at you! You are old now.

She giggled. She went to hug her brother. I looked at my husband and smiled. I did the Venda royal greetings. I slept on one side on the floor before him.

Me: Nophiko, nokhula ngamazwi, Phamule, mbonambi, mazwi angidinile. Sthandwa Senhliziyo yami.

Sam: Mmm. My wife is home. I like the style of greeting.

I giggled. He held my hand and I got up. He hugged me tightly. I closed my eyes and I inhaled his scent. I didn't want to let him go but we had to. He caressed my face with his hands. His eyes were looking at me. I wanted to cry so bad. I held my tears back but one tear drop off. He wiped it off. I smiled. He held my chin up and he kissed me. I wrapped my

hands around his neck. We kissed deeply. He held me tight and my feet left the floor. We broke the kiss. He kissed my forehead.

Sam: I have missed you so much.

Me: Not like I did.

He hugged me once more. He then went to hug Uyathandwa. He spun him around.

Uyathandwa laughed.

Sam: Thank you for taking care of my wife. She's beautiful.

EJ: I told you I won't disappoint you.

They laughed. He put him down.

EJ: Where's my dog?

Aloe: They have new houses come.

He held his hand and they ran out of the house. We took the bags upstairs. We went to our room.

Me: Did Missy visit?

Sam: She's at her daddy's house. She came back last week.

Me: Okay. HAPPY BELATED BIRTHDAY.

I gave him the gift. His birthday was on the first of December. He took it. And opened it. He smiled and kissed me. I was so nervous but not that much because after birth I didn't sleep with Dennis. But still it was like he was going to feel that I slept with another man. But anyway I couldn't say no to him. We made love countless hours. Yeah! Hours Brah!

Afterwards I was dead meat. I closed my eyes.

Sam: Did I kill you?

Me: Do you have to ask?

Sam: [chuckle] Nine months is not a game.

I faked laughing.

Sam: Bbe are you sure you're alright? Did everything go well in America? Don't tell me you're going back?

Me: No! Bbe I am not going back and I am 100% fine. There's nothing to worry about. I just want to take a nap.

Sam: Okay rest Queen Ndunakazi. I will go and check up on the kids.

Me: And please tell Themba to bring my baby.

Sam: Okay your highness.

I giggled and closed my eyes.

I woke up later. Samkelo was shaking me.

Me: Hm?

Sam: Wake up now. Missy is home. Her daddy wants to see you.

Me: Okay.

Sam: Your phone was ringing non stop.

Me: Who was calling?

Sam: I didn't answer nor check bbe. But the last person who called was Snothando. I couldn't see the other missed calls because I don't know your new password.

Me: My new password is your second name.

Sam: Okay. Who is the little fellow on your home screen?

Me: Oh. That's my friend's son.

Sam: He's pretty. I am sure his mother is pretty too.

Me: Yeah but I don't know his mother.

Sam: But you said his mother is your friend.

Me: Not his mom. But his dad Dennis. He's one of my colleagues in America.

Sam: Oh okay.

He looked at me. I smiled. He smiled back and stood up. He left. I sighed. I took my phone

and I checked the caller. It was Dennis. I sighed and I placed my phone on my bag. I went to bathroom. I washed my face and brushed my teeth. I put on my gown and I went downstairs. I ran down the stairs.

Me: Missy!

Sese: Mommy!

She ran up to me. I picked her up and spun her around. She giggled loudly. Her saliva fell on my face. I stopped.

Me: Argh! Missy!

Sese: [giggles] I am sorry mommy. [She wiped my face]

Me: I got you those chocolates.

Sese: Yey! Yey! I wanna dance!

I put her down and she danced. I laughed. I held her hand and we walked up to Themba. He stood up and hugged me.

Me: Themba.

Themba: Thandeka. How are you doing?

Me: I am fine and you?

Themba: I am fine. It's nice to see you again.

Me: Likewise.

Themba: Can I take my son for a few days. I will bring him back.

Me: If he wants to go there's no problem.

EJ: I want to go.

Me: Okay.

Themba: Thank you.

He kissed his daughter's forehead. Uyathandwa went to take a bag that he came back with. He came back.

EJ: Bye family.

Us: Bye.

He took his dog and they left.

Sam: Can we go and eat out today?

Us: Yes!

We all went upstairs and changed. Samkelo took us out.

We came back late. The kids were sleeping. We put them in their beds. We took a shower together and we went to bed. We were tired. But I couldn't sleep. As soon as I saw that my husband was sleeping. I took my phone and I sneaked out of the house. I made a call outside the house facing the front door. I called Snothando first. She picked up.

Sno: Don't worry sisi. I have found what I was looking for.

Me: Okay. Is he asleep now?

Sno: Yes.

Me: Okay kiss him goodnight.

Sno: I will.

Me: Thanks.

I hung up and I called Dennis. He picked up immediately.

Dennis: My love. Where are you? Please tell me your address I will come and check up on you.

Me: [crying] Dennis I am sorry. I lied to you. I went back home. I have four kids. I couldn't embarrass you. I am sorry. I can't marry you.

Dennis: What? Thandeka please. I love you. I don't care if you have five or ten kids. I just want to be with you. I can't live without you.

Me: I am sorry but I can't.

I hung up the call. I cried silently for a long time. I wiped my tears afterwards and I walked

up to the door. My phone rang again. It was an unsaved number. I answered.

Me: Thandeka Ndunakazi hello.

Voice: It's Dennis's mother. Please my child marry my son. Please save him. [She was crying]

Me: What's wrong?

Her: Dennis wants to kill himself. He is holding a gun, pointing it to his head.

Me: What? No!

I heard other people crying calling out his name. Then there was a loud gunshot. I started shaking.

Me: Mummy?

Her: No!

I heard others crying. Then she dropped the call. I sat down on the floor and cried silently....

I felt hands holding me. I jumped off and looked up. Samkelo was trying to hold me. I wiped my tears immediately and I faked a short smile.

Sam: What's wrong?

Me: Argh nothing bbe. Let me go back inside.

Sam: Hheyi don't fuck me up wena! What's going on here?

I got a fright. I looked at him and I looked away quickly.

Me: I just lost a friend that's all.

Sam: Thobelani Maphanga?

Me: No. My friend from Mpu – America.

Sam: I am sorry mama. Come here.

He held me closer to him. I wept inside his arms. Guilt was eating me up big time. My phone rang. I took it. It was the same number that called the last time. I answered.

Me: What happened?

His mom: He killed himself! Oh my only son.

Me: I am so sorry mummy. I tried to reach out to him. I didn't know he was going to do such a thing. I am really sorry.

Her: He was selfish. Even if things didn't work out the way he wanted. He wasn't supposed to kill himself.

Me: I know you might be blaming me. I am really sorry.

Her: Blaming you or him won't bring him back. I will tell you about the funeral?

Me: Where will he be buried?

Her: Probably back home in India.

My heart started beating pretty fast.

Me: India mummy?

Her: Yes. It's the last respect you can give him. Please come.

I swallowed hard. Last respect for umakhwapheni Jesus!

Me: I will hear from you.

Her: Okay my baby.

I hung up the call. I looked at Samkelo.

Sam: This friend of yours will be buried in India?

Me: Yes.

Sam: You will go?

Me: I don't know India Samkelo.

Sam: You have to show support Thandeka.

Me: Okay.

Sam: I will go with you.

Me: Huh?

Sam: You're my wife. I will support you. Your friends are my friends. Your family my family.

Me: Thank you let's go and sleep.

He held my hand. We stood up. We went to sleep. I didn't know what I have done that the universe gave me such a loving man.

The following morning I woke up early. I went to shower and wore my pyjamas. I went to make breakfast. I sat by the counter and drank coffee. I was just thinking about this whole thing. I couldn't go to India. Specially not with my husband. I had to come up with someone who was going to be me. I don't know how but I had to do something. I had to come up with a plan fast.

Sam: Thandeka! The pots!

I got frightened. I stepped up and turned off the stove. The cooking oil was too hot. I placed the pan aside.

Sam: Thandeka you're worrying me now. I know you lost a friend bbe but please try and calm down. Don't stress yourself.

Me: [crying] I am sorry bbe. I am really sorry.

He hugged me.

Sam: There's nothing to be sorry about. You just have to stop stressing yourself. You'll be fine.

Me: I love you Samkelo. I seriously do.

Sam: I love you too mama ka Nana.

I giggled and kissed him. That day. We spent the day indoors with the kids. Uyathandwa was with his daddy.

Later I called my father. We were sitting on the lounge. Samkelo and I. He picked up immediately.

Dad: This is a nice surprise.

Me: I am back home daddy.

Dad: I should buy a cow. And we slaughter it.

Me: Indodakazi yolahleko?

Dad: Yes. [We laughed]

Me: How are you my daddy?

Dad: Now that my little girl is home. I am fine.

Me:[giggles] My old man. I have missed you daddy.

Dad: I have missed you too. Here is your brother. He's being a nuisance.

Me: Let me talk to him.

I heard shuffling sounds.

Andile: Ntwana yami.

Me: Bhuti kaThandeka.

Andile: It's been a long without hearing your voice. Uyabhunguka yezwa!

Me: Come on. I was fixing my shit up.

Andile: Yelele. American girl. Uhm a chick from the hood. Yoh bitch you hear dat!

Dad:[from background] Andile my son!

I laughed really hard. Samkelo laughed too.

Sam: I ain't taking shit from you nigga!

Dad: Mkhwenyana!

Sam: Uxolo baba. My wife is home baba.

Andile: You'll stop crying to me because of hunger.

Sam: I am even skinny now Brah.

Me: What are you talking about?

Andile: Izindaba zamadoda Thandeka.



back. Everything went well but Dennis's memory was still haunting me. I had no peace inside but I tried to let go. We spent our Christmas with my in-laws. All my kids were there. My heart wasn't there but it was in Durban. New year's eve we were with my family. On the first of January. We celebrated our 3rd year anniversary. But I wasn't free at all. I committed adultery and I lied to my husband but I was scared of telling him the truth.

3months later....

Samkelo and I went back to work. And the kids went back to school. Alondwe was doing grade 4. Uyathandwa was grade 3. Sese started preschool. I used to visit Mesuli everyday during my lunch hour. My son was just a lovely boy. He was cute just like his grandfather. Yeah! Not daddy but grandpa. It was the beginning of April. Mesuli was seven months. He could sit and crawl. It was a Friday I was coming from work. I arrived at home and I went inside the house. Alondwe was with Uyabongeka. I kissed them.

Me: Where is Uyathandwa?

Aloe: He didn't catch a taxi with us. He said he's going to his father's house.

Me: What?

Sese: We told daddy. He said it's fine.

Me: Your father is home?

Aloe: Yes. He's in the kitchen.

Me: Okay.

I took my phone and I stood up. I clicked my tongue and I went out of the house. I called Kimberly. She picked up.

Kim: Hello?

Me: Hi. Is Uyathandwa there?

Kim: No. Why?

Me: Uhm it's nothing. I am not home yet I was just checking if Themba has fetch them.

Kim: No.

Me: Okay thanks.

I hung up the call. I sighed. Uyathandwa walked inside the gate. He was dragging his bag along. I waited for him.

Me: Where have you been Ethan Junior?

EJ: I went to check up on Chance.

Me: What? Why would you do that without telling me?

EJ: I was missing him. I think it's time we tell daddy the truth so that Chance can stay with us full time mom.

Sam: Who's Chance and what truth are you talking about? Lastly where have you been?

I gave Uyathandwa a dead stare. He shook his head.

Me: He's –

EJ: Chance is your little baby daddy.

Me: Uyathandwa Smith!

EJ: No mom I am not a young boy anymore!

Me: Hebanaa!!! You're 8yrs old Uyathandwa you're a child.

EJ: Okay but dad didn't lie to you.

Sam: What are you talking about? Thandeka!!

EJ: Mommy and I didn't go to America. We were in a province called Mpumalanga.

Sam: It's one of your jokes again.

He opened his backpack. I was shaking. He took out his file. He showed Samkelo a picture of me and Mesuli at the hospital. And he gave him his school report.

EJ: That's why mommy didn't want to show you my school report daddy. I want Mehsuli to come and live with us.

Samkelo looked at me. I looked elsewhere.

Sam: Where does he live?

EJ: He lives in Musgrave. On mom's old flat. Where you came to visit us when we were younger.

Samkelo looked at me. He came towards me. He took my phone away from me. And he took my car keys. He went to my car.

EJ: Daddy?

Sam: I will come back boy.

He stepped inside the car. And he drove out of the yard. I looked at Uyathandwa with tears.

EJ: Mom I –

Me: Tsk!!

I walked inside the house. I ran up to my room. I locked myself up and cried. I was crying because I didn't know what was going to happen...

I sat in my room. I didn't know what to do because I didn't know Snothando's number by heart. I went to the landline in my room and I dialed Thobelani's number. He picked up.

Thobe: Yebo landline.

Me: Uyathandwa told him Thobelani.

Thobe: He told him about the baby?

Me: Yes.

Thobe: Yho! But he did the right thing. Mesuli is seven months and you still wanted to keep him a secret!

Me: Hello? What if he becomes Shaka Zulu on my son and kill him. I was scared. He made it clear that he want no baby.

Thobe: [laughing] Really Thandeka? Shaka Zulu.

Me: Yeah. He killed his own son.

Thobe: Samkelo won't do that. Just wait. He'll come around.

Me: Okay ntwana. Thanks.

Thobe: Sure skhokho.

I hung up the call. I went to my bag and I searched for my ring. The one Dennis gave me. It wasn't there. His family had given Nonto other pieces of the ring. I was clueless. I sat on my bed. And I thought about the ring.

There was a knock on the door. I didn't respond. My life was just one big mess. I didn't want to talk to any of my kids special Uyathandwa.

EJ: Mommy it's me please open up for me.

Me: [silence]

EJ: Mommy I am sorry.

Me: [silence]

EJ: Didn't you say we're friends? And friends help each other mommy. I was helping you.

I didn't say anything at all. He started crying. I sat on my bed. His sisters spoke to him.

Aloe: Why are you crying?

EJ: Mommy doesn't want to open the door.

Sese: [shouting] Mommy is tired leave her alone. Oh my goodness Uyathandwa you'll wake mommy up. Leave her alone now.

I smiled. It was funny because she was shouting like she's older.

EJ: Leave me alone! I want my mommy.

Aloe: The gate!

I heard their footsteps running away from the door.

EJ: Mom I am sorry.

There was a knock on the door.

Themba: Why are you crying my boy?

EJ: Mommy doesn't want to open the door for me daddy.  
Themba: Maybe she's tired. Thandeka it's me I am here to take Missy.  
Me: Take them both please.  
EJ: I don't want to go today daddy.  
Themba: It's Okay. Ain't you gonna come out of your room?  
Me: No. You can go. Bye Missy.  
Sese: Bye bye mommy. I must tell Uyathandwa to leave you alone right?  
Me: Yes please.  
Sese: You heard mom leave her alone. Please leave mom alone boy.  
I wanted to laugh. My daughter was dramatic.  
Themba: Thandeka are you alright?  
Me: Yeah Themba I am fine.  
Themba: Okay. See you Sunday bye.  
Me: Bye.  
They left.  
EJ: Mommy?  
Aloe: Leave mom alone hawu! Let's go and check the dogs.  
EJ: I will join you later.  
Aloe: Look! Daddy came with a baby!  
EJ: Really?  
Sam: You'll wake him up. Stop making noise Laa Laa.  
EJ: Thanks daddy for bringing him home.  
Sam: Thank you for telling me boy. Where's your mother?  
Them: She's inside.  
Sam: Okay let me go and put the baby down.  
I heard his footsteps walking away. I was hoping and that he doesn't strangle me or do more because I wasn't going to take that in. I had enough abuse with Themba.  
He came back and knocked on the door.  
Aloe: Mommy won't open the door. Leave her daddy she's resting.  
Sam: She told you so?  
EJ: No. She's not talking to us.  
Sam: Thandeka open the door. Open the door now Thandeka.  
I sat up straight. I hugged my legs. Tears started streaming down.  
Sam: I am not leaving here until you open the door.  
I sighed. I stood up and I went to open the door. Uyathandwa hugged my waist tightly. I looked at him. I removed his hands away from me. He looked at me.  
EJ: I am sorry mommy.  
Sam: You did nothing wrong so please don't be sorry boy. In fact you did a good thing.  
EJ: But she's angry at me.  
Aloe: What did you do to mommy?  
I walked back inside the house.  
Sam: Go and check up on your dogs. I want to talk to your mother.  
Them: Okay.  
They left. Samkelo walked in. He closed the door behind him. He sat on the dressing table chair. He looked at me. I looked elsewhere.  
Sam: How could you do this Thandeka?  
Me: Do what? I was protecting my child and you're asking me how can I do this?  
Sam: Protecting him from what?  
Me: From you! You wanted no children remember? What was I supposed to do because I was already pregnant when you took that decision alone? And worst you told Alondwe first

without telling me first.

Sam: That was pain talking danmit!

Me: That was fear acting! You see it's a draw so you have no right absolutely no right to be mad at me.

He didn't respond for a while.

Me: You said if I was pregnant I was going to terminate the pregnancy. You wanted me to remove my womb. Don't blame me for everything that I did! Don't!

Sam: You should've told me. You should've told me and do all that if I insisted that you terminate. When were you planning on telling me that I have a son?

Me: Whenever I felt like telling you.

Sam: He's 7 months Thandeka. Meaning you've kept this from me for a year and four months but you call yourself my wife? You did something my ex girlfriend did.

Me: Don't compare me to your girlfriend.

Sam: I don't believe you. I want to believe this but I can't believe you were doing this!

Me: Uyangixaka yazi. Because you don't see Your mistake here but you see mine.

He didn't respond. He went to the drawer. He took out a black small box. He threw it on my bed. I took it and opened it. It was the ring that Dennis gave me. My eyes widened. Tears streamed down my face. I looked at him. He was looking at me.

Sam: Mind explaining that?

Me: This is just a ring.

Sam: I see that. I don't remember buying that for you Thandeka.

Me: Where did you get this?

Sam: It doesn't matter. Just answer my question.

Me: I bought this.

Sam: You're lying!!! What went down eMpumalanga?

Me: Nothing.

He grabbed a vase with water and stones on top of my dressing table and he threw it on the wall on my direction. I jumped off the bed and I landed on the floor.

Sam: What happened when I was not there. I am asking you a question???

Me: [crying] I am sorry Samkelo.

Sam: Sorry for what?

Me: Everything that I have done. I am really sorry. Please forgive me.

Sam: What happened eMpumalanga? Who is Dennis? Who gave you this ring?

I cried louder.

Sam: Talk Thandeka Ndunakazi!!

Me: [crying] I had sex with him because I wanted to make my labor to be less painful than the last time I gave birth to Uyathandwa. Themba wasn't having sex with me because I was unattractive. Dennis thought what we had was serious. He proposed. I left him. He committed suicide. I am sorry that I cheated on you. I am sorry.

I looked at him. He was looking at me with an emotionless face. I was crying waiting for him to say something. He didn't say anything. He left the room. I stood up and followed him.

Me: Samkelo?

He went inside the room that was Uyabongeka's nursery. He locked himself up there. I ran back to my room and I cried....

I realized that crying won't help me. I had cried a lot that I was having a headache. I stood up and wore a bikini. I wore my gown and I went out of my room. My kids were on the lounge talking about God knows what! I walked passed them. They looked at me. I went to the swimming pool. I took off my gown and I jumped in. I was trying to cool down. I went under the water. I held my breath and I tried to relax for about a few minutes. I then rose up. My kids were looking at me.

Aloe: How do you do that mommy? You stay under the water for a long time? Huh?

I laughed faintly and went back under the water. I wasn't in a mood to talk to anyone. I wanted to be alone. I had an affair and I was regretting it. I couldn't imagine what Samkelo was thinking about me that time. I stepped out of the pool and sat by the pool stairs.

Aloe: Mommy?

Me: Huh?

Aloe: Why did you hide my baby brother?

I looked at her and shrugged my shoulders.

EJ: You hate me?

I didn't respond to that fucked up question. I laid on my back and looked at the sky.

Aloe: You shouldn't have told daddy. Look now my mom is sad. Ukhuluma kakhulu nawe.

EJ: I said I am sorry. What did you say in the end?

Aloe: Mxm. Idiot!

EJ: Idiot? You're calling me an idiot?

Aloe: Yes! You want my dad and mom to stop being close friends like your dad and mom did!

EJ: No I don't!

Aloe: Yes you do!

EJ: I don't –

Me: ENOUGH BOTH OF YOU!!! GET OUT OF MY FACE NOW!!

Sam: [behind us] Hhey wena Thandeka ungakhipheli umsindo wakho ezinganeni!! [Don't take your anger out on the kids]

He was shouting at me. The kids stood up and they went inside the house.

Me: I am sorry.

Sam: We won't eat today?

Me: I will make something quickly.

He walked away. I stood up and I went inside the house. I showered and wore my pyjamas. I went downstairs and I cooked. Alondwe walked inside the kitchen. I picked her up. I kissed her cheek.

Me: Do you like your little brother?

Aloe: Yes. He's pretty. Daddy loves him. He was singing for him because he was crying. He gave him a name Scelokuhle. He said [mimicking his voice] "Mesuli Scelokuhle kuwe Ndunakazi. Daddy's boy"

Me: That's nice. Mommy is sorry for hiding him Okay?

Aloe: Okay mommy. Apology accepted.

I smiled and kissed her forehead. She giggled.

Me: What did you come here to do?

Aloe: I wanted to cook with you.

Me: Okay. Sit here.

I put her on top of the counter. I finished up cooking. Alondwe was telling me stories. I finished up and dished up for everyone. I made Mesuli's food. Samkelo had bought it. I called them. They came to the table. I took the baby from Samkelo's arms. I sat down with him. Uyathandwa prayed and they started eating. I fed Mesuli his food. Uyathandwa kept on looking at me. I didn't feel like eating. I stood up and I went to bath my baby. I put him on warm clothes and I put him on his cot.

I went to my room. Samkelo was wearing his pyjamas. I fixed the mess Samkelo created when he threw the vase on my direction. I changed the bedding. I sat on my bed.

Me: Ndunakazi?

Sam: Don't call me like that. It disgust me knowing that another man fucked my wife!!

Me: I am sorry.

Sam: You're sorry!?! You're sorry? I waited for you Thandeka! You think it was easy for me to wait for you? It wasn't!. But I did because all I knew was, my wife is out there in another country trying to make this right so that we can be together forever but No I was wrong! She was busy fucking an Indian man! Keeping my child away from me.

Me: [crying] I was scared Samkelo. Samkelo I love you. I didn't mean to hurt you in any way bbe

please forgive me. Ngyaxolisa mnyeni wami.

Sam: Uyazi manje ukuthi ngiwumnyeni wakho? You've forgotten that when you were keeping secrets? I don't think I can forgive you Thandeka for what you did. For all I know this marriage is over. I didn't expect you to break my heart like this. You had sex with Themba when you were carrying Alondwe. Now an Indian guy fucked you while you were carrying my son! No I can't! I can't help but think about you moaning another man's name. No!

I just wailed. He took his phone and placed my phone on top of the dressing table. He approached the door.

Me: You won't sleep here?

Sam: No I can't. I will sleep with Scelokuhle.

I nodded. He left. Another divorce? I wasn't going to take it. It was going to be hard. I cried. I had hiccups from crying. I stood up and took off my pyjamas. I wore a black jeans, black and white long sleeve top. It had a long neck. I wore a white leather jacket and black boots. I let my hair loose. I took my bike keys and my house and flat keys. The house was dark. I was scared of the darkness. I took my phone and lighted up my way. I turned on the lights when I was downstairs. I placed my phone on the coffee table. I walked out of the house. I went to the garage and I got on top of my bike. I wanted clear my head. And feel the wave of fresh air. I rode my bike out of the house. I didn't put on the helmet. I wanted my hair to blow off. I was going to sleep in my flat. I wanted to give Samkelo some space to decide whether to end our marriage or not. I was flying on the road and I felt good about it. I was out of Durban North. I was on a free way. I ended up crying. "Save my marriage God. I am sorry" I cried. Tears made me struggle to see the road properly. I wiped them away and the next minute I landed on the other side of the road. I tried to move but it was hard. I tried to breath. I couldn't. My head was heavy. I passed out.

I woke up on the hospital bed. I looked around there was a student nurse changing my bedding. I tried to talk.

Me: Hello?

Nurse: Hey dear you're awake.

Me: What happened?

Nurse: A white man brought you here. He found you on the pavement of the bridge in Durban North. You were dumped there.

Me: Dumped? Me? By Who?

Nurse: We don't know. But probably it was the men who raped you. You don't remember anything? I started shaking. I pulled the covers up and I covered my body. I cried. I looked around in fear. I was scared.

Nurse: I am sorry. I – I Eish!

She injected me. I felt dizzy quickly. When I wake up the second time I tried to remember being raped but I didn't remember a thing. Part of me was kind of relieved because I didn't remember meaning I wasn't going to have nightmares but I had a huge scar because I was nothing but a useless human being. I got raped repeatedly. I needed a fresh start. I needed to forget about my past and look into the future. The Doctor came in. She smiled at me.

Doc: I can see that you are up.

Me: Where am I?

Doc: St. Augustine Hospital.

Me: Where is the guy who saved me? Isn't it a private hospital?

Doc: I don't know where he is but he brought you here and paid the bills. I need your details I filled in my details and I gave her the form.

Doc: You don't have family that we can contact? Husband or mother?

I looked at my left hand. My wedding ring wasn't there.

Me: I don't have a family member you can contact.

Doc: I am sorry. Your body is bruised. Whoever attacked they beat you I think after raping you. And you hit the ground with your head. You got an STI. But I will give you medication you'll be fine.

Me: Okay. How long have I been here?

Doc: Three days.

Me: Okay. Can I have a mirror?

Doc: I will get the nurse to give you one.

I nodded. The nurse came back and she gave me a mirror. I looked at myself and I was horrible. My face looked like I was beaten up hard. And I had a blue eye. I gave her the mirror back. I started praying. Thanking the Lord for keeping me alive.

I spent three more days at the hospital. The guy who saved me came on the day I was going to be discharged. He sat down.

Me: I suppose you are my super hero?

Guy: [chuckled] How about guardian angel?

Me: Okay I like it. But Thank you so much.

Guy: It's my pleasure. I couldn't leave you alone. Your site was unpleasant but I had to try and save you because you were still alive.

Me: Thank you. All I remember is I was riding my bike. I remember losing control and I ended up on the other side of road.

Guy: What happened?

Me: I had a huge fight with my husband and I left the house. I wanted to sleep in my flat not in the house.

Guy: But the hospital said you told them that you have no family.

Me: I don't want them to see me like this. I know it's selfish but I want to keep it that way.

Guy: You can stay in my house for a few days. I will get you a nurse to look after you.

Me: No. I will be fine. I will stay in my flat.

Guy: I was not asking you. And besides I am going to New York next week Monday. You'll call the shots while I am away.

Me: I don't know. You're a stranger. And I have been through so much –

Guy: I won't do any harm to you please trust me. I just want to help until you're ready to go back home to your husband and sort things out with him.

Me: Thanks but my flat will do.

Guy: Okay. At least allow me to check you up. Until I leave.

Me: No problem.

Guy: Better.

He gave me a plastic bag with a long blue dress and sandals. I wore them and I went back to the bed. I had bandages in my head. The Doctor gave me instructions and I was discharged. We went to his car. I was walking with crutches. I stepped inside with his help. He did the same.

Me: Where are my manners? Your name?

Guy: My name is Andrew.

Me: Okay. Mine is Thandeka but you can call me Trinity.

Andrew: Nice to meet you.

Me: Nice to meet you too.

He smiled and drove me to my flat. We arrived and he walked in with me.

Andrew: I will go to Musgrave center and buy a few things for you. I will be back just now. I am not asking for your permission.

I nodded. He left. I went to my room. I laid on my bed. I didn't want to think about my family but I wanted to get better and face them afterwards. Andrew came back.

Andrew: I bought groceries, toiletries, a few dresses and a phone.

Me: Uhm. I have a phone at home.

Andrew: Okay. But while you're not at home please take this one. I will contact you here.

Me: Okay. I hope you bought Vodacom.

Andrew: Yes.

Me: Thank you for everything.

Andrew: Okay let me go home to my daughters.

Me: You have daughters?

Andrew: Yes. They are twins.

Me: Can you give me those genes?

Andrew: [chuckled] You love twins?

Me: Very much. I was probably gonna have 10 kids if I had those genes.

We laughed.

Andrew: That's too much.

Me: I love kids.

Andrew: How many do you have?

Me: I have four.

Andrew: You need six. To complete ten.

Me: No! Singular babies. I can't.

We laughed.

Andrew: I can be your surrogate father if there is such.

We laughed.

Me: No. It's cool. Where is their mother.

Andrew: She died last year.

Me: I am sorry.

Andrew: It's Okay. Let me go. I will see you tomorrow?

Me: Yeah. Thanks.

He left a few hundreds and he left. I ate the takeaway that he gave me and I took my medication. I drifted off to sleep.

The whole week I was in my flat. Andrew came everyday to check up on me. I didn't contact anyone. I wanted to have my own peace of mind and be prepared for my second divorce. It was a Monday. Andrew had flew to New York. I called a cab to take me home after changing my bandages in my head. They put on the clean one. My hair was growing. They had to cut them. I had the kind of hair that grew fast and they were not few. But the bandages covered my whole head. I was still using crutches. My bruises were not that bad. I told the driver to drive me to my house in Durban North first. I knew that no one was around. I directed him. We arrived and I stepped out. I took one crutch and I opened the gate using my controller. The house was locked. I opened it and I walked inside. There was a small table lean on the wall with my big framed picture. There were candles lighted up on the sides of the picture. And the petals of different flowers.

Me:" Maybe they thought I died "

I said and I limped up to my room. I took my handbag and my phone. I took one suitcase and I packed up a few clothes and shoes. I closed it and sat down. I thought about my kids. I told myself they have Daddies who'll look after them. I had to look for professional help. I had to go to a center and find myself. Andrew had suggested that to me and I was going to do it for myself. I left a note saying "I AM FINE" I took my bag and dragged my suitcase. I opened the door and I froze for a minute.

Sam: Thandeka?

Me: Samkelo?

I stepped back a little. He hugged me tightly. I flinched in pain. "Where have you been Thandeka?" He asked.

Me: You're hurting me.

Sam: I am sorry. That cab is waiting for you?

Me: Yes.

Sam: Let me tell him to go.

Me: No. Don't. I am leaving.

He gave me a dead stare. He went to the gate. I sighed. I left my bags down and I limped to the couch. I sat down. I buried my face in my hands. Samkelo came back. He took my bags upstairs.

Me: What are you doing Samkelo?

Sam: I am angry at you Thandeka! Don't make things worse.

I didn't respond. He went upstairs with them and came back. He sat down next to me. He held my hand.

Sam: Where have you been? What happened?

Me: I lost track of my bike. I landed on the other side of the road.

Sam: But Thandeka I always tell you to be careful on the road. The bike is not like a car. It can kill you easily. And how come you are injured in your head?

Me: I didn't have my helmet on.

Sam: Thandeka!! You wanted to die?

Me: I wanted some fresh air. This will be my second divorce Samkelo. Getting divorced is not easy.

Sam: Who said we're getting divorced?

Me: You said our marriage is over. I cheated on you and I know that most guys don't forgive that. But I am sorry.

Sam: In spite of all the things you did but you know that I love you! One thing you're 100% sure about Thandeka is that I love you!! And you doubted that???

Me: Themba loved me too but he divorced me.

Sam: Am I Themba? When you look at me you see Themba huh?

Me: No but –

Sam: I am not Themba damnit! And stop comparing me to him. Yes I said our marriage was over but I was angry! I didn't expect you to cheat on me. I was hurt but for you to leave like that?

Me: I wanted some fresh air and I wanted to give you space.

Sam: You disappeared for two weeks Thandeka? You didn't contact me to tell me what happened. You come back like this and you were leaving!

Me: I was in the hospital. A white guy helped me and took me to the hospital. I was going away for therapy.

Sam: Therapy for the divorce?

Me: No. [Crying] I – I was raped again.

I cried. He didn't say anything.

Me: [crying] I know you won't want me because of this. I understand. Nobody would want a useless woman like me. I cheated on you. I was raped twice. I know you can't even touch me intimately again. So I had to save myself the pain and leave.

He held me closer to him and he brushed my back.

Sam: Don't cry mama. I am sorry I wasn't there to protect you. I should've followed you when I heard you riding the bike out of the yard. I am sorry. This is all my fault.

Me: It's not your fault.

Sam: I failed to be a good husband. I should've told you first about not wanting another baby. I was supposed to discuss it with you first. I didn't respect you as my wife. I told our daughter first. Who does that?

Me: I shouldn't have kept the baby a secret.

Sam: You were trying to protect our baby. Any mother who was afraid and clueless could've done the same MaDinangwe. You did what you thought was best. We were both wrong and we have to forgive ourselves and move on with our lives.

Me: But I was –

Sam: I love you and I won't leave you because you were raped. You didn't ask that to

happened to you. I always tell you not to think I will leave you whenever things go wrong. Yes you cheated on me. I was heart broken. I realized that you weren't going to cheat on me unless you were desperate. But spending two weeks without you made me realize that I don't want to live without you. We will work on this together. I will support you. We said til death do us part right?

Me: Yes. I love you Samkelo. I am sorry for everything that I have done.

Sam: I am sorry too. Now can we move on?

Me: Yes. Baba uNdunakazi.

He brushed my head softly.

Sam: I am just happy that Mama uNdunakazi is back home. There's no Baba uNdunakazi without mama uNdunakazi.

Me: I am one blessed woman.

Sam: I love you.

Me: I love you too.

Sam: Manje bbe you don't have hair?

Me: Yes I have short hair. Where are the kids?

Sam: School. But Themba took his kids. My mom took Scelokuhle. I think we will take him back when you are back on your feet.

Me: Okay Baba.

Sam: Thank you for giving me such a beautiful baby boy. He looks like my father though.

And he was so happy to see him. In fact everyone was happy.

Me: I am glad to hear that. Did you tell my dad?

Sam: Yes. I had to tell them.

Me: Let me call him.

I took out the phone that Andrew bought.

Sam: Who bought the phone?

Me: Andrew the guy who helped me.

Sam: Thandeka!! You didn't even think of calling your father?

Me: I am sorry Samkelo. I was just selfish and hurt. Please don't tell him that I didn't contact him intentionally.

Sam: Okay.

I dialed Dad's number. It rang. He picked up immediately.

Dad: Dhlomo hello.

Me: Molo tata uThandeka.

Dad: Thandeka? Thandeka why are you making our lives this miserable?

Me: I am sorry. I was in the hospital. I was involved in an accident.

Dad: Thandeka? Are you fine?

Me: Yes dad. I am fine now. How are you?

Dad: I was worried about you. But I am glad that you're fine.

Me: I am sorry daddy. But my husband will take care of me don't worry.

Dad: And the baby? Why didn't you tell us?

Me: It was complicated dad. I couldn't tell you.

Dad: Secrets destroy families Thandeka. Don't ever keep secrets from your husband.

Me: Yebo baba. I hear you.

Dad: I am glad that you're back. I will tell your brother.

Me: Send my love to them.

Dad: Okay. Tell Ndunakazi to look after you.

Me: I will tell him.

We hung up the call. Samkelo was looking at me. I shrugged my shoulders.

Sam: You don't care about us neh?

Me: I do. I left a note nje.

Sam: A note? A note was going to explain everything? How much we need each other? Was it going to explain how much we need you Thandeka?

Me: I am sorry.

Sam: Sometimes I feel like slapping you back to life yazi wena!!

Me: Please don't slap me.

Sam: Argh! Let's go and fetch Alondwe.

Me: Okay. Did you tell your family that I disappeared?

Sam: Yes. I did.

Me: Did you tell them about my affair?

Sam: That's between me and you. I didn't tell anyone.

Me: Thank you.

He held my hand and we stood up.

Me: I will be beautiful again right?

Sam: Yes. The scars are disappearing. You'll be beautiful again.

I kissed his cheek. I limped to his car. He opened the door for me. He stepped inside too. We drove to Alondwe's school. They were standing with Themba.

Me: Please call Themba for me.

Sam: Okay.

He went to them. They all came to the car. Uyabongeka ran to the car. I opened the car.

Sese: Mama?

Me: A kiss maybe?

Sese: I won't hurt you?

I shook my head "NO" she pouted and I kissed her. She laughed.

Sese: Who did this to my mom?

Me: The thugs did this to your mother. But mommy is fine now my baby.

Sese: Can we come back home now? I miss you mama.

Themba: But you're home.

Me: You won't bring them back?

Themba: No I won't. So that you can leave anytime you wish? Do you remember our divorce terms? Who left the kids alone? It's you not me. And my son told me that you don't talk to him because he exposed your dirty laundry. I always knew that the day will come when you'll do something wrong and you didn't take long to do that. And Uyathandwa doesn't want to live with you anymore.

I didn't TalkBack.

Me: Alondwe?

Aloe: [hugging] Mommy. Don't leave us again. Please mommy.

Me: Mommy was in the hospital but I won't Nana Okay?

Aloe: Okay. I love you.

Me: I love you too my baby.

I kissed her lips.

Me: Hi Uyathandwa.

EJ: Hi mommy.

Me: Are you fine?

EJ: Yes.

Me: Okay. Sesethu?

Sese: I want to go with mommy daddy!

Themba: No. We're going home. Can't you see that she doesn't love you?

Sam: How can you say something like that to her daughter?

Themba: If she cared about them. She wasn't going to leave and look for danger. Uyandidika

mna Thandeka! You're a selfish pig. It's better because I left you early.

Me: I am their mother Themba. Nothing will change that. And don't forget I have a lot to use against you.

Themba: I have something against you too. I know everything about your involvement with Ava. Now you don't want the police to start investigating again? Do you?

I didn't answer him. I brushed my daughter's cheeks and said: You will come and visit me. Don't worry you'll be fine and your brother will look after you. Just don't forget that I love you all Okay?

Sese: I love you too.

I kissed her cheeks. She went to her daddy.

Me: Samkelo let's go. Alondwe get inside the car baby? Bye bye Uyathandwa.

EJ: Bye bye.

Alondwe and Samkelo stepped inside the car. Samkelo drove straight home.

Me: You shouldn't have told him that I left. You know the terms of the custody of my children with him Samkelo.

Sam: I didn't tell him and I told the kids not tell him but Uyathandwa told him everything. He came to the house and took them. He took their things too.

Me: That Son of a B\* –

Sam: Watch it. There's a child here.

I pressed my teeth together. We arrived at home and I went to sleep. Being divorced with kids was very hard. Parents fight and kids are dragged into those things. I don't wish that to happen to any parent and children out there. Themba and I had real fucked up terms concerning our children. And if I were to fight him. I was going to get arrested for being involved in a murder of Ava. I wasn't ready to go to jail. I wanted to make sure that I find professional help before I go crazy

THREE MONTHS passed. I was in a wellness center. I was living there. I had to leave my family. My therapist made see a lot of things about myself. I realized where I was wrong and I was a selfish human being alive. I spent my birthday there. Samkelo and Alondwe came to celebrate it with me. It was the end of July on a Saturday afternoon. I was going back home. I had no scars and my hair was an afro, it wasn't that big. I signed out after consulting my therapist. My husband and Alondwe. They were waiting for me. I saw them and I ran up to them. I hugged my baby first.

Me: My angel.

Aloe: Hello mommy. You look beautiful now.

Me: I feel beautiful.

I kissed her face.

Me: I have missed you.

Aloe: I have missed you too. You're back forever right?

Me: Forever my love.

She hugged me. I giggled. I stood up and I looked at Samkelo. I smiled and looked down. He smiled back at me. We hugged each other for a long time. I kissed him intensely.

Aloe: Mom and dad let's go. You'll get arrested.

We broke the kiss and laughed.

Me: My handsome husband.

Sam: My beautiful wife. I am glad that you're coming back home.

Me: I am over the moon.

We hugged each other once more and we stepped inside the car. He drove us to a nearest mall. And we had dinner together. After that we drove straight home.

We arrived. Alondwe was asleep. Samkelo carried her inside. I took my suitcases. I went up

to my room. I threw myself on top of my bed. There were clothes lying around. Samkelo's clothes. Hhay. I stood up and picked them up. He walked inside the room.

Sam: Eish I am sorry about the mess but Alondwe was shouting at me for being late. You made her my boss so I had to listen to her. I am sorry neh?

Me: You have a bad way of saying welcome home bbe.

He brushed his head. I took his clothes and I went to put them on the washer. I went back to my room. He was lying on top of the bed on his back. I sat on him. I kissed him briefly and I broke the kiss.

Me: When last did you see my kids?

Sam: Uhm bbe?

Me: Yeah?

Sam: Themba left with them.

Me: I know that nje. When last did you see them?

Sam: I mean he left Durban and they went back to Cape Town. They live there now.

Me: What? When did this happen?

Sam: Beginning of July.

Me: And you didn't tell me Samkelo?

Sam: I didn't want you to loose focus on your therapy. And there was nothing you can do about it.

Me: Themba is a dog. Tsk!

I took my phone and I called his wife.

Kim: Hello?

Me: Can I talk to your husband now!

Kim: Okay.

I heard shuffling sounds.

Themba: Yeah?

Me: How could you just up and leave with my kids without telling me Themba?

Themba: I didn't know I had to report to you!

Me: I am their mother Themba. I am their mother maybe you have forgotten that.

Themba: I forgot that you're their mother. serious yazi. Sorry hey.

Tears streamed down my cheeks.

Me: Can I talk to them?

Themba: "Do you want to talk to your mother?"

Sese: "Yes!"

Themba: "Here"

Sese: Hello Thandeka

I put her on loud speaker.

Me: [giggles] I am Thandeka now?

Sese: Yes! That's your name.

Me: You're a bad baddest child alive!

Sese: Mommy!!

Me: [laughing] I wanted that! I am not Thandeka to you hello?

Sese: Sorry mommy!

Me: It's Okay. When are you visiting mommy?

Sese: Daddy doesn't want us to visit.

Me: Is that what he told you?

Sese: Yes. I want to live with you and Kuhle.

Me: Who's Kuhle?

Sam: Scelokuhle.

Sese: The baby! Mommy?

Me: I am sorry. I forgot that he has a new name. I know Mesuli.

Sese: [laughing] Ha.a he's Kuhle now.

Me: That's beautiful.

Sese: Daddy said that's a meaning of Kuhle.

Me: Which daddy?

Sese: Samkelo! Mommy you ask a lot.

Samkelo and I laughed.

Me: I am sorry your highnesses.

Sese: Please come and take me. I want to see Kuhle mommy.

Me: Tell daddy.

Sese: "Daddy can I go?"

Themba: "No you're not going to KZN"

Sese: [crying] "Daddy?"

Themba: "Bring back my wife's phone"

Me: Uyabongeka?

Sese: Mama.

Me: I love you my baby. Give your father the phone.

Sese: I love you too mommy.

Themba: What?

Me: You can't stop my kids from visiting me.

Themba: You want her to stop going to school and come to you?

Me: No but during holidays. They must visit.

Themba: You didn't hear Uyathandwa saying he wants to visit you.

Me: Can I talk to him?

Themba: "Ethan Junior do you want to talk to your mother?"

EJ: "No. Mommy can I go and visit Evan?"

Kim: "Yes but don't come back late"

EJ: "Thank you! "

He was quite excited. His footsteps walked away. I was heart broken big time.

Themba: How does that feel?

Me: Goodnight!

I hung up the call. I breathed in and out. I exhaled loudly.

Sam: Just take this to court.

Me: I can't. I will go to jail and I can't leave again. I have a son who's ten months. I want to raise him. At least I will see Missy. I can't give up on my three kids for one angry child?

What did I do to him? I did nothing to him Samkelo. He's being cruel like his father. He'll come around. If he doesn't. It's cool.

Sam: But you didn't kill Ava. His father's gangster killed him.

Me: You don't know the Smiths. Themba can tell the guy to testify against me. They'll make the evidence to point out to me. They can even say I killed her. I wrote the letter and I had the motive for killing her. The guy had no motive.

Sam: He wanted to please his boss.

Me: Going to court will mean exposing his father as a gang leader. And I don't want that. I will die. They will kill me the minute I walk out of the court. And besides he supported me big time when we were getting married. I don't want to end up in jail because of me.

Sam: Yeah. He helped us a lot. Otherwise we wouldn't get married. And I don't want you to leave us again.

Me: I am not leaving you ever again.

I kissed him and we made love. After a long time. It felt good and I felt younger. We went to shower afterwards.

Me: Can we go and fetch our son tomorrow.

Sam: Okay. Andrew came here last week. He said I must tell you that he's moving to New York with his daughters. He bought you a birthday gift.

Me: You opened it?

Sam: [laughing] I didn't come on!

Me: Just tell me what it is because I know that you know.

Sam: Earrings and necklace.

Me: That's so nice. I want a new bike Samkelo.

Sam: No! You're not getting a new bike. In fact you'll never ride again.

Me: That's unfair. Just because I caused an accident?

Sam: If you want to go for a ride. We will use my bike and you'll go with me.

Me: Won't you miss our race?

I said kissing his neck.

Sam: Mmmm\_\_ I will miss it bbe\_\_ but No!

He lifted my legs up. I wrapped them around his waist. He pined me against the wall.

Me: But you want to chow me right now.

"Just because I don't want to buy the bike for you. It doesn't mean I can't have you and I don't want you to take your money and buy it" He said going inside me. I bite my lower lip.

Me: You're being unfair bbe. Hhayi Samkelo bbe. Ah\_\_\_ Bbe you\_. Uhm\_\_mmm.

Sam: Stop talking.

I pressed my lips together and we had another round on the shower. We finished and wore our pyjamas. I went to check on Alondwe. She was sleeping. I joined my husband and we drifted off to sleep...

The following morning we all drove to Empangeni.

Me: Bbe I have to look for a job.

Sam: You don't like your old job?

Me: Don't you think I will be fired.

Sam: No. Your boss knows your problem but you got a written warning.

Me: Yoh! At least. My first written warning in history.

Sam: I got two.

Me: Samkelo!

Sam: You were pregnant nje Thandeka. I was always sleeping at work.

Me: Shame bakithi. You can blame that on Kuhle not me.

Sam: Yeah. I blame him big time!

Me: Sorry.

Sam: I hope our last born won't do that to me.

Me: You want us to have another baby?

Sam: That's what we wanted. I can't just rock the boat to the East just because my feelings changed for a few months. We wanted three kids together and we'll have them.

Me: Thank you. I just want to learn from my mistakes and stop doing the same mistakes over again.

Sam: It's not easy to let go of something you're used to do. You won't stop lying over night.

But you will stop. You're quite a good liar but I believe in you, you will change. Now if you have a cute guy in your corner I doubt you'll do the same mistakes all over.

I laughed and kissed his cheek.

Aloe: Why are you laughing mama?

Samkelo and I looked at her. She was yawning.

Us: Uthanda Izindaba!!

We laughed at her and she sulked. Within 30minutes we were in my mother in-law's house. Mesuli was playing with mud outside the house. His grandma was looking at him shouting

“Uyapheka umfana kagogo” Samkelo and I looked at each other. Alondwe laughed. She ran up to her grandmother. Mesuli screamed. He crawled up to us. We met him halfway.

Sam: Hhayi I won't take him Thandeka.

Me: Baba wakho baby unetiye.

He was crying because he wanted us to pick him up. Honestly speaking I didn't want to pick him too. He was dirty.

Mama: Pick my grandson up! Samkelo? Thandeka?

Us: He's dirty mama.

Mama: So it's nice to you if he's crying? He's your child pick him up.

Sam: Why did you let him play with mud mama?

Mama: It's part of growing up.

I bend over and picked him up. He stopped crying and laughed.

Me: Usile yazi wena.

Sam: Awusiyo ingane yami. Ungangibuki nje. Angisiye ubaba wengane engcolile. [You're not my child nje. Don't look at me. I am not a father of a dirty child]

Mesuli laughed.

Me: Uphaphela ingane yami yazi. Mama's boy.

He held my face with his hands. They had mud.

Me: Mesuli!! HhAyi!!

Sam: Yeah!

Me: This child!

We went to sit down with him.

Me: Kodwa mama bakithi. Udaka?

Mama: He wanted to cook for granny.

Aloe: He's beautiful like this.

Me: Take him.

Aloe: No! Where's my aunt?

Mama: They left with their dad. They'll come back tomorrow.

Sam: You will sleep alone?

Mama: You're leaving?

Sam: It's Monday tomorrow.

Mama: I will sleep alone.

Me: You will come to their birthday party?

Mama: Yes.

Aloe: Why will my birthday party be done with Kuhle's birthday?

Me: He was born on the 1st of September just like you. But not on the same year.

Aloe: Oh you share a birthday with your big sister. Oh pakithi nzee.

She tried to kiss him but Mesuli wanted to touch her face. Alondwe backed away quickly. We laughed.

Me: Bbe please bath him. I want to cook for mama before we leave.

Sam: Okay.

Mama: Thank you baby.

I stood up and I put the baby down. He cried.

Sam: Cook with him bbe ngeke ayi.

Mama: Samkelo!

Sam: Hhayi mama. Ingcolile le ngane. Ngisa kapa amaround ko bay kanje. [He's dirty. I want to go and visit Richards bay]

He stood up.

Aloe: Can I go with you daddy?

Sam: Yeah. Come Nana. Wena iya kumama wakho. Uyasala. [Go to your mother]

Mama: Hhaybo!

Sam: Let's go Nana.

They went to the car and left.

Mama: Hhayi. Angsazi ke. But I wanted to see my friend just around the corner.

Me: Okay.

She stood up and left. I picked up my son.

Me: Ngyabonga Mina! Bonke bayakubalekela.

I went to bath with him because I was also dirty. I changed him. I wore my mother in law's shirt, I washed my shirt and I put Mesuli in my back. I went to cook dinner for my mother in-law. After cooking we went to sleep. We woke up when it was time to go. Samkelo picked Mesuli up.

Me: Because he's clean now?

Sam: Daddy couldn't get dirty right boy?

Mesuli laughed.

Me: Ivele ihleke le ngane.

We took his bags and we packed them in the car. My shirt was dry. I wore it. We went to say our goodbyes to mama. We then drove back home.....

Monday morning I woke up Samkelo was on the shower singing. I laughed and I went to the bathroom. I washed my face and brushed my teeth.

Me: Uyabhimba!

Sam: Unomona!

I laughed and I left him. I went to make breakfast quickly. I woke Alondwe up so that she can get ready for school.

Aloe: Mommy you know nursy gets bored now that spring is gone.

Me: What must I do?

Aloe: Let's get her a sister.

Me: Your dog is a boy not a girl.

Aloe: Oh. A brother.

Me: Tell your father about it Okay?

Aloe: Okay mom.

Me: Call me if you need any help with anything.

She nodded. I left her. I went to set up the table. I went to take a shower too. The bathroom was a mess.

Me: Ndunakazi!

Sam: Yebo?

Me: Come here bbe.

He showed his head up on the door.

Me: What's wrong now bbe? This mess? It's like five people took a bath here?

Sam: No. I am in a hurry mama but you will clean up for me.

Me: Aicha.

Sam: Bbe look? I have gym training today eMlazi with my boys. We have a game Saturday.

Me: What game? And what boys?

Sam: Eish I forgot to tell you. I needed something to do because you were not around bbe. So I am a soccer coach eMlazi for young boys. And I play with the older team. I want you and our kids to come and support us on Saturday.

Me: Okay that's nice. Please have breakfast before you leave.

Sam: Okay.

He left. I cleaned up his mess first then I took a shower. I brushed my teeth, lotion and wore my pink dress and sandals. I went downstairs. Samkelo and Alondwe were dancing. I stood

by the stairs and watched them.

Aloe: No! Daddy you're cheating me.

Sam: You took my moves.

Aloe: Let's do it again.

They danced again. They were looking lovely dancing together.

Me: You'll be late.

Aloe: We have to teach mommy. Right daddy?

Sam: She can't dance to save her life.

Me: Uyaphapha!

Aloe: He's jealous mom don't be sad.

Samkelo laughed. I pouted. They danced their way to the dining table. I switched off the music and joined them. We prayed and ate.

Me: I will go to work tomorrow. I want to go and enroll Mesuli on a daycare today.

Sam: You don't want Nancy to look after him?

Me: I want him to be around children.

Sam: Okay. Nana Let's go.

Aloe: I am not done yet.

Me: You'll be late for school. Take your plate.

Sam: But you won't leave it in my car.

Aloe: Mommy?

Me: Go baby. You'll leave it there. Your father will go with it to his workplace.

Aloe: Waah!

Alondwe stood up. Her father did the same.

Sam: Nidlala ngami ngoba nakhu ngiyimvu yenkosi?

I laughed and said: My goodbye kisses.

They looked at each other and they both ran towards me. I laughed. I kissed Alondwe first.

Aloe: Kiss daddy like me don't kiss him for a long time.

Me: Okay.

Sam: I don't want baby kisses.

Me: You're getting them though.

He sulked. I gave him a baby kiss. He looked at me and Laa Laa.

Sam: Laa Laa ka daddy take this and go wait for me in the car. I have something I want to take upstairs.

Aloe: Okay.

She took the bags and walked out of the house. Samkelo kissed me intensely.

Me: Go before she comes back.

Sam: I love you.

Me: I love you too coach.

He laughed and kissed my forehead. He left. I stood up and I started cleaning up my house.

Mesuli woke up. I bathed together with him first. We wore our clothes and I fed him. I took the necessary documents and I drove to the daycare. I called Mrs Smith along the way.

Mrs Smith: Hello Thandeka.

Me: Hi mama how are you?

Mrs Smith: I am fine dear and you?

Me: I am fine. Have you seen my kids?

Mrs Smith: Yes. They visit us all the time. I am sorry Thandeka.

Me: I was going through a rough patch mama not that I neglected them.

Mrs Smith: But Ethan doesn't see it that way.

Me: Can you please help me?

Mrs Smith: There's nothing we can do to help. Ethan is our son and if he thinks taking his

children is what best for him. There's nothing we can do but we must support him.

Me: He's turning them against me mama.

Mrs Smith: I can talk to him about that. But he made us choose between supporting either of you whether the children must stay with you or him. And after supporting your wedding while he wanted us not to support you. We had to support him. He's our son Thandeka. I am sorry.

I didn't say anything for a long time. Tears were streaming down my face.

Mrs Smith: Thandeka are you still there?

Me: [sniffing] Yes. Thank you.

I hung up the call and I cried. I parked my car on the other side of the road. I cried my lungs out. It was painful but I had no choice. If I were to fight him a lot was at stake and I couldn't risk leaving my family again. I had to accept that I have lost. In life there are things that are hard to live with but no matter how hard they are we just have to accept them. Having to lose Uyathandwa as my son was painful because Themba was going to make sure that our relationship was ruined because he envied it. At least Uyabongeka wanted to be part of my life. I wiped my tears. I looked at my son. He was sleeping. I sighed and I drove to the daycare. I spoke to supervisor and I registered my son. I paid. I then drove to my workplace. I unbuckled my son and I walked inside the building. I went to the reception desk.

Me: Hi Yonela.

Yonela: Mrs Ndunakazi hello. How are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Yonela: I am good. Look at this little guy. He's so pretty. He's yours?

Me: Yeah. He's mine. Is Mr Khumalo in?

Yonela: Yes but let me check if he's busy or not. Please wait.

I nodded. She called his office.

Yonela: He's free you can go through.

Me: Thank you.

I went to the lift. I arrived in his office. I knocked on the door.

MrK: Come in. Mrs Ndunakazi and the little champ.

I smiled and walked inside. We went to sit on the couch.

Me: How are you doing Sir?

MrK: I am fine and you?

Me: I am doing great. I just wanted to notify you that I am going to come back tomorrow. My husband told me that you gave me a warning.

MrK: Yes. That's because I don't want to lose your skills but I am glad to hear that you're coming back. I suppose you're doing well now?

Me: Yes Sir and I am ready to work.

MrK: Okay. Please consult the HR department.

Me: Okay Sir thanks.

I stood up and we handshake. I consulted the HR department. And I left. I then drove to Laa Laa's school to fetch her. She ran up to my car. I opened the door for her. She went through and closed the door.

Aloe: I thought you were not coming.

Me: Stop exaggerating I am not that late.

Aloe: Did you see the time mama?

Me: Whatever! Daddy is having a game Saturday we will go and watch him play?

Aloe: Yes! Mommy I want to swim again?

Me: But daddy doesn't want you to swim nana

Aloe: But I will be responsible.

Me: Please choose another sport my baby not swimming.

She didn't say anything.

Me: Alondwe?

Aloe: Yes mommy.

Me: Good.

We arrived at home. Laa Laa ran up to her dog. I unbuckled Mesuli off his seat. We walked up to the door.

Me: Please change your uniform first. You will see the dog afterwards.

Aloe: He missed me mommy.

Me: Listen to me Alondwe.

Aloe: Okay. Come Nursy.

We walked inside the house. I put my son down. He cried and followed me crawling.

Me: Don't cry baby. Mommy will make something to eat for you.

I gave him, his bottle while preparing food for him and his sister. I finished. I picked him up. I sat down with him. I took off his bottle from his mouth. He cried.

Me: I am sorry baby. You're hungry?

I fed him and he stopped crying. Alondwe came downstairs. She took her dog's food and walked out with him.

Me: Please don't like pets when you grow up boy. They are so annoying.

He looked at me. I kissed his mouth. He laughed. I shook my head. Alondwe came back.

Aloe: I got you this boy.

She gave him a lollipop.

Me: Don't buy sweets for him Alondwe.

Aloe: He loves them.

Me: Usisi wakho akezwa. [Your sister doesn't listen]

Alondwe looked at me and folded her lips.

Me: What?

She pouted and ate her food. I put Mesuli down after feeding him. I started cooking.

Me: Please go and do your homework after eating.

Aloe: I don't have homework.

Me: Unamanga! [You're lying]

She laughed. She put the dishes on the sink.

Me: Who will wash them for you?

Aloe: Please mom.

Me: Ha.a come and wash them.

Aloe: I will later.

She ran upstairs. I looked at Mesuli.

Me: Ivila usisi wakho. [Your sister is lazy]

He looked at me. Laa Laa came back with her books. She opened the lollipop for Mesuli. She sat by the counter and did her homework. Mesuli cried. I looked at him. The dog had a lollipop on his mouth.

Me: Alondwe? You see your dog?

Aloe: Hhayi! Nursy! But he was the one who gave him his lollipop.

Me: You were watching him share a lollipop with a dog.

Aloe: My dog doesn't have diseases. Daddy took him to the Doctor.

Me: Give him his lollipop back.

She stepped off the chair. She couldn't take the lollipop off the dog's mouth. Mesuli was crying. Samkelo walked inside the house. He was wearing the sport gear.

Sam: Why is my son crying?

Aloe: He wants his lollipop back daddy. Nursy doesn't want to give it to him.

Samkelo took out a packet of cheese curls and gave them to Mesuli. He shook his head and

pointed the dog.

Sam: Hhayi ke.

He went to the dog and he held it. He took out the lollipop. He washed it and gave it to Mesuli. He stopped crying. He crawled up to the dog.

Me: Samkelo please take him.

He took him. Alondwe continued doing her homework. Samkelo went upstairs with him. I dished up the food. I assisted Alondwe finish write her homework. I could see that she was quite lonely without her brother but it's life. Samkelo came back downstairs on his pyjamas. Mesuli was wearing his nappy only. We sat down on the table. We prayed and started eating.

Sam: Thobelani was calling you. He said he's getting married and he wants you to be his best man woman. I don't know what to call it.

Me: Huh?

Sam: Yeah. He said his girlfriend from Johannesburg came back. So he wants to marry her.

Me: I will be the best man?

Sam: It's the 21st century bbe. You're his best friend nje.

Me: I will call him later. Themba's parents can't help me with getting my kids back.

Sam: That's bad. I am sorry.

Me: It's cool.

Aloe: I miss Uyathandwa and Sese.

Samkelo and I looked at each other.

Aloe: Mommy tell Kuhle to grow up fast so that I can play with him. I want him to talk.

Sam: He'll talk soon. Don't worry.

She nodded. We ate in awkward silence. After eating I washed the dishes. I was thinking about being a best man. I found myself laughing but all in all Thobelani was nothing but a good friend to me.....

I went upstairs and I took my phone. I called Thobelani. He picked up.

Thobe: My best man.

Me: Really? Ntwana! Your best man?

Samkelo was laughing.

Thobe: Why is Ndunakazi laughing?

Me: He must laugh! I have never heard of such! And worse my husband said I am a best man woman!

Thobe: [laughing] You don't want to support me? Your friend?

Me: Thobelani are you serious?

Thobe: Yes I am serious.

Me: Your fiancée doesn't mind?

Thobe: No she doesn't.

Me: Okay. I will be your best man ke.

Samkelo laughed even louder. I pinched him.

Me: Sorry about that Ntwana but uyaphapha uNdunakazi sometimes.

Thobe: He's jealous.

Me: yeah. Goodnight boika!

Thobe: Goodnight boy!

Me: Fusegi!

Sam: Thandeka! My kids?

We laughed and I hung up the call.

Me: You're sleeping with us tonight?

Alondwe: Yes mom.

Sam: But this is funny a best man woman.

Me: Shush!

He laughed. I gave him a dead stare. He immediately shut up. Mesuli was sleepy.

Alondwe: Daddy please tell me a bedtime story. I want to sleep now.

Sam: Okay. The title of the story is Our Love Was A Mission. Please record my story bbe. I took my phone and recorded it.

Alondwe: It's a fairy tale story?

Sam: It's a story about two beautiful human beings.

She smiled and nodded.

Sam: Once upon a time there was a girl named Joy. She lived in her own world and she loved herself dearly. But there was a beast named Matthew. This beast wanted to hurt and eat Joy.

Alondwe: Haa! No! Joy must kill the beast first daddy. No!

Me: Killing people Alondwe is not an option.

Alondwe: Okay mom. What happened daddy?

Sam: The beast plotted an evil way of eating Joy. He went to Joy and pretended to be a very nice human being. Joy loved beast so much but Beast Matthew didn't love Joy.

Alondwe: Beast Matthew is evil. I don't like him.

Sam: People warned Joy about Beast Matthew. But No! Joy didn't listen to them. She wanted to be close friends with Beast Matthew.

Alondwe: Joy doesn't listen! Run Joy! Run! Close friends? They will be like you and mommy? No! Joy with a beast?

Sam: Listen phela. MaNdunakazi.

She placed her hands on her mouth.

Sam: Beast saw that Joy is a good girl. And though Joy could see Beast's bad ways. She believed she can turn beast into a nice person. Who is full of life and love.

Alondwe: Ncoah Joy!

Sam: And indeed Joy changed beast Matthew into Sweet Matthew. But they went through a strange party and creepy party to bury beast's past.

Alondwe: Eww! Creepy!

Sam: They became close friends and Sweet Matthew planted a little baby inside Joy's tummy.

Alondwe: Oh. Baby. Baby. Nunuzana nzee.

Samkelo and I laughed.

Sam: Joy made a mistake and Sweet Matthew was angry at Joy! Matthew left her alone.

Alondwe: And the baby?? No! That's beast Matthew. Ayi! You see mom. He must be killed! I laughed.

Sam: Joy found a new close friend. Matthew came back and they were fighting over the baby with Joy.

Alondwe: Poor baby.

Samkelo and I looked at each other and smiled.

Sam: Matthew was sad because he lost the girl of his dreams. Joy's new friend made Joy happy and that hurt Matthew for years because he wanted to be one to make Joy happy. But through all the trials and tribulations Sweet Matthew found his Joy back in his life.

Everything in his life was well. Though the other part of life was painful but When Matthew has Joy. He has everything.

Alondwe: But daddy you never told me the name of their baby.

Sam: Their baby is Owami Ndunakazi. And Mesuli Ndunakazi.

Alondwe: Oh. How sweet. Baby Owami. So lovely... Daddy?

Me: Huh?

Alondwe: My name is Owami and my brother is Mesuli.

Sam: Yes.

Alondwe: Oh! Daddy you wanted to eat my mommy!  
She hit his chest. I laughed.  
Alondwe: You're the beast! Argh! Beast!  
Sam: No! But baby I changed. I am sweet now!  
Alondwe: Haa! You were fighting over me? Mom! Dad!  
Us: We love you!  
She sulked and covered her face with the blankets.  
Us: Owami??  
Alondwe: Okay! I love you too!  
Me: Kiss us goodnight?  
She sat up straight. She kissed my cheek.  
Alondwe: For Matthew's Joy.  
I giggled and she kissed her dad's cheek.  
Alondwe: For Joy's Sweet Matthew.  
We kissed her too and we then went under the blankets.  
Alondwe: The story was nice. Goodnight daddy and Goodnight mommy.  
Us: Goodnight baby.  
Saturday morning came. I bathed with our daughter and Samkelo bathed with our son. We went to have breakfast. Samkelo had asked me to prepare lunch for his boys. They were going to come to our house after the game.  
Alondwe: Please win daddy. Don't lose.  
Sam: I won't be playing alone baby.  
Alondwe: Yes! Tell your teammates that I said. I want my daddy to win.  
Sam: I will baby.  
She nodded. I whispered to Samkelo.  
Me: And I always thought she's a quiet child.  
Sam: People change baby.  
Me: Yeah. Sweet Matthew.  
We laughed. Mesuli laughed after us.  
Alondwe: Why are you Laughing guys?  
Me: Yoh! Alondwe baby eat your food.  
She nodded and ate. Samkelo was having something different because he was going to play. We finished eating and I washed the dishes. We then drove straight to uMlazi. Samkelo went to his teammates and we sat on the benches. The game started. Someone tapped my shoulder. I looked at them.  
Guy: I think I know you?  
Me: From where maybe?  
Guy: Don't you remember me? I am Phil. You are Thandeka. Samkelo was the member of our group.  
Me: Okay. Now I remember. Phil. How are you?  
Phil: I am fine and you?  
Me: I am fine. It's nice to see you.  
Phil: Where's Samkelo.  
Me: He's on the ground playing.  
Phil: Wait? You guys are still together?  
Me: Yes. We are married and these are our kids.  
Phil: Oh Lord! Can I take him?  
I gave him Mesuli. He greeted Alondwe.  
Phil: I can't believe you guys are still together.  
Me: We separated from each other for a number of years but we are together now.

Phil: That's so lovely.

Me: So you? Any luck?

Phil: No. I am still on the game.

Me: Ain't you tired of all this game?

Phil: No! No! I am not. It's very fun. Look one of my mission is here. Let me get your digits. I will call.

Me: Let me give you my husband's number.

He nodded. I gave him Samkelo's number. He took it, I took my boy and left. He followed an old but fancy looking woman. I sighed and concentrated on the game. Alondwe was cheering for her daddy. The team that he was playing for lost and his boys won. After the game we went to his boys.

I tapped his shoulder. He looked at me and he kissed me. The boys cheered. We broke the kiss.

Sam: Boys this is my wife and kids.

Them: Hey family.

Alondwe and I: Hi guys.

Sam: My wife prepared lunch for you at home so we will go there and eat.

They chanted: Yes!

I laughed and we went to the road. We stopped a taxi and the boys went inside the taxi. There was one boy who couldn't keep his eyes off me. It was kind of uncomfortable because I didn't know why he was looking at me. Samkelo and I led the driver. We arrived in my house and I dished up for them. Samkelo celebrated with his boys by the pool chairs. I went inside the house with my kids. We watched TV. Just me, Alondwe, Mesuli and the dog. I stood up and I went to the kitchen but I eavesdropped a conversation between the two boys who were in my kitchen.

1stBoy: It's her Brah. It's her.

2ndBoy: You're lying!

1stBoy: I can't lie about this what do you take me –

Samkelo walked inside the kitchen. I quickly hid away.

Sam: What's taking you so long boys? We are waiting for you.

Them: Sorry coach.

I sighed and I walked inside the kitchen. The boys left immediately.

Me: Are you enjoying yourself?

Sam: Yes my love.

He said and kissed me

We were outside the gate with the boys. We were waiting for the taxi. I decided to ask.

Me: You? What is your name?

I touched him.

Boy: I am Senzo.

Me: Why are you looking at me? I mean you can't keep your eyes off me.

Sam: Thandeka??

Me: No Samkelo. I want an answer.

Other boy: I think he's just looking at your beauty Mrs Ndunakazi.

Me: I am not joking here. Senzo answer me. Why are you looking at me?

Sam: Thandeka please go back inside the house because you're making my boys uncomfortable.

Me: I am making them uncomfortable? He's the on making me uncomfortable.

Sam: Thandeka??

I gave him the driver's money and I looked at that boy for the last time. I went inside the

house. I went to the kitchen and I cleaned up the whole mess and washed the dishes. Samkelo walked inside the kitchen.

Sam: What was that about?

Me: That boy was looking at me and he was making me uncomfortable.

Sam: You should've called him and talk to him aside. What you did was unacceptable. Doing that in front of the whole team. You made it look like Senzo is crushing on you.

Me: Who knows maybe he is.

Sam: Excuse me? What did you say?

Me: I said I am sorry for embarrassing him.

Sam: Tsk!

He left. He went upstairs. I sat down and I buried my face in my hands.

Me: Owami!!

Alondwe: Mama?

Me: Come here!

She came to me.

Me: Go to my room upstairs and take my phone.

Alondwe: Okay.

She ran upstairs. Mesuli came inside the kitchen crawling. He was crying. Alondwe came back. I took my phone.

Me: What is your father doing upstairs?

Alondwe: He's inside the bathroom. Showering.

Me: Okay. Can you please stay with your brother I want to cook?

Alondwe: No. I am going to feed my dog now.

She ran out of the kitchen. I clicked my tongue. Alondwe was one lazy child I had. I picked Mesuli up. I wiped his tears. I went upstairs and I put him on my back using imbeleko. I went back downstairs. Samkelo was watching soccer.

Sam: Bring him here.

I took Mesuli off my back and I passed him to his father.

I went to the kitchen and I started cooking. I took my phone and called my brother. He picked up on third ring.

Andile: Joy.

Me: Hey bhuti are you fine?

Andile: Yes I am fine and you?

Me: I am good. I want us to talk about something.

Andile: But you don't sound good to me. Is everything alright?

Me: Yes. Everything is alright. I want us to talk about dad.

Andile: What about him?

Me: I want us to do a thanksgiving ceremony for him. Just to thank him for raising us. Though mom was not there but he held us together.

Andile: That's a very nice idea. And we can buy him a nice car. There is this car that he's always talking about this days. Maybe we can buy it for him. I will ask questions about the colour.

Me: Okay. That's nice. I think we must do the ceremony back home to his old house.

Andile: Yeah that's nice.

Me: Okay. We will talk again after my kid's birthday.

Andile: Okay. Sisi.

Me: Kiss Luzuko for me.

Andile: I will. Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight.

I hung up the call and I placed my phone aside. Samkelo walked inside with Mesuli. He was

crying. He handed him over to me. I looked at him.

Sam: He's crying. I am watching a game with Alondwe. He's disturbing us.

Me: I am cooking here. He will get hurt.

Sam: Put him on your back.

I took him. His father left. I made him sit on the counter. I prepared a quick snack for him and I fed him.

Me: They say you're disturbing them. Bayakuqhela. I don't understand this. Alondwe is watching soccer and you're here in the kitchen. But your dad is chasing you away. Ayikho lento yakhe.

He laughed. I shook my head. After feeding him. I put him down and he crawled back to the lounge.

I took my phone and I called Kimberly. She answered on the second last ring.

EJ: Mom's phone hello.

Me: Hi Uyathandwa it's Trinity.

EJ: Hi. Mom is outside the house.

I decided to treat him like an adult because he was acting like one.

Me: Listen here Uyathandwa and listen to me carefully. I am your mother. I gave birth to you. I don't care what you think about me. But you're just a child. And to me you'll always be my child. Even if you have your own family when you're older you'll forever be my child! You'll never be of same age with me or be above me. I deserve your respect as your mother do you understand me!??

EJ: Yes mom.

Me: Good! Now give your sister that phone.

EJ: Okay. Missy!

Sese: "Yes!"

EJ: "Mom wants to talk to you"

Sese: "I don't want to talk to her. She took my dolls away"

EJ: "Trinity"

I heard her footsteps running.

Sese: "give me the phone"

I heard shuffling sounds.

Sese: Mama!!

Me: Hello my baby how are you?

Sese: I am fine mama. I miss you.

Me: I will come and take you baby. Mommy will be throwing a birthday party for Alondwe and Kuhle. They are both born on the same day.

Sese: Yeah! We will eat a cake?

Me: Yes my baby. Do you want mommy to count your birthday there too because you were born on the same month?

Sese: Why don't you throw my own party?

Me: You don't live with me anymore baby. I can only do it for you same date as your siblings.

Sese: I want to live with you too. Kimberly took my dolls because I didn't want to stay with the baby.

Me: I am sorry but you must help her.

Sese: Ha.a I don't want to.

Me: Yoh! My daughters are lazy. Tell your dad that you need your dolls back.

Sese: I am waiting for him. I will tell him mama. I want my dolls.

I laughed because she was acting like someone who was angry and it was funny.

Me: You will get them baby don't shout.

Sese: Your baby is angry mama. I am angry.

I laughed some more.

Me: Calm down Miss Smith. My beautiful Lilly. Daddy will give his Princess the dolls back. He will never disappoint you Okay?

Sese: Yes mom.

Me: Mommy has to go now. I love you Okay?

Sese: I love you too mama.

Me: Where's your brother?

Sese: He went to his room with his dog.

Me: Okay. Tell him I love him Okay?

Sese: Okay mom. Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight my baby.

I hung up the call and I finished up cooking. I went to the lounge.

Me: Alondwe you won't bath today?

Alondwe: I will after watching soccer.

Me: Soccer is for boys.

Sam: Hhayi! Hhayi! That's a lie.

Me: She's must be in the kitchen helping me. Sese doesn't want to help Kimberly. What's up with you and being lazy? I am not lazy.

Sam: Gender stereotypes.

Me: Oh? How about you stand up Ndunakazi and bath Mesuli, dish up for us. Come back tomorrow cook and clean.

Sam: I am watching a game.

Me: Tomorrow?

Sam: Okay I was just kidding. Laa Laa stand up. Go and bath. Help your mother in the kitchen. I won't cook because of you.

Alondwe: But daddy! I am –

Sam: Stand up now before I whip you.

She sulked and stood up.

Alondwe: Nursy! Come!

Her dog followed her. I went upstairs and bathed together with my son. We lotion and wore our pyjamas. I went downstairs with him and I passed him over to his father.

Sam: But bbe you love putting him here. He's disturbing me. He needs attention.

Me: I want to dish up for you guys.

Sam: Hhayi! Scelokuhle.

Me: Umtanakho mos.

Sam: Owakho nawe.

Me: Mthathe!

He sulked and took him. I went to dish up for them. Alondwe came back. She pouted.

Alondwe: Daddy said I must help you.

Me: You will wash the dishes.

Alondwe: But the dishes are hard.

I didn't answer her. I went to the lounge and took my baby from Samkelo.

Me: You can come and eat.

Sam: The game will be over soon.

I left him. I sat down with Mesuli. Alondwe prayed and we ate. I finished first and put the dishes on the sink. I went upstairs to put Mesuli on his cot. He was asleep. I went to my room and sat on my bed. I thought about that young boy. Something was not right. I had to put pressure on Samkelo so that I can find out what was going on. Samkelo walked inside the room scratching.

Sam: My muscles are painful. I never a massage.

Me: Oh you must go to a spa.

He jumped on the bed and kissed me. I kissed him back. He pushed me off and I laid on my back.

Me: What kind of massage do you need?

Sam: You gave Phil my number?

He kissed my neck deeply.

Me: Mmm\_\_AAAA\_ Yes I did. He wanted my mine but I gave him yours.

He looked at me and bite my lower lip. I giggled.

Sam: I don't trust him. Actually any of them. Please don't let them anywhere near our family. It's that time of the period they want to test us. It is not compulsory but I don't want us to do it.

Me: But to me he acted like someone who doesn't know that we are back together.

He unbuttoned my pyjamas top and sucked my nipples. I moaned. He stopped.

Sam: He was just tricking you. Please don't let anyone trick you. Even if you don't know them just be aware.

I wrapped my arms around his neck.

Me: I thought this was over.

Sam: It is but that's what happened after the couple has been together for more than two years they pose a test to a relationship. It ain't compulsory but they do it anyway.

Me: Nothing can break us right?

Sam: Nothing at all.

He kissed me intensely and one thing led to another..

1st of September. It was a Thursday. Samkelo and I woke up in the morning. Alondwe was still sleeping. We took a birthday cake and we went to her room. We walked inside her room. We sang HAPPY BIRTHDAY for her. She woke up and sat up straight. Samkelo was capturing her. She was smiling. I placed the cake on her lap.

Me: Make a wish!

She did and blew the 9candles. We cheered and clapped hands for her.

Alondwe: I feel like a Princess mom and dad.

Samkelo and I looked at each other and smiled.

Sam: You're our Princess.

We kissed her cheeks. She kept on blushing.

Me: Okay wake up now. You have to get ready for school.

Alondwe: You'll come back tomorrow right mommy?

Me: Yes baby.

Alondwe: Uyathandwa will come?

Me: I don't know baby.

Alondwe: Please tell him to come.

Me: I will try but even if he doesn't come your birthday party will still the best okay?

Alondwe: Yes mommy.

I took the cake. She was going to take the cake to her class. When a child has a birthday he/she must bring the cake to share with his/her classmates. Alondwe went to bath. We took Mesuli's cake. I woke him up. I made him sit on the floor in front of his cake. We sang HAPPY BIRTHDAY for him. He cried and dug his hands on the cake.

Sam: Thandeka stop him.

Me: It's his birthday baby. Leave him to it.

He didn't stop him. Mesuli ate the cake. He screamed. He messed up his face. I removed the cake. He cried.

Me: No that's enough. Hhaybo. Let's go and bath with mama.

Sam: I want to join you too.

Me: Say no! Asiyifuni insila yakho!

I laughed. Samkelo placed his phone down. He ran after us. I ran with my son. He was laughing. Samkelo caught us inside our room. We fell on top of the bed. I laughed.

Me: My bed covers Samkelo. Mesuli has the cake on him.

We laughed. Samkelo breathed down on my neck. His breath was warm. It made my hair at the back of my neck stand.

Me: Mmm! Bbe stop that you know what that does to me. Please.

Sam: What? What have I done?

Me: Samkelo we have to get ready for work. Please bbe.

He tried to kiss my neck. I pushed him off.

Me: Ha.a usile wena!

I stood up with my son. We went to the bathroom. We strip naked and I mixed up the water. We stepped inside the tub. Samkelo joined us. We bathed on the same tub. We finished and rinsed ourselves. Samkelo held Mesuli and we brushed our teeth. We lotion and wore our clothes. I went to my son's nursery and I made him wear his clothes. We then went to the kitchen to have breakfast. Samkelo took Alondwe's cake. I took my bags and Mesuli.

Samkelo came to me.

Sam: Have a safe trip my love. Don't forget that I love you.

Me: How much do you love me?

Sam: I love you beyond measure.

I kissed him deeply. We broke the kiss.

Me: I love you more than you can ever imagine.

We shared a hug. He kissed my forehead. I went to kiss my daughter.

Alondwe: I love you mama.

Me: I love you too Nana. Take care of my boys tonight Okay?

Alondwe: You know you can trust me.

I giggled. I went to my car and I drove my son to daycare. I drove to work. My day began.

At 17:00 I knocked out late because I wasn't coming to work the following day. I took a plane to Cape Town. After a number of hours I was in Cape Town. I took a cab to Themba's house. It wasn't that late. I arrived and buzzed the gate.

Themba: Yes.

Me: Are you sleeping? It's Thandeka.

Themba: Shit! It's Thursday today. Come in!

The gate opened. I walked inside. I knocked on the door. He told me to come in. I walked inside. He was folding the blankets on the couch. He was wearing an underwear only. I looked at him for a few seconds and I cleared my throat. He turned back and looked at me.

Themba: Look I am sorry. I will call Kimberly just now to come back.

Me: Where's she?

Themba: She went to visit mom with the kids.

Me: Oh. But you knew that I am coming?

Themba: We forgot.

Me: Okay I will wait.

I closed the door. I stood there.

Themba: Okay let me.

He came towards me and I stepped back. I flipped my bags at the back of my legs.

Themba: I wanted to take your bags. You'll sleep here right?

Me: No. I will sleep on a hotel.

Themba: Come on.

He came closer. I stepped back until I was against the wall. He looked at me deep inside my eyes. My eyes wondered around. I was avoiding eye contact.

Me: What are you doing Themba?

Themba: I was just trying to help. I wanted to –

He directed his face on the side of my neck and his hand reached out for my bags. His breath on my neck made my body shiver.

Me: Themba stop it.

My breath escalated. My blood got warm. He stopped and looked at me.

Themba: What's wrong?

Me: Nothing. Please step off me. I can feel your – uhm – you're hard against me. Themba.

His face slowly crawled up to my face. I looked at the other side. He kissed my cheek. "No I am married" I thought to myself. I tried to push him back. He was strong. His skin was warm and a little sweaty. He looked at me. I looked down.

Themba: I will go and wear something.

I nodded quickly. He held my face and kissed my forehead. He ran upstairs. I breathed in and out. I placed my bags down and I placed my hands above my head. "Oh Lord!" I said and walked out of the house. I sat on the chair outside. I tried to calm down. A car drove through. It parked in front of the house. Uyabongeka stepped out of the car. She ran up to me. I stood up and kneeled down. I hugged her.

Sese: Mama!

Me: Baby!

I stood up and spun her around. She giggled. I kissed her face.

Sese: We're going home?

Me: Yes baby.

Sese: Yes! I want to dance!

I put her down and she danced. I laughed. Kimberly stepped out of the car with her daughter. Uyathandwa followed with his dog.

EJ: You don't even know how to dance.

Sese: That's Jealousy!

I laughed. I looked at Uyathandwa.

EJ: Hi mom.

Me: Hey.

I hugged him and kissed his cheek.

EJ: Mom!

I laughed. I picked Uyabongeka up. We walked inside the house.

Kim: Hi.

Me: Hey.

She looked at me. I kissed my daughter's cheek. I didn't want to look at her. Themba came downstairs.

Themba: My family is home!

He kissed his wife.

EJ: Yes! Daddy but I didn't want to come back just yet. Grandpa promised me that we will go on a cruise Saturday.

Themba: You'll go back to him my son.

Sese: You're not going with us?

EJ: No I am going with grandpa.

Sese: Mommy?

Me: It's Okay. We will go alone. Kuhle is waiting for you.

Sese: Yes! Let's go now!

Me: We will go tomorrow morning. But for now just go and take your bag.

Kim: I will fix something for her. I didn't pack anything.

Me: Okay.

Kim: Why is your face pink?

Me: Excuse me?

Kim: My children please go upstairs.

I put sesethu down and they went upstairs. I sat down.

Kim: What has been going on here? Themba?

Themba: Going on where?

Kim: Between you and Thandeka? I can see that something happened. The look on her eyes says something and her face.

Themba: You're imagining things.

Kim: Don't tell me I imagine things!!

Themba: Don't raise your voice at me! Kimberly don't!

Me: I think I should help my daughter.

Kim: You're going nowhere near my bedrooms.

Me: What do you think I will do?

Kim: You tell me!

Me: Tsk! This is madness. I will stand outside ke. Bring my daughter.

Themba: I thought you'll sleep here. You can't sleep in a hotel with my daughter.

Me: You thought wrong.

I took my bags and went outside. I called the cab. Themba came to me.

Me: Themba I am not here to cause trouble. I just want my daughter.

Themba: You caused no trouble.

Me: Your wife thought I did something with you Themba.

Themba: You know you did nothing.

Me: What happened here was almost something.

Themba: I just wanted to take your bags.

Me: I don't get you. One minute you hate me and the second minute you're nice to me. What's going on?

Themba: I don't hate you. But you the one who seem to hate me.

Me: I don't hate you.

Themba: But you love me?

Me: I love you as a human being.

He laughed. I was really confused. Themba was confusing me.

Me: Is your wife pregnant? Or you have another surrogate mother?

Themba: What? No! Why?

Me: You have mood swings and it's scaring me.

Kimberly walked out with Uyabongeka. Themba looked at me. I looked at my daughter. I didn't want to confuse myself about my feelings for Themba. I was in love with Samkelo and he was everything that I needed. I didn't want to confused myself with infatuation. I picked up Uyabongeka. I took her bag and I couldn't take mine.

Themba: I will walk you to the gate.

Me: No I will put Sese down.

Sese: No! Mommy!

Me: Hheyi kwahle!

I put her down. She sulked. I took our bags.

Me: Uyathandwa didn't want to come and say goodbye maybe?

Themba: Uyathandwa! Your mother is leaving.

He came out of house.

Me: Alondwe will be sad that you won't come to her birthday party.

EJ: I will call her.

Me: What is wrong with you? You don't want to visit us. You don't want to talk to us. Why do you hate us so much, what did we do to you? Or what did I do to you?

EJ: You made me lie mama. You made me a bad person.

Me: I said I am sorry. You told Samkelo the truth. And he has forgiven me. What kind of a child are you? Children forgive easily but no! You don't. I didn't raise you to hold grudges against people. You know I hate that. Alondwe did nothing to you and you're punishing her for something she didn't do! She's your sister for goodness sake!

Themba: Thandeka he's crying now.

Me: Let him cry! You think this behavior of his makes me happy? No! It doesn't! Sese let's go.

Sese: Say sorry to mom. Mom is angry at you.

Themba: Uyathandwa?

EJ: I am sorry mama.

I placed my bags down and I hugged him. Tears streamed down my face. It's like I was getting my long lost son. I kissed his face all over.

EJ: Mom! Don't!

Me: Who doesn't want his mother to kiss them. Don't you love me?

EJ: I love you.

Me: Then kiss me.

He looked at Themba. Themba put his hands on his eyes and pouted. Uyathandwa nodded. He placed his hands on his eyes and he slowly crawled up to my face. He baby kissed my lips.

Sese: No! Daddy is wrong! Remove your hands on your face.

EJ: Shush Missy! Are you happy mom?

I giggled and nodded. I kissed his forehead and his sister's forehead.

EJ: Okay. I am going with you.

Me: Thank you.

EJ: Daddy come!

He went inside with his father. The cab was outside the gate.

Me: Thanks Kimberly. Let's go baby. Your brother will meet us outside.

She nodded. We went outside the yard. I packed our bags and we waited for Uyathandwa. He came back and he stepped inside the car.

Me: Bye Themba.

Themba: Bye Thandeka. Bye my babies.

Them: Bye daddy.

The driver drove off. I was feeling guilty about everything that happened back in the house with Themba. And Samkelo was going to see right through me as he always does. I sighed and concentrated on spending the night with my kids before going back home.

In the morning I woke up. I went to take a shower and I ordered breakfast. I woke My son up first. He rubbed his eyes.

Me: Go and shower now.

EJ: I want to sleep for two minutes mamma.

Me: Uyathandwa!! Please!

He reluctantly got up. He went to the bathroom. I took out clothes they were going to wear. My husband called. I answered.

Me: Ndunakazi?

Sam: Mam how are you?

Me: I am fine Mr how are you doing without me?

Sam: Horrible. Your kids are driving me nuts please come back. Scelokuhle broke your vase.

Me: No! Which vase?

Sam: The one my stepmother bought for you.

Me: Samkelo! Samkelo! How come?

Sam: He was taking his steps and he held it when he was about to fall. He sat down. He was dragging it with him. It broke.

Me: You were watching all this?

Sam: No bbe I –

Me: How did you know it happened?

Sam: Laa Laa told me.

Me: I want my vase. You'll buy it!

I hung up the call. I clicked my tongue. I loved that vase because his stepmother bought it for me.

We don't get along with her because I didn't offer them something to drink way before but it was the beautiful gift from her. I woke Uyabongeka up. Samkelo called again.

Me: I want my vase back Matthew!

Sam: But I didn't break it.

Me: Your son broke it. You will pay for it. Have a good day. I am generous I even wish you a good day.

Sam: You love me nje bbe.

Me: Hhaysuka!

I hung up the call. I giggled because I was being dramatic and he was a little afraid. Uyabongeka looked at me.

Me: What?

Sese: I want to go.

I picked her up and I went to the bathroom. Uyathandwa was sleeping on the bathroom carpet. I shook my head. Uyabongeka laughed at him. I bathed her. And I told her to go to the bedroom. I woke Uyathandwa up.

Me: We will leave you here. If that's what you want!

He reluctantly stood up. He took off his pyjamas and he went to the shower. I left him and we dressed up with my daughter. Breakfast came. We waited for Uyathandwa. He finished, we prayed and we ate. After eating we gathered our things. I checked out and we took a cab to the airport. We flew back to Durban.

In Durban, we took a cab to Durban North. There was a girl with a baby girl outside my gate. We stepped out of the car and we walked up to the gate.

Me: Hi sisi.

Girl: Hi. I am Prudence Dhlomo. I am looking for a job. I am really stranded sisi. My boyfriend left us with nothing and my family is in Mpumalanga. I want a job just for three months and I will be able to go home.

Me: Have you tried the neighborhood?

Girl: Yes but the woman from next door referred me here because you have no one helping out.

Me: Come in. You'll wait for my husband. But I don't need a maid. But we'll see.

She smiled and nodded. She looked dirty and Stinky. Her baby had no health at all. We walked inside the house. My kids wanted to sleep. I went upstairs with them. They slept. I went downstairs to make something to eat for Prudence and her daughter. I gave them food. Samkelo was going to come back with the kids. Alondwe waited for us on her brother's daycare. We took them after work because we had no one who was going to stay with them. I told Prudence to go and shower on the back room. Later Samkelo and the kids walked in. Mesuli was asleep on his father's arms. I hugged my daughter. She wanted me to pick her up and I picked her up.

Me: You're 9 years old but you want me to pick you up.

Alondwe: I am still a baby.

I shook my head and kissed my husband.

Sam: At least I get the kiss.

Me: And you must be grateful!

He laughed. Mesuli got a fright and woke up. I put Alondwe down and I took him.

Sam: Who's bag is this?

Me: Some woman named Prudence Dhlomo came here. Looking for a job.

Sam: Really? And you let her stay here? What did I tell you about trusting people you don't know Thandeka?

Me: I was just trying to help Samkelo.

Sam: I don't even want to see her. Please tell her to leave my house. There are lot of houses in Durban North. Why did she come here?

Me: I –

Sam: Don't utter another word Thandeka. Tell her to leave.

Prudence: I am sorry Sir. I will leave.

We turned back and looked at her. She looked a lot better.

Sam: Don't call me Sir! Leave my house qha.

Me: But bbe –

Sam: No.

Alondwe: Daddy. The Bible says help the poor people.

Sam: Laa Laa I didn't ask for your opinion. Go upstairs. I don't know why you talk while I am not talking to you.

She ran upstairs.

Sam: Please move sisi.

She nodded. She took her bags.

Me: You won't even give her some money?

Sam: No. She'll probably call Phil. Tell them I don't want to play.

Prudence: Who's Phil?

Sam: You know him. Stop acting out. Thandeka tell your friend to leave.

Me: Please leave.

I opened the door. She walked out using the small gate. I looked at Samkelo. He clicked his tongue and he went upstairs. I sighed. I went to the kitchen and prepared something to eat for my kids. I looked at Mesuli.

Me: Don't shout at your wife my baby when you grow up. You know, this drives me crazy. Your father likes shouting like I am deaf.

Sam: That's because you don't like to listen to me. I will shout because clearly you have hearing problem.

I didn't answer him. I took my son and I went to the lounge with him. I fed him. There was a lot of noise upstairs. I smiled because my kids were happy together. After feeding Mesuli I put him down and I started cooking. Dragging the kids out of their rooms was a mission because they were playing. I just let them be.

Samkelo, Mesuli and I ate alone in total silence. Mesuli was the only one making the noise.

Me: You'll go and fetch my parents at the airport?

Sam: I called your brother. They said they'll sleep in a hotel. They'll be here in the morning.

Me: Okay.

Sam: I hope you checked everything and remind everyone to be here in the morning.

Me: Yes I did.

He nodded. My phone rang. I took it. It was an unsaved number. I answered.

Me: Thandeka Ndunakazi Hello?

Senzo: It's Senzo mam. Can we talk?

Me: Yeah sure.

Senzo: I am sorry for looking at you like that but I know the guys who raped you.

My mouth went dry. Tears started gushing out my eyes. I didn't trust my voice. But I tried to talk.

Me: Where did you see that?

Sam: Thandeka?

I quickly looked up at him. I was shaking. He jumped out of the chair and held me.

Me: Where did you see them?

Senzo: The freeway just before you enter Durban station.

Samkelo took the phone away from me. He spoke to the Senzo. Mesuli started crying. I put him on top of the dinning table, I stood up and I ran upstairs. I locked myself up and I cried my lungs out....

I woke up on the floor Samkelo was banging the door. It was a new day. I must've fallen asleep on the floor. I stood up immediately. I opened the door. Samkelo looked at me. I didn't say anything.

Sam: I am sorry sthandwa sami.

He hugged me tightly. I sob inside his arms.

Me: Why now? Why didn't he tell me after my children's birthday party.

Sam: Everything will be alright.

Me: Nothing will be alright.

Sam: They will be behind bars bbe.

Me: Am I fit enough to face them?

Sam: Yes you're. You're strong but for now Let's just get ready for our kids party we will deal with this later. Your family is here.

I nodded. We let go. I walked inside the room. He followed me. I took a shower. Samkelo used the tub. I finished, I brushed my teeth, and I went to lotion. Samkelo came inside the room.

Sam: You'll go and get the cakes right?

Me: Yes.

I wore white jeans, white vest with a navy stilettos. I brushed my weave and I took my handbag. I went to the door.

Sam: Thandeka?

Me: Yeah?

Sam: I still love you and please be careful.

Me: I love you too.

I walked out of the door. I went downstairs. My mind was slow and I wasn't myself. I didn't know how I felt. My family was eating at the dinning table. Samkelo's parents were also there.

Me: Good morning.

Them: Morning.

Andile: Ntwana yami.

He stood up and hugged me. Shemah stood up too. They sat down.

Me: Hello Christian.

Chris: Hello my sister.

Andile: Are you fine sisi?

Me: Yes I am fine. I am going to fetch the cakes now. I will see you later.

Sam's Stepmother: You don't look okay. Is everything alright?

Me: Yes. Everything is alright.

I walked out of the house. I went to my car. I cried until I arrived at the baker's shop. They packed the three cakes and I drove back home. I was scared and I was shaking. I parked my car near a pub. I cried. I didn't understand why do I have to suffer. It was painful. I had everything but my life was miserable at times. I stepped out of the car. Maybe I needed to drug my sorrows. I bought the strongest brandy and I went back to my car. It was my first time doing such but I wanted to feel a lot better. I opened the bottle and I downed it. Not at

once. I didn't want to get drunk. It was awful. I closed it and I put it inside my bag. I drove straight home.

I arrived at home. The children were already around. They were playing jumping castles. Samkelo came to me. He opened the back door.

Sam: What took you so long?

Me: I had to wait at the bakery. Did you give the letters to our neighbors notifying them about the level of noise?

Sam: Yes I did yesterday morning. We were waiting for you. Please go and change.

I nodded. Samkelo was trying by all means to pretend like nothing happened but I just couldn't. The kids were told to go inside the house. I went to my room. I took my phone and called the number that called the previous night. It rang and Senzo answered.

Me: Hello.

Senzo: Mrs Ndunakazi. I am really sorry for calling last night. I didn't know about the kids party. I am sorry.

Me: Where did you get my number?

Senzo: I got it on Facebook. I was scared to ask coach. This was eating me up.

Me: How do you know the people who took advantage of me?

Senzo: We were coming from morning side. I was their driver. They asked me to drive them because I don't drink alcohol. One of them saw you on the ground and they told me to stop the car. I was hired so I did that. They saw that you're unconscious and one suggested they take advantage of you. I tried to stop them but they were drunk. There was nothing I can do. When I saw you. The memories of that day came back.

Me: How many were they?

Senzo: They were four.

Me: And they all did –

Senzo: No. If you want to open the case I am willing to be an eye witness.

Me: Why didn't you report them? Why did you let them beat me? Why? Why?

I hung up the call. I buried my face on the pillows. I cried. I felt a sharp pain on my lower abdomen. I held where it was painful. Andile walked inside my room.

Andile: Thandeka come down phela.

I nodded with my head still on my pillow.

Andile: Thandeka?

He came to my bed and held me tightly.

Andile: What's wrong? Are you and Ndunakazi having a break down?

I shook my head "NO"

Me: I will be fine bhuti. Let me change. I don't want to ruin my kids party.

Andile: You'll talk when you're ready right?

Me: Yes.

He kissed my forehead and left. I stood up and changed. I went downstairs and the party had began. The decorations were beautiful. My kids looked lovely on the table. I sat down next to Samkelo. He held my hand. The party went on and on. I didn't even know what was happening my head was all over the places. And the abdominal pain kept on coming and going. Samkelo spoke on behalf of parents. I told him I couldn't. The party was over and it was time for people to eat. There was a catering company. I went to my kids on the table.

Me: How are you my babies?

Them: We're fine.

Sese: We want to go and play on the jumping castles.

Me: Eat first then you will go. You're having a good time right?

Them: Yes!!

I smiled and I walked out of the house. I sat down by the pool chairs. My pain was more

intense. I cried.

Me: [screaming & crying] Samkelo!! Samkelo!!

His mother came out running.

Mama: Thandeka!?

Me: Samkelo mama. I need him..

Mama: He left with your brother. What's wrong?

Me: I don't know.

I tried to stand up.

Mama: Baby you're bleeding.

I looked at myself and there was a lot of blood.

Mama: You need to go to the Doctor.

Me: No I will just –

I felt dizzy and I passed out.

I woke up in a hospital bed. Samkelo was beside me holding my hand. There was a female Doctor with us.

Me: Samkelo?

Sam: Bbe. How are you feeling?

Me: What happened? Doctor?

Doc: You were under a lot of stress and as a result you lost –

Sam: Doctor can we talk outside?

She nodded and they left. I sat up straight. I drank water. Samkelo came back alone.

Me: What happened?

Sam: You were under a lot of stress that's all bbe. But you'll be fine don't worry.

Me: Why was I bleeding?

Sam: It must've been periods but the Doctor gave you something.

Me: When can I go back home?

Doc: [coming in] You'll go home today. I will discharge you.

Me: Thank you.

She left.

Me: How was your birthday party?

Sam: My birthday party?

Me: Who's birthday party was it?

Sam: The children's party.

Me: Oh I forgot.

Samkelo looked at me with pain and worry in his eyes. I looked down. Maybe I was going crazy??

We went back home later. We walked inside the house. My family stood up. They all looked at me with pity. I looked down. They hugged me one by one. I then went to sit down.

Dad: I think you should look for help.

Me: Help about?

Dad: You have a lot going on my child and I am worried about you.

Me: No. I am fine dad. And besides I did look for help.

Andile: But sisi wami some decisions you take are not good and they don't show that you're fine.

Me: What are you talking about?

Andile: I am talking about the things you have done Thandeka.

Me: I know. And I have learnt.

Mama: You'll be fine though.

Evelyn: Yes. You must not think too much.

Sam's dad: I think you must take the kids to your aunt Samkelo. I spoke to her. Just for a few days so that you can help your wife deal with this pain you're going through.

Sam: Thank you baba.

Mama: Mesuli can come back to me because he is young to go around staying with people he's not used to.

Me: But I think having them around can help me. And give me strength.

Dad: No baby you need time away from them. What if you have a break down in front of the kids? They won't understand Thandeka.

Andile: Yeah sisi wami. Please let them go for a while. It will be good for you and them. I nodded.

Sam's stepmother: Are you going to open a case against those thugs?

Me: I want them behind bars for what they put me through.

Evelyn: We'll support you baby.

Me: Thank you.

Dad: Ndunakazi how are you holding up?

Sam: I don't know.

His stepmother: It's Okay to mourn Matthew.

Me: Mourn what?

Sam: She's talking about the pain you're going through. Your pain is like mine. That's what she's talking about.

I nodded. They looked at him in a strange way. I was also confused. But I brushed it off because I wanted to go and sleep.

Me: Can I go and lie down?

Them: Okay.

I stood up and I went to my room. I couldn't sleep. I took my handbag and I downed my brandy. I put it back on the bag and I then fell asleep.

I woke up Samkelo was brushing my head. I smiled. He smiled back.

Sam: Even if you're in pain. You manage to smile.

Me: You told me I am strong right?

Sam: Yes baby you're strong.

Me: This will pass right?

Sam: Yes it will pass. All will be alright.

Me: I love you Ndunakazi.

Sam: I love you too Mama uNdunakazi.

Me: The kids are leaving tomorrow morning. Please take them home.

Sam: Cape Town?

Me: Yes. I can't go to Themba's house again.

Sam: Why? what happened?

Me: Nothing just –

Sam: Please don't start.

Me: Themba tried to make a move on me but I swear nothing happened.

Sam: WHAT??

Me: Bbe calm down.

He stood up and walked up and down. I went to him. I held him and I made him look at me. His face was hot.

Me: Hey! Hey! Look at me.

Sam: Is it me? He's disrespecting my existence in your life.

Me: You're angry Samkelo calm down. Nothing happened.

Sam: Hell yes! I am angry let go of me Thandeka!

Me: No I won't!

Sam: Thandeka!!

I held his face tightly and I made it come closer to mine. I kissed him to calm him down. He held me really tightly and kissed wildly. We kissed until his breath was down. He was more calm. I broke the kiss and looked at him. He looked at me without a word. He gave me a tight squeeze.

Me: I am sorry okay but nothing happened.

Sam: It's Okay. I am sorry for snapping at you.

Me: It's Okay bbe.

We let go and he kissed my forehead.

Sam: Let's sleep now. My sister will take them to their father. I can't leave you alone.

Me: Okay. Thanks. Goodnight.

Sam: Goodnight.

We went to bed. He held me even more closer to him. I fell asleep on his arms.

The following morning. We woke up everyone was leaving. It was a Sunday. We went downstairs after showering.

Sese: Mama we are leaving now.

Me: I will miss you. Next time you'll spend more time with me Okay?

Sese: Yes mama.

Me: My boy.

EJ: Mamma. We will come and visit during December holidays?

Me: Yes I will talk to your father.

He nodded. I hugged and kissed them.

Me: Melokuhle please travel safe with them.

Melo: Yes sisi.

Me: Themba will meet you at the airport. They will see him.

Melo: Okay.

I hugged the others. The kids hugged each other. Everyone left, Samkelo was driving them to the airport. I took Mesuli.

Me: Mfana wami.

Kuhle: Mama.

Me: Uzohamba nogogo wakho. Uzohlala naye boy. [You'll go with your grandmother.]

Kuhle: Baba mama?

Me: Uzobuye umbone ubaba Kuhle. Ngiyakuthanda boy. [You'll see him some other time. I love you]

He shook his head and cried.

Sam's stepfather: Nkosikazi let's wait for his father. Or else he'll cry til we arrive home.

Mama: Yebo baba.

Me: Thank you.

Sam's stepfather: It's Okay mntanami.

I sat down with him. Alondwe sat next to me.

Alondwe: Mama why do we have to go?

Me: Mama is sick my baby. Do you want to see me sick?

Alondwe: No but who will take care of you?

Me: Matthew will take care of Joy baby Okay?

She nodded, she held her brother's hand and she rested her head on my shoulder. I opened up space for her and she rested it on my chest. She cried.

Me: Alondwe don't cry.

Alondwe: I don't want to go mama.

Mama: Woza kugogo. [Come to gogo]

She stood up and went to her grandmother. She tried to calm her down. They were both

crying. Mesuli was crying loudly. I gave him his bottle but he didn't want it.

Me: I think they should stay.

Mama: You need to deal with this without them being around.

Me: But Samkelo is not coming back. He should be here by now. And you need to go because you're working tomorrow.

Sam's stepfather: She's right Nkosikazi. We have to go now.

Mama: We will talk through the phone Okay?

Me: Okay mama.

Mama: Kuhle woza. [Scelokuhle come]

He shook his head and said: Baba.

Me: We will bring him if we can't manage mama.

She nodded. She put Alondwe on the couch. She was asleep. They left.

Me: Uzobuya ubaba yezwa ungakhali. [Dad will be back. Don't cry Okay]

He hid his face in my chest and cried.

Me: Uyeyisa phela wena uma usuzela. Yazi.

I stood up with him. I went to his room. I put him on his pram and rocked him until he was asleep. I put him on his cot and I took his sister. I went to my room and I called Samkelo. His phone went straight to voicemail. I was worried about him. I went downstairs and I waited for him. Time went by and he was not around. Melokuhle called to report that they arrived safe. The kids woke up. I gave them the toys and I went to cook. I finished, and I bathed my son.

Alondwe bathed herself. We went downstairs and had supper.

Alondwe: Mommy where is daddy?

Me: He went to his friends. He will come back later.

Kuhle: Mama phi Baba? [Where's dad mom?]

Me: Uzobuya ne lollipop. [He'll come back with a lollipop.]

He yawned. I gave him his bottle. He was sleepy.

Alondwe: I am going to sleep now. Dad is not coming.

Me: Goodnight baby.

Alondwe: Goodnight mama.

She kissed me.

Alondwe: Nursy! Come!

Me: Are you going to sleep with him?

Alondwe: Yes mommy.

I looked at her. She walked up the stairs. Her dog followed her.

Me: Hhayi boy. Kunzima.

I stood up and I went to put him to bed. I went back to my room. I tried to call Samkelo again. His phone was on voicemail. I went downstairs. I washed the dishes. I cleaned up. I walked out of the house for fresh air. I sat by the stairs and thought about my life. I prayed to God for quite a long time. I stood up and I went back inside. Samkelo was sitting on the lounge with blood on his shirt. He had the bottle of brandy that I bought. I went to him.

Me: Ndunakazi?

Sam: What is this?

Me: I – I can explain.

Sam: I found this on your handbag! What is this Thandeka Ndunakazi?

Me: I wanted something to drug my pain.

He stood up. He made me stand up. He was very angry. I tried to calm down.

Sam: Who killed my son? Huh? It's this shit you were drinking? Or those bastards who raped you! And gave you stress? Who?

Me: What are you talking about Samkelo. I did nothing to SJ. I didn't know him. Swimming killed him not me.

Sam: Fuck everything!!! Thandeka!!

He threw the bottle on the wall. It broke into pieces.

Me: What's wrong with you??

Alondwe: [by the stairs] Daddy?

We both looked at her. Samkelo sat down. I ran up the stairs. I picked her up.

Me: Nursy! Come!

The dog followed us. I put Alondwe on her bed

Alondwe: Why was daddy shouting at you?

Me: He was angry baby. Sleep now.

I held her closer to me and she fell asleep.....

I stood up and I went our room. It was dark downstairs. Samkelo was fast asleep. I looked at him checking if he took his bath. He was on his pyjamas. I wanted to go downstairs but I remembered that it was dark. I sat down on my bed. I looked at my husband. He was looking so peacefully. I brushed his hair.

Me: I love you. I wish this can be behind us. I know that I am always causing trouble in our marriage. I am sorry. I wish life can be different. But I know that we will be alright. I didn't know that you're still hurting because of SJ. But I didn't do anything Samkelo. I don't know why you think my mess killed him. I am am so sorry. Sleep tight my love.

I kissed his forehead. I rested my head on his chest. He held me tightly. And he kissed my forehead. I smiled. I closed my eyes and I drifted off to sleep.

The following morning I woke up. Samkelo was still sleeping. I took a shower and I brushed my teeth. I lotion and wore my pyjamas. I took my phone and I went to prepare breakfast because it was still early. I didn't wake him up. I called Senzo. He picked up.

Senzo: Mam

Me: Hey how are you?

Senzo: I am fine and you?

Me: I am fine. Look. I think I will go to the police after work. I want to open the case. Are you still going to help me?

Senzo: I don't think that would be necessary.

Me: Why?

Senzo: They are dead.

Me: WHAT? HOW? WHEN?

Senzo: We were coming from a club. They were speeding off. The car hit the wall and it exploded.

Me: And you are alive but you were with them?

Senzo: Uhm – Uhm – I wasn't driving the same car. I was with the other guys.

Me: You're trying to tell me that none of the rapist survived?

Senzo: Three of them were in that car. I have always told them to fix the car brakes. But they never listened.

Me: Three? I don't know what to say. I will tell my husband.

Senzo: Your husband knows, he was with – uhm. Shit! Sorry. You should tell him. Bye.

He hung up on me. Okay? That was off. I didn't understand. Samkelo knew? But how? I couldn't figure it out. I sighed and continued making breakfast. I fixed up everything and I went wake Alondwe up.

Me: Alondwe you have to prepare for school.

Alondwe: Ha.a I am not going to school.

Me: Hhayi! Wake up!

I removed the blankets from her. She cried and woke up.

Me: You're not a child anymore. Alondwe stop crying.

She dragged her feet to the bathroom. I went to wake her father up.

Me: Ndunakazi? Wake up you have to get ready for work.

Sam. Ha.a I am not going to work.

Me: Why?

Sam: I am not going to work. Take that.

Me: Bbe are you fine? Is everything alright?

Sam: I am fine. Now can I sleep?

I didn't say anything. I looked at him. He looked at me and looked away. I went Mesuli's room and I woke him up. He cried. I went to the bathroom with him and I bathed him. I made him wear his nappy and his clothes. I went downstairs with him. I fed him.

Kuhle: Baba mama?

Me: Ulele. [He's asleep]

I gave him his bottle after breakfast and I went upstairs with him. Alondwe went to have breakfast. I put Mesuli on the bed. He touched his father's face. I got dressed up for work. I brushed my weave.

Sam: Kuhle man ungithela ngobisi Tsk!!

He shouted at him. Mesuli cried. I went to him and I picked him up. I took my bags and I left. I didn't know what was going on with Samkelo. But something was not right with him. I waited for Alondwe to finish. After that I drove them to school. Mesuli was no longer crying.

Alondwe: Daddy is not going to work?

Me: Yes. He's not feeling okay.

Alondwe: Okay.

We arrived by her school.

Me: Have a nice day baby. After school go straight to daycare Okay?

Alondwe: Yes mom. Bye boy.

He kissed him and she left. Mesuli waved his hands at her. I smiled and drove off. I dropped my son off and I went to work.

Lunchtime I met up with Thobelani.

Me: Ntwana. What's happening with the wedding?

Thobe: I think we should wait a little.

Me: Why? Is everything okay between you and Madam?

Thobe: Yes but it's you I am worried about. At the children's party you weren't yourself.

Me: I am fine now.

Thobe: Are you sure?

Me: Yes so let's talk wedding bells.

Thobe: You know it's okay to mourn right?

Me: It's not like I lost something big. And I don't have memories of what happened. I am tired of crying. So the wedding?

Thobe: How's your husband?

Me: My husband is at home. Can we not talk about Thandeka or else I will leave.

Thobe: Okay! Okay. So we're getting married on the 16th of December. We will get married back home.

Me: That's nice. Did you tell everyone about me being your best man?

Thobe: Yes and they have no other choice but to accept that.

Me: Mmm Okay. So let's toast.

We ordered two glasses of wine. It arrived later and we toasted.

Thobe: To love and happiness.

Me: To love and happiness.

We laughed and drank our glasses of wine. Thobelani paid the bill. We then made our way to our cars. We hugged each other.

Me: Can you convince Samkelo to buy another bike for me please.

Thobe: [laughing] I will try.

Me: Thanks ntwana. Ngigcwele ngawe neh?

Thobe: Ngigcwele nami ntwana.

We stepped inside our cars and we drove our separate ways. I went to work. Part of me was relieved that I wasn't going to face the guys who raped me but death was an easy way for them but it happened that way and I wanted to move on with my life. I got a call from my mother in-law.

Me: Mama.

Mama: Hey baby are you doing well?

Me: Yes mama. How are you?

Mama: I am fine. I spoke to your husband. He told me about the guys. How do you feel?

Me: Yeah. I am just glad that I don't have to face them in court. And that I don't remember what happened. Going through the court case was going to be hard.

Mama: That's true. Take care of yourself and your family baby okay?

Me: okay mama you too take care. Bye.

Mama: Bye bye.

I hung up the call and I called Kimberly. She answered.

Kim: Hello.

Me: Hi how are you?

Kim: I am fine and you?

Me: I am fine. I believe the kids are back from school can I talk to them?

Kim: Their father left with them.

I heard Uyabongeka talking. Like they were walking in.

Me: Who's that?

Kim: They just came. Your mother is on the phone. Come. I will put them on speaker.

Me: Okay.

Them: Hello mommy?

Me: Hey babies how are you?

Them: We're fine and you?

Me: I am fine. Did you eat your cake with your baby sister Uyabongeka?

Sese: Yes mommy.

EJ: She didn't want to share with me.

Me: Uyabongeka!!?

Sese: No! Mom you told me to eat it with my baby sister not him.

Me: Isn't he your brother?

Sese: He is but he doesn't give me his things.

EJ: That's not true.

Me: Caring is sharing okay?

Themba: That's a new saying.

Me:[laughing] Come on Brah it's Alondwe's saying.

Themba: [laughing] It's just like her.

Me: Uyaphapha wena! My babies sharing is caring okay?

Them: Okay mommy.

Sese: Where's kuhle?

Me: He's at his daycare. I am going there now.

Sese: Send my love to them.

Me: I will my baby. Mommy loves you Okay?

Them: We love you too.

Me: Mncwa!!

Them: Mncwa!! [They giggled]

Me: Bye.

Them: Bye.

I hung up the call. I laughed and drove to Mesuli's daycare. I was told their father came to fetch them. I drove straight home. I went inside the house but they were not there. There was a note "we went to the beach. We will see you later. Love you" I smiled and I went upstairs just to rest....

I woke up when my son was screaming.

Alondwe: Buyisa ilollipop yami wena! [Bring back my lollipop]

Kuhle: [screaming & crying] Baba!!

Me: Alondwe what's wrong now?

Alondwe: He doesn't want to bring back my lollipop mama.

Me: He's a baby Alondwe give it back to him.

Alondwe: No.

Samkelo walked inside the room. He had his pyjamas on.

Kuhle: Baba.

Sam: Yini inkinga boy? [What's wrong]

Kuhle: Yoyondwe. [Alondwe]

Alondwe: I am not Yoyondwe wena. Daddy I want my lollipop. He finished up his lollipop now he wants mine. That's unfair.

Sam: He's a baby. Alondwe give him the lollipop.

Alondwe: No.

Me: No one will have it. Give it to me now!

Them: Ha.a [Mesuli shook his head]

I tried to take the lollipop and they both cried. I stopped.

Me: Alondwe you're old to cry.

Alondwe: I want my lollipop.

Me: Samkelo help?

Sam: Sihlephule. [Cut it in between]

Alondwe: Howu!

Samkelo took the lollipop, he went to the balcony and he threw it away. They stopped crying.

Sam: Silandeni phandle ke. Kumnyama phandle futhi. Hambani phela. [Go and fetch it. It's dark outside. Go and get it]

They both shook their heads. They wiped their tears. They rested their heads on the pillows. I covered them up with a blanket. I looked at Samkelo. We both shook our heads. I stood up and I went to hug him. He hugged me tightly.

Sam: It's been a long day. How are you?

Me: I am fine mabhebeza. Wena?

Sam: I am fine Nanesh wami. When last did you call me honey bear?

Me: [giggles] So now you like it when I call you like that?

Sam: I've always liked it.

Me: Okay my honey bear. Let's go and sit down.

He held my hand and we went to sit down by the balcony.

Me: Why didn't you tell me that those rapists died?

Sam: I was angry yesterday and I was too emotional.

Me: Why? What happened?

Sam: We – we los – I hate seeing you in pain and I will do anything to protect you. You've had enough pain Mama uNdunakazi. I want you to be happy now. You deserve that don't you?

Me: I do but I don't want my happiness to be based on secrets. I have seen what secrets does to people. If there's something bothering you please tell me.

Sam: You were bothering me. But now it all behind us mama. Come to me.

I sat on his lap. He brushed my head.

Sam: You're beautiful.

Me: I last heard that last month.

Sam: Thandeka!!

He tickled me. I laughed. "Samkelo stop baba ka Nana please" He didn't. I tickled him back.

He was laughing. He stopped and I stopped too. We laughed.

Kids: Sicela ukudlala nathi mama. [Can we play too]

We stopped laughing and looked at them. They were standing by the door smiling.

Me: It's mom and dad's time nje hawu nina.

Alondwe: We're your babies.

Sam: Okay. Let's play hide and seek.

Samkelo explained the game to Mesuli. He laughed and we stood up. Samkelo went downstairs first to turn on the lights. He called us and we ran downstairs.

Alondwe: Daddy you will start counting.

Sam: Okay.

He closed his eyes and faced the wall. We giggled and started hiding. Samkelo looked for us. He found me first at the back of the couch and he found Alondwe after me.

Sam: Where's Kuhle?

Us: We don't know search for him.

He looked for him almost the whole downstairs. He came back and sat down.

Sam: I give up.

Mesuli giggled at the back of the curtain. We laughed. He found him. He was laughing. We played until we were all tired.

Me: No let's go and sleep.

Sam: You're not hungry?

Me: No.

Sam: Let's go and sleep ke.

I picked Mesuli up and Samkelo picked Alondwe up. I went to our room first so that Samkelo can switch off the lights. I went to take a quick shower and I joined them to bed. Samkelo was telling them a story. We all listened to him until we fell asleep.

The following morning we woke up. I bathed with my baby girl on the tub and Samkelo with Mesuli on the shower. We finished up first and we went to Alondwe's room to get dressed.

We went downstairs and prepared breakfast. The boys joined us. We prayed and started eating.

Sam: Bbe how about we take Scelokuhle –

Kuhle: Baba?

Sam: Angikhulumi nawe [I am not talking to you]

He brushed his head.

Sam: Take him for circumcision

Me: No. He's a baby nje. Is there a law that support that?

Sam: I don't know really. But I was watching a movie a mother took his son for circumcision. While he was still a baby.

Me: It's American movie. But even if it's done bbe that must be his choice.

Sam: But it's good for him. While he's young.

Me: He'll feel pain. No. But let's research about it. If it is done in South Africa. We can ask for second opinion on Pros and Cons.

Sam: Okay mama.

Me: And once again. I want my vase.

Alondwe laughed.

Sam: Why are you laughing?

Alondwe: Mom wants his vase.

Sam: We were not talking to you.

She laughed and ran upstairs. I laughed too.

Me: My vase bbe please.

I kissed his cheek and I went upstairs for my bags. Samkelo walked in.

Me: You left Mesuli alone?

Sam: Yes.

Me: Okay. Angagangi ke.

I made the bed and I went downstairs. Mesuli was not around.

Me: Kuhle!!!

Kuhle: [outside] Mama!!

I went to him. He was picking up the pieces of the lollipop. I laughed.

Me: Ngizokuthengela esinye. Woza. [I will buy you another one. Come]

He shook his head.

Me: Uzokushaya ke uSamkelo. [Your father will beat you up]

He threw it away immediately. I laughed and picked him. He pouted, I kissed him. We walked inside the house. Alondwe gave me his backpack. I put Mesuli down and put it on his back. He clapped his hands. Samkelo came downstairs.

Me: You're taking them to school today?

Sam: Eish yeah.

Me: Okay. Come and kiss mama goodbye.

Alondwe came first. I kissed and her brother afterwards. And their daddy. They went to their daddy and they left. I went to my car and I drove to work. Along the way I saw a familiar car driving out of the hotel in Durban North. I looked at the car's registration and it was my dad's car. I took my phone and called Evelyn. She picked up.

Evelyn: Hello baby is everything alright?

Me: Yes and your side?

It didn't sound like she was in a car. But dad was with someone in the car. I was 100% sure that it was his car.

Evelyn: I am okay. How is your father baby? I am sorry I couldn't come with him to be with you. But I am glad that he's there for you.

Me: Uhm. Yeah. I wanted to say thank you for letting him come.

Evelyn: Anything for you my baby.

Me: Okay. Mom please have a good day.

Evelyn: You too honey.

I hung up the call. My dad's car was nowhere around. I didn't understand? Was he cheating? How can he lie about visiting me and he never came to see me. I shook my head and laughed sarcastically. I arrived at work and my day began. My dad was in my mind. I couldn't stop thinking about him. While I was working I got a call from Shemah. I answered.

Me: Hello.

Shemah: Hey sister how are you?

Me: I am fine dear and you?

Shemah: I am fine. I was just checking up on you just to find out how are you doing?

Me: I am doing just fine dear. Thank you. How is my nephew?

Shemah: He's fine. He couldn't stop talking about the party.

Me: That's nice. Please take care of them

Shemah: I will and you too take care of your family.

Me: Thanks sisi.

Shemah: Bye.

Me: Bye. Uhm does Andile know that dad is in Durban?

Shemah: Yes he knows.

Me: Uhm. Okay thanks.

Shemah: Okay.

We hung up the call. I continued working.

After work. I drove to the daycare. I picked my kids up and I drove home.

Alondwe: I finished with my homework early today. Daddy promised me another dog. But he didn't buy it.

Me: But baby what if another dog doesn't like Nursy. Would you want him to be hurt?

Alondwe: No! What? Maybe it's a bad idea. Nursy is alright.

I smiled. I didn't want another dog in my house. Hhaybo? No.

Me: What did you buy for your brother?

Alondwe: Nothing.

Kuhle: Mama. Lolophophu.

Me: Okay. Boy.

We passed by the mall. And we bought candies and goodies for them. We went home.

Samkelo was already home. We stepped out of the car and we went inside the house.

Me: Daddy!!

Sam: Family!

He came to us. He picked up Mesuli.

Me: Where's my vase?

Sam: No how was your day baby?

Alondwe: Mama's vase?

Sam: There it is. You told Thobelani to convince me to buy you a bike.

Me: Yes. January is near though.

I walked up to vase.

Sam: What's happening in January? Don't touch it!!

I picked it up and it broke down in my hands. I looked at him. Alondwe laughed. Samkelo stood up with Mesuli. He ran out of the house.

Alondwe: Let's run after him.

Me: Yeah.

I took off my stilettos and we ran after him.

We gave up on them and we went back inside the house. We sat down.

Alondwe: We lost mama.

Me: Yes baby. Your dad is strong.

Alondwe: But we can punish him mom. Let's stop talking to him. Until he buys the vase.

Sam: You won't do that. Don't poison my wife against me.

Alondwe: She's my mother.

Sam: Ngamlobola mina. She's my wife.

Alondwe: I was inside her tummy for nine months. I know her more than you.

Sam: I knew her before you.

Kuhle: Mamami lona.

Sam: Yeyinina uNkosikazi wami lona. Imina engamenza umama wenu. [This is my wife. I made her your mother]

Alondwe: You wanted to eat her.

Me: Okay! Enough! I belong to all of you. Now give mommy some kisses. Line up please!

They lined up. I smiled. I felt special and big. I felt like I owned them and that alone made

me happy. They were the best family I could ever ask for. I kissed my husband, my baby girl and my baby boy.

Me: How about you all help mommy cook today?

Alondwe: How about daddy take us out?

Sam: Anything to make my family happy.

We smiled. We went upstairs and bath. We changed our clothes and we drove to Mhlanga.

We went to a restaurant of Samkelo's choice. We sat down. We ordered.

Alondwe: This is beautiful daddy.

Sam: Yes It is.

They conversed together. I was just admiring the beauty of my family. Our order arrived. We started eating. I fed Kuhle. By the time we finished. Kuhle was asleep. Samkelo paid. We stood up. We went to the car. Samkelo drove us home. Alondwe made her way to her room.

Alondwe: Thank you daddy. Goodnight mom and dad.

Sam: My pleasure Nana. Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight.

Alondwe: Nursy! Come! Nursy!

Her dog barked and ran up the stairs. Samkelo and I looked at each other.

Sam: I can't believe she really sleep with a dog.

Me: The story of our lives.

Sam: Ukuzala kwethu impela.

We shook our heads and walked inside our room. I took off Mesuli's shoes and his jeans. I buckled him under our blankets. We took off our clothes and we wore our pyjamas. We joined Mesuli.

Me: We had a beautiful night. Thank you.

Sam: I am happy if you're happy.

Me: Bbe I was thinking about our last born. I want to conceive him or her before I turn 30yrs.

After that ngizoyivala inzalo.

Sam: Uhm. Oh. Eh. That's nice.

Me: Are you having a second thoughts?

Sam: What? No! No!

Me: I want to have a water birth.

Sam: What?

Me: Yes! I want to give birth inside the water. You'll hire a midwife for me.

Sam: Let's talk about it when you're pregnant.

Me: Okay goodnight. I love you.

Sam: Goodnight. I love you too.

He kissed my forehead and we drifted off to sleep.

The following morning. We woke up as usual. I asked Samkelo to drive the kids to school. I wanted to check something. I drove to the hotel where I saw my dad's car. I went to the reception desk. I pulled a straight face. I had my Dhlomo ID book just in case. I was going to show it up. I acted serious.

Me: Hey mam. I am supposed to meet my husband here. Please check which is he in. I have to see him before I go to work.

Girl: Uhm. I am new here but I think I can help. The receptionist is not here at the moment.

Me: Yoh! That was unnecessary. I want my husband's room number. His name is Mfaniseni Dhlomo. Please check. Hurry up girl please.

I clapped my hands showing her to hurry up. The poor girl panicked and checked.

Girl: But mam Mr Dhlomo is with his wife Maud Dhlomo. Are you sure you're his wife?

Me: What? That man! Tsk!

I walked out quickly. I was shocked to the core. I couldn't believe it. I went to my car. I

called Andile immediately. He picked up.

Andile: Sisi –

Me: Your father is with his old wife Maud. Can you believe it?

Andile: You're lying.

Me: Serious. He lied to Evelyn and he told him that he is coming to Durban to be with me. But he's busy with Maud.

Andile: When did she got out?

Me: I don't know! How can dad do this to Evelyn? And this mean he didn't divorce Maud maybe?

Andile: They did get divorced. But Wow! Just wow!

Me: Agh! I will call you later.

Andile: Sure.

I drove straight to work. Was it love? What was going on with dad? I arrived at work and called Samkelo. He picked up.

Sam: Mama.

Me: Bbe. You won't believe it. Dad is seeing Maud.

Samkelo laughed really hard.

Me: Samkelo!

Sam: Okay how do you know?

Me: I saw [I told him everything]

Sam: Wow! I can't believe this. Maybe he loves her. Or maybe Evelyn is too much for him.

Me: Excuse me?

Sam: Come on bbe. They are both Doctors, sometimes people of the same level of Education shouldn't be together.

Me: But Evelyn is nothing but a good wife. And Maud is a Doctor too. Or should I say was.

Sam: But she's been down.

Me: Mxm. Bye Baba ka Alondwe.

Sam: Bbe –

Me: Hhaysuka. Uvuna uDhlomo qha.

I hung up the call. Maybe it was love. But what was I supposed to do? Was I supposed to ignore it just like that? I sighed and I started working.

Along the day. I received a call from Kimberly. I answered. It was Themba.

Themba: Hey Thandeka?

Me: Hi. How are you?

Themba: I am fine how are you holding up?

Me: Uhm. Good. What's wrong.

Themba: The other day I wanted to call you but I figured I should give you guys time. And when you called the kids I didn't get the chance to talk to you.

Me: Talk to me about what? Is everything alright? Are my kids okay? Or it's you are you sick?

Themba: No. We're fine. Samkelo's sister told me what happened. I asked her why you didn't come yourself to bring the kids and she told me what happened.

Me: Oh. I am fine.

Themba: Are you sure? I know you love kids Thandeka and loosing one must've been very hard to you. I am really sorry.

Me: Okay? Wait? What are you talking about now? What kid? Themba what did you do to my children?

Themba: No. I am talking about the miscarriage. I am really sorry. I know that lately I have been nothing but a jerk but I am seriously sorry for your loss and I wish you can get well and please pray. Okay.

Me: [swallowing hard] Yes. Thanks Themba.

Themba: Okay. If you need anything please don't hesitate to call me anytime.

Me: I will keep that in mind. Have a nice day ahead.

Themba: Thanks you too.

I hung up the call. I couldn't believe it. I wanted to believe it but no I couldn't. I took my phone and called Samkelo. He picked up.

Sam: You miss me I see.

I hung up the call. I took my things. I drove to his workplace. He kept on calling but I didn't answer. I wanted to look him in the eye and ask him if it was true. I arrived and I passed by the reception. Becca let me through. I didn't even knock when I arrived in his office. I just walked inside. He was busy on the computer and his P.A was also working. He looked at me and smiled. He stood up.

Me: Is it true Samkelo?

P.A: I will give you two space.

Me: No. You can stay.

P.A: No.

She left immediately. I looked at Samkelo.

Sam: What are you talking about?

Me: You know exactly what I am talking about. Is it true or not? Please tell me it's lies. Please tell me bbe it's not true. Please Samkelo. Please. Tell me it's not true.

Sam: What?

Me: I am talking about the baby! Damnit! Did we loose a baby? Or not?

He looked down. I leaned by the door and I slowly went down until I was on the floor. I cried. Samkelo tried to come close to me.

Me: [crying] Don't! Don't come close to me. You lied to me. You made me believe that everything was alright by lying to me. You made me believe that we are happy again by lying to me. You watched me play a fool talking about the baby kanti you know that, that baby is dead and you didn't bother to tell me. You tell your sister? Was she the one who was carrying that child?

Sam: I was trying to protect you.

Me: Protect me by lying about the death of our baby? Don't you think I also deserve to mourn him or her?

Sam: It's him.

Me: You have the guts to tell me that now? I don't believe you! Who else knows?

Sam: Everyone knows.

I looked at him. I stood up and I wiped my tears. I held the handle.

Sam: Thandeka. Please. Don't drive while you're like this.

I opened the door and walked out of his office. He was after me. I ran fast as I could. I went to my car. I drove straight to North beach. I switched off my phone. I took off my stilettos. I walked to the quiet side of the beach. I sat down on the soil and I buried my head on my knees. I cried.

Me: My baby?? No! God!

I just broke down and let my tears free...

I was just crying but making no sounds. I was looking at the sea waves. The only thing that kept on ringing in my mind was the words that Samkelo had spoken to me. Maybe I was responsible for his death. If I never drank that whiskey maybe I was going to see my baby. Maybe I was going to hold him in my arms, sing lullaby for him. Watch him sleep and watch him grow up.

Me: I am sorry my baby. This is all my fault. I am so sorry.

Sam: It's not your fault.

I looked at him and I didn't say anything.

Sam: Can we go home Thandeka please.

Me: Why did you come here?

Sam: You're my wife and we will go through this together.

Me: You know the funny part about this? Is that I had to hear this from Themba. But my husband didn't care to tell me.

Sam: You were going through a lot of pain. I didn't want to lose you because of stress.

Me: We should've mourned together Samkelo but No! You did it alone.

Sam: We are of one flesh it doesn't matter whether if I did or you did. If I mourned I mourned for us because me and you were are the same. Just that I am the husband and you're the wife. Please forgive me MaDinangwe.

Me: I want to go home.

Sam: We will drive together. I came with your friend. He'll drive your car.

Me: He also knew but he didn't tell me.

Sam: I didn't tell him that you don't know.

I stood up. He held my hand. I looked at him.

Sam: Don't push me away.

Me: Let me deal with this alone because you wanted that vele.

Sam: You're unfair.

Me: Oh so I am unfair now? How come?

Sam: Thandeka please.

I let him be. We walked up to his car. Thobelani came to me and he hugged me. I sobbed inside his arms.

Thobe: I didn't know that you didn't know but Samkelo was only trying to do what is best for your health. You were under a lot of stress Thandeka.

Me: I want my baby. I want my baby Samkelo.

I held him by his blazer. He raised his hands up. I hit his chest and grabbed him roughly. The buttons of his shirt fell off.

Me: I want my baby.

He held me tightly. I cried inside his chest.

Sam: He was suffering baby. That's why he didn't make it. He's in a better place now. Let's go home mama please.

He wiped my tears. He opened the door for me. I stepped inside the car and he drove us home. On our way home Andile called on Samkelo's phone. I answered.

Me: Hello.

Andile: Are you alright?

Me: Why didn't you tell me that I lost a child?

Andile: Samkelo asked us to give you time to heal first from the pain of having to find out about the rapists.

Me: You're my brother you were supposed to tell me Andile.

Andile: Your husband was supposed to tell you not me.

Me: You all thought Samkelo was right. I lost my child and you –

Andile: Thandeka! You're not the first person to lose a child. Shemah and I had two miscarriages. Nothing you do can bring back the lost child and stop making this like we were not thinking about your well-being. You have kept secret from us and –

I hung up the call. I couldn't listen to all that. It's not like I knew that he lost two babies. I gave Samkelo his phone.

Sam: What's wrong?

Me: Nothing.

I leaned by the window. Samkelo's phone rang again. He answered it.

Sam: Your brother wants to talk to you.

Me: I don't want to talk to him.

He told him that. He looked at me.

Sam: What is wrong?

Me: He snapped at me. I don't want to talk to him. That's all.

We arrived at home. I stepped out of the car and I walked inside the house. My kids came up running. I picked up Mesuli. I kissed his face.

Me: Sanibona.

Them: Yebo.

Alondwe: Mommy. I need to plait my hair. This afro is troubling me now.

Me: We will tell daddy to take you to the salon.

Alondwe: Thank you.

Me: Who is here with you?

Alondwe: Mama uNancy.

Me: Okay. Mom will join you just now. I want to shower.

I put Mesuli down and I went upstairs. I took my phone and switched it on. I had a few voice messages. I called my dad back.

Dad: Thandeka I was worried about you.

Me: I am fine dad.

Dad: I am sorry baby but we were going to tell you.

Me: It's Okay. Evelyn told me that you're in Durban. In my house tata. I didn't see you though but I saw you at the hotel with your ex wife. How come?

Dad: You won't understand Thandeka.

Me: Okay. Can I rest now?

Dad: Don't be mad.

Me: I am not. You're my dad. It's your life. I am nothing but a child. But I think you have to tell Evelyn what's going on.

Dad: I will my child.

Me: I love you.

Dad: I love you too.

I hung the call. I went to shower. I finished everything. I wore my pyjamas and I went to sleep. I didn't feel like doing anything. Later Samkelo woke me up with food.

Me: I am not hungry.

Sam: But you have to eat.

Me: I know. I will tomorrow I promise.

Sam: Please forgive me.

Me: I forgive you.

I hugged him tightly. He kissed me.

Me: I love you endlessly.

Sam: I love you too now and forever...

We fell asleep afterwards.

Days went by I was taking it easy until I accepted that my baby was gone. I found myself and I focused on my family. I thanked Themba for telling me. And we decided to put the past between us behind and be good parents to our children. It was a Saturday we were in Johannesburg in my father's house. Dad had called us. We were all sitting around the table. The entire family was there.

Dad: I know you all are asking yourselves to why I called you here.

Us: Yes.

Dad: Evelyn and I have spoken about this. I am taking my Maud as my second wife.

Me: What? Mom you agreed to this?

Evelyn: I love your father dear and if he thinks taking a second wife is the best thing for him I don't want him to cheat so he'll take the second wife.

Me: Wow.

Uncle: Thandeka calm down.

Me: She'll make him bankrupt again. We won't be around to save your ass.

Andile: Thandeka!!

Me: What? It's the truth.

Sam: They love each other Thandeka.

Me: Mxm. That wife will never be my mother. Evelyn is my mother. Not Maud.

Gogo: You must support your father and don't forget that you're a child here.

Me: It's Okay. Get married to Maud.

Dad: Thanks.

I stood up and I walked out of the house. I sat by the stairs. My kids were playing outside the house with Luzuko and Christian. Andile sat next to me.

Andile: The last time I spoke to you the conversation didn't end well.

I didn't say anything. I looked at the kids playing.

Andile: I am sorry I didn't mean to say it like that. I am sorry.

Me: It's cool. I am sorry for your loss.

Andile: Are we going to do the Thanksgiving ceremony for dad? Or what?

Me: Let's buy a car for him. I am no longer in the mood for the ceremony.

Andile: But it was going to be a good thing.

Me: I am no longer up for it.

Andile: Okay. Let me go back inside.

I nodded. He left. I sat there and reflected on my life. A lot of things turned out the way I never thought they would but at the end of the day I was grateful for everything God had given me. I had a lot of things to be grateful for.

In life I have learned from my mistakes. Growing up I heard it all easy, though my mom was not there but my father was the best father I could ever ask for. That's why I didn't let anger stop me from doing the Thanksgiving ceremony for my dad. It is important that we appreciate our parents while they are still alive. My life is not rich as all the richness I have. I was selfish and secretive but with Samkelo everything was different. He is nothing but my soulmate.

Four years later. My father married Maud. I accepted that but I had no relationship with Maud. Evelyn was the only mother I had. That year Samkelo and I had turned 31 years.

Alondwe was 13yrs old doing grade 8. Uyathandwa was 12yrs doing grade 7. Sesethu was 8yrs doing grade 3. Mesuli was 5yrs old doing grade R/0. I don't know the difference between the two. Uyathandwa and his sister were still living with Themba, his wife and their baby sister. They visited me during school holidays. Andile had a two year old daughter.

Nonduduzo. Phil gave up on testing our relationship. Life had its challenges but mostly I was happy with my family. It was the 15th of December. I was with my midwife, my gynaecologist and Samkelo in our bathroom. I was giving birth to our last born inside the water in my bathtub. Samkelo was holding my hand.

Me: This is hard Samkelo.

Sam: Push harder baby you'll be alright. Think about Junior please.

Midwife: You're almost there.

I held Samkelo's hand tightly.

Sam: You don't have to break my hand baby.

He tried to stand up.

Me: Samkelo! Take off your belt damnit! Do you want us to die?

Sam: Huh? I didn't know!

He quickly took off his belt. He held my hand once more. A few pushes my baby was out. He cried. They brought him up to me. I asked to cut the cord myself.

Sam: He's beautiful. Thank you.

Me: This is our endless love. I love you.

Sam: I can't believe we've been married for seven years. I met you in high school.

Me: You wanted to eat me beast Matthew.

Sam: It was a mission baby. You were my mission.

Me: It's the mission that brought us together.

Sam: Your love changed it all. You're my forever now.

Me: My endless love. I love you Ndunakazi.

Sam: I love you too Mrs Ndunakazi.

We kissed each other.

Sam: This is ALUPHELI NDUNAKAZI.

ME: Yini engapheli?

Sam: ALUPHELI uTHANDO LWETHU NDUNAKAZI....

I smiled and kissed him.....

Nothing can stand in the way of love. You can be apart but your soulmate is your soulmate.

He/she will their way in your life..

This is where Thandeka wanted me to take you with her love story with Samkelo. She hopes that you learnt something from all the bad choices she made in life. Never to be selfish, secretive and the rest you can say it for yourselves...

Nobuhle

It's been two years since I have started working in a club. A 22 year old bartender, yeah that's me. After matric I didn't have enough money to register for my studies. My mom is a nurse at Addington hospital and my father is a security at university of Kwa Zulu Natal (UKZN), Edgewood campus. My dream is to become a teacher. I passed my matric well but not well enough to get a bursary. The reason why my parents can't afford my registration is that my older sister PHILISIWE is doing her final year in Dental Technology in Durban University of Technology (DUT). They are working their ass off to pay for her studies. She didn't qualify for National Student Financial Aid Scheme. (NSFAS). My younger brother SAKHILE is doing his grade 10. We live eMlazi in a six room house excluding bathroom. 4 bedrooms, mom and dad's room, my brother's room, my sister's room, my room. Kitchen, living room and bathroom. We are a normal family like every other families out there. It was a Friday. I was on my uniform. I took my handbag and said my goodbyes to my family. I took a taxi to West street from West Street to South Beach. I knocked in and I started working. I was used to my job. Specially the noise and customers some were rude but some were nice.

Me: What can I get for you guys?

Guy1: I am not going to order just yet. We are waiting for my wife and her friends.

Me: How nice. Coming to a club with your wife

Guy1: We're not that old. We owe it to ourselves and she's a fun person

Girl:(joining in) Who's that "she" you're talking about?

Guy1: My beautiful wife of course.

Girl: It's rude to gossip Mr Ndunakazi.

They kissed each other. Believe me they looked cute together. They didn't look that old.

Maybe they were on their early 30s. I was smiling just looking at them. Love is a beautiful thing right? Yeah hey. In that moment I wished I had a boyfriend maybe. There was another couple that Mrs Ndunakazi came in with. And a guy who was with Mr Ndunakazi. I cleared my throat because they didn't want to stop kissing. They stopped and the others laughed.

Mrs Ndunakazi: Sorry. I am Thandeka Ndunakazi. This is my husband Samkelo Ndunakazi. The others can introduce themselves.

Guy2: I am Phumlani, Samkelo is my friend.

Guy3: I don't know why we have to introduce ourselves but you seem like a nice person so I am Thobelani Maphanga and this is my wife Nelisiwe Maphanga.

Me: I am Nobuhle Mthembu. It's nice to meet you all. I think you're such a bunch of cool friends.

They laughed.

Thandeka: I think I like you already.

I smiled.

Me: Can I take your order?

Samkelo: Yeah sure

They ordered and they went to sit on the VIP section. Okay Mr Ndunakazi was handsome. He looked so yummy and wow! But he's married I wasn't supposed to look at him like that but I did hey. Okay enough!

I continued working but I didn't keep my eyes off those bunch of cool people.

Voice: Do I need to smile to get your service miss?

Me: Arg! I am sorry Sir. How can I help you?

He didn't say anything but he looked at me for a long time. It was quite awkward but I kept my cool.

Guy: I am Gary Pillay.

Okay? I suppose it was tell me your name day. Not that I complain but \_\_\_\_\_

Me: Nice to meet you Gary what can I get for you?

Gary: Friendship maybe?

Me: Friendship talks will happen after hours but now please order.

He smiled and placed his order. He was a cute Indian guy. He looked like he was in his late 20s. He didn't leave the bar so I had an ongoing conversation with him while serving other customers. He was a nice guy. He was 27years old and he lived at chatsworth in Durban of course.

Gary: I think I have to go now before my mom complains. Do you mind giving me your number?

Me: I can't. I don't give numbers to customers.

Gary: Please.

Me: I can. After hours maybe.

Gary: What about mom?

Me: I am sorry next time.

Gary: No. I will wait.

I laughed and attended other customers. He indeed waited for me. Thandeka came to me.

Thandeka: This is my card. I would like to know you better. I think it's time I have a female friend.

Me: Okay.

I giggled and took the card making sure that nobody sees me.

Thandeka: You'll call me right?

Me: Yes mam.

Thandeka: Thanks bye.

Me: Bye.

The rest of them waved goodbye. They were tipsy. I smiled and continued with my conversation with Gary.

Thandeka...

Samkelo was driving slowly. He was almost drunk. We had a wonderful time. Nobuhle looked like a good girl and I was looking forward to being friends with her.

Me: Ndunakazi you're too slow bbe ngeke.

Sam: You want us to make it home safe right?

Me: Yes but –

My phone rang. I took it out of my handbag. Uyathandwa was calling me. That year he was 15yrs old doing grade 10. Uyabongeka was 11yrs doing Grade 6. I answered.

Me: My baby.

EJ: Hi Mom how are you?

Me: I am fine baby and you?

EJ: I am fine too mom. When are we coming home to visit you mom. The school closed today for Easter holidays.

Me: I forgot. I will call your father. Maybe by Monday you will take a plane.

EJ: Okay. Where's Alondwe? Her phone is off.

Me: They are at home baby. I don't know what happened to it. Your sister is sleeping?

EJ: Yes. My airtime mom.

Me: Okay. Goodnight. I will call your father in the morning. I love you.

EJ: I love you too.

I hung up the call.

Sam: They want to visit?

Me: Yes.

Sam: Kuhle wants to visit my mom.

Me: He'll go. That's if he'll want to go alone.

Sam: I doubt.

We continued talking until we made it home. The house was dark. Samkelo went through first and he light up the house. I took my bag and I stepped out of the car. I closed the door and went inside. Alondwe was on the couch watching a movie. She was 16yrs doing grade 11. She was full of herself. She was more like me not that I complain but I didn't like it. She didn't want us to call her Laa Laa anymore. Mesuli was 8yrs doing grade 3. Alupheli was 3yrs going to daycare. Nancy was working for us. She slept over only if we asked her.

Me: Why ain't you sleeping?

Alondwe: I am watching TV. Don't tell me to go and sleep mom. The school closed today.

Sam: That doesn't explain anything. It's almost midnight now. Go to bed.

Alondwe: But dad –

Sam: Go to bed Alondwe now!!

She stood up and switched off the TV. She sulked and went upstairs.

Sam: There's nothing good to watch at this hour. And she's here alone.

Me: Don't think overboard.

I held his hand and went upstairs. We walked inside our room. Mesuli and Alupheli were sleeping on our bed.

Sam: And who said we want to must sleep with them?

Me: They always invite themselves and you know that.

Sam: We must lock our room always.

I laughed and we went to shower and joined the kids in bed. We kissed each other goodnight and drifted off to sleep.

Nobuhle...

After work I always sleep over at my friend's place. She had a flat around South Beach. I always went back home in the morning because it was far, sometimes I would spend a few days with her. My parents didn't mind because they knew her. Her name was Patricia. She

was beautiful but fat. She was dating a cute coloured skinny guy. They were so in love and I envied their relationship. They were both studying at UKZN westville campus. I had no relationship history because during my high school days I was too focused because I knew that I am not clever so I had to focus on books only so that I can pass. I was ready for a relationship now but I haven't find a good guy. My friend was a rich girl the flat belonged to her. We were good friends.

Gary waited for me until I gave him my number. He was drunk.

Me: I think you must book a room. There's a lodge near by.

Gary: I will drive.

Me: That's a bad idea. Chatsworth is far. Please.

Gary: My mom?

Me: You'll explain in the morning.

He nodded and we walked out of the club. I walked with him to the lodge. He checked in.

Me: I have to go.

Gary: Thanks. Can I take you out for breakfast this morning?

Me: I will be dead sleeping.

Gary: Lunch?

Me: Maybe.

Gary: I will call you.

Me: Okay. Sleep well.

Gary: Are you sure you are going to be safe?

Me: Yes. It's not far.

He nodded. I left. When I arrived at my friend's place she was already asleep so I made my way to the spare room. I took off my clothes, I went to bed. I couldn't stop thinking about Samkelo Ndunakazi. The guy was in my head and his sweet voice echoed in my mind until drifted off to sleep. In the morning I was woken up by Patricia.

Me: Can't you let me sleep?

Tricia: A guy named Gary called. He said he'll come in an hour. He's taking you out. I gave him my address.

Me: I said lunch time.

Tricia: Hello? It's lunchtime already!

I reluctantly stood up and I made my way to the bathroom. I had a few clothes in her apartment. I wasn't working that night so I was free. Sometimes I did work during the day. I finished bathing. I wore a simple black jeans and green tank top. I put on my black sandals and I fixed my weave. I fixed the bed. I went to the kitchen and ate cereals.

Tricia: You'll come back?

Me: No I will go straight home dear.

Tricia: Okay. I am going out with Daniel.

Me: Romantic Lover boy.

Tricia: That's my man!

I laughed. She made her way to her bedroom. My phone beeped. It was Gary. I grabbed my things and made my way to the door. I wanted to call Thandeka but I didn't get a chance. I made a mental note to call him later.

Me: Baby I will see you.

Tricia: Bye!

I walked out and I made my out of the building. Gary was with a guy. He was also Indian. He was so damn cute. And fit compared to Gary. I smiled as my eyes met Gary's eyes. He met me halfway and gave me a hug.

Gary: You look more beautiful in the sunlight.

Me: Oh. So last night I was less beautiful.

Gary: Come on!

I laughed. We made our way to his car.

Gary: This is my baby brother Rajiv Pillay.

Rajiv: You must be Precious? Excuse me I can't spell your Zulu name.

Me: I understand. Gary can't spell it too. Yours sounds complicated too.

We laughed. He opened his arms and we hugged each other.

Gary: Let's go people.

We stepped inside the car and we drove straight to Suncoast. We were talking along the way just getting to know each other. We arrived at Suncoast and we went to a restaurant of my choice. Before the order arrived. Gary excused himself.

Rajiv: You are beautiful.

Me: Thank you. You're not bad yourself.

Rajiv: I think that's a compliment.

I smiled and looked down. The guy was cute!!

Rajiv: So you like my brother?

Me: I met him yesterday. I take him as a friend nothing more and that's what he wanted Friendship.

Rajiv: Mmm. That's nice. So if I want to be more than just a friend with you. You won't object?

Me: I –

The waiter placed our order on the table. Rajiv was looking at me. I was smiling. Gary came back and sat down.

Gary: What did I miss?

Rajiv: Nothing. Let's eat.

Gary: Okay.

Gary looked at me. I smiled and looked down. We started eating and talking. I was having a good time with the two Pillay brothers...

Thandeka...

I remembered I had to call Themba. Samkelo and the boys were out. I don't know where they went. Alondwe was watching TV. I was in my room reading a novel. I took my phone and called Themba. He picked up. I was calling his number directly. The feud between us was over. We were civil about everything though sometimes we had those little arguments.

Themba: Hello.

Me: Hey how are you?

Themba: I am fine and you?

Me: I am fine. Uyathandwa called yesterday. They want to come and visit.

Themba: Who will come and fetch them?

Me: Samkelo will come tomorrow morning.

Themba: Okay.

Me: Thanks bye.

Themba: Sure.

I hung up the call. He sounded down, not as forward as he used to be. I didn't want to ask because he said he's fine. Alondwe walked inside my room wearing a black short and a blue crop top with white Nike sneakers.

Alondwe: Mom can I go out with Zenande (Thobelani's daughter)

Me: Where are you going?

Alondwe: Gateway.

Me: But his dad didn't tell me about it.

Alondwe: You can call Zenande to confirm mama. We will meet at the mall.

Me: Let me call her mom instead.

Alondwe: Ah! Mxm.

She walked out of the room. Zenande was 17yrs doing grade 12. I called Neliswa. She answered.

Nelly: Thandeka?

Me: How are you?

Nelly: I am fine and you?

Me: I am fine. Is Zenande going out with Alondwe?

Nelly: Uhm. No. She left with her daddy and her brother. They went to Pavilion mall.

Me: So that means Alondwe is lying.

Nelly: Kids.

We laughed and hung up the call. I stood up and I went to her room. She was not there. I called her name but she was not around. I called her phone. She didn't pick up. I called her father he didn't pick up too. Alondwe was full of it. She was supposed to tell me the truth but she decided to lie. I wasn't going to let her do as she please. She was going to face me when she comes back home.

---

#### Alondwe's POV

Having Thandeka as a mother is hard. Don't get me wrong, she's a good mother but she is always on my case. But she's better because my dad is worst. He doesn't want me to watch TV because he always say "it will corrupt your mind". They are tough parents. Now if they can find out that I have a boyfriend they can ground me for the whole year. They don't want to accept that I am growing up. I know that I am only 16yrs old but I love Sphephelo. Zenande thinks he's older than me. But the guy is only 18yrs doing his grade 12. I see nothing wrong with our relationship. When mom was busy calling Zenande's mom. I used that chance to go out. Sphe was taking me out so I couldn't disappoint him like I did the previous weekend because mom and dad refused to let me go out alone. Sphe and I have been dating for four months and he was a lovely boyfriend. Though I wasn't sure about my dad's whereabouts. I took chances and took a taxi to suncoast. I told mom that I am going to gateway just in case she follows me she won't find me there. I had to spend time with my baby. I was going to face mom and dad later. My mom kept on calling. I ignored her calls and focused on the road. I couldn't switch off my phone because I was going to contact Sphe about my whereabouts.

---

#### Nobuhle....

Spending time with Gary and Rajiv was something I wish I could do again and again. I think my heart was interested in Rajiv. He was young and more relaxed but Gary was too serious. He wasn't that old but for my first boyfriend I couldn't date him. Arg! Look at my stupid mind. None of these guys proposed a relationship with me but I was busy choosing. I guess I was that how desperate I was to get a boyfriend. They drove me to the rank where I was going to take a taxi home.

Rajiv: I have to say I had a wonderful time. Thanks to my brother for dragging me out of the house. (They laughed)

Gary: She's quite a nice person hey.

Rajiv: Yes. I hope there will be a next time.

Gary: Yeah

Me: I hope so too but for now let me leave you guys. I will see you.

We shared hugs and I went to the taxi. As soon as it was full it drove straight to eMlazi. I got off when it was my chance and I made my way home. Mom was on the lounge watching TV with Sakhile.

Me: Sanibona.

Them: Yebo.

Sakhile: Sisi can you please buy airtime for me please. Please.

I looked at mom. She laughed. Sakhile followed me to my room.

Me: I don't have money.

Sakhile: Come on Buhle please.

I took out the money and gave it to him. He took it and thank me. He left. I sat on my bed and I called Thandeka. It rang and she picked up after a few rings.

Thandeka: Hello?

Me: Hey Thandeka. It's Nobuhle from the club.

Thandeka: Oh. Hey girl how are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Thandeka: I am fine. I am going crazy here.

Me: What happened?

Thandeka: My 16 year old daughter left the house without my permission. I don't know where she is. I am trying to call her and she's not answering her phone.

Me: Calm down. I am sure that she's safe wherever she is.

Thandeka: This child is rude. Her father must do something because I will send her to boarding school with girls only.

Me: Don't do that to her.

Thandeka: The world is cruel out there Buhle. I don't want her to do the same mistakes I did. You know they say ukhamba lufuze imbiza.

Me: Yes that's true but she's fine.

Thandeka: Eish I am sorry to bother you like this. I just don't know what to do. I think I must follow her because she said something about gateway mall.

Me: There's no problem at all. She'll come back home don't follow her please.

Thandeka: Okay. Are you working Monday lunchtime?

Me: No I am working at night.

Thandeka: Can we go out for lunch. I will call you. It will be Just the two of us.

Me: I would love to. Can I invite you on Facebook?

Thandeka: Yeah sure. It's Thandeka Ndunakazi.

Me: Thank you. Have a wonderful evening.

Thandeka: Thanks you too. And thanks for calling me back.

Me: My pleasure.

I hung up the call. I smiled and I logged on Facebook. I searched her, I saw her and invited her. I looked at her pictures. She had beautiful children, some looked like they were coloureds. I went through her husband's wall. Looking at him made my blood warm. I saved a few pictures of him. I took my laptop and I transferred the pictures there. My phone rang while I was busy doing that. It was an unsaved number. I answered.

Me: Hello.

Rajiv: Hey it's Rajiv.

Me: Oh hey Raj.

Rajiv: I like the way you call my name. It makes blush.

Me: I am happy to make you blush.

Rajiv: I like you Precious. I would like to spend more time with you.

Me: Where did you get my number?

Rajiv: I stole it from my brother's phone.

Me: You're naughty.

Rajiv: (chuckle) What are you doing on Monday morning?

Me: Nothing.

Rajiv: Can I spend some time with you please.  
Me: Okay no problem.  
Rajiv: I will call you tomorrow night about the details.  
Me: Okay.  
Rajiv: Thank you. You're really beautiful.  
Me: Thank you.  
Rajiv: Okay have a wonderful evening.  
Me: Thanks you too.  
I hung up the call. Okay? Maybe I should stop thinking about Samkelo. I looked at his picture. No! But he's a must have kind of man. I closed my laptop and I made a little scream. My stomach had butterflies. Rajiv was also the ish!....

---

Alondwe....

Spending time with Sphe was so nice. But his friends joined us later and we ended up going to the beach. I wasn't worried about time because I overheard mom and dad talking about dad leaving for Cape Town today. I had nothing to worry about because I only had mom to face. I can blackmail her until she understands that I had to go out like any other kid out there but dad I couldn't do that to him. He was going to beat me up without giving it another thought.

Me: Bbe I have to go now.

Sphe: But love you said your dad is leaving. Why are you worried?

Me: I don't want mom to freak out Okay? She'll be worried about me.

Sphe: You can call her. Please Owami.

Me: No Sphephelo I have to go. I have called the cab. It's 7pm now.

He made a puppy and leaned over for a kiss. We kissed each other deeply. We stopped when his friends cheered up and blew whistles. He looked at me. I blushed.

Sphe: I love you Owami Ndunakazi.

Me: I love you too Sphephelo Khumalo.

He kissed my forehead. He held my hand and walked with me to the cab. We shared a brief hug and I left. I started gathering up lies to tell my mom..

Thandeka Ndunakazi...

Samkelo and the boys came back while I was cooking. Alondwe was not back yet. Alupheli was fast asleep. Mesuli came to me with a plastic bag. He handed it over to me.

Kuhle: Dad said this is for you and Alondwe.

Me: Okay. Thanks baby. You had a good time?

Kuhle: Yes mom. It was so fun.

Me: That's good. Now go and bath.

Kuhle: Where's big cc. I didn't see her in front of the TV.

Sam: Yeah where is she?

Me: Kuhle go upstairs and shower.

He nodded and left.

Sam: And then? Where's my daughter?

Me: I don't know where she is?

Sam: What do you mean you don't know. I left you here with her?

Me: She said she's going out with Zenande. I called Neliswa to confirm. Alondwe left while I was still on the phone.

Sam: Did she go with Zenande?

Me: No. She left alone.

Sam: Ungijwayela kabi u-Alondwe. I am not leaving until she's here.

Me: You have a flight to catch.

Sam: I will leave in the morning. I will book another ticket.

Me: Don't be hard on her Samkelo.

He gave me a dead stare and walked up to our room. I tried Alondwe's phone still she wasn't picking up her phone.

Alondwe: (by the kitchen door) Is dad home mama?

Me: You have guts. Asking me that. Where have you been? I told you not to go but you left without my permission.

Alondwe: I knew you were going to refuse mom. I wanted to go out.

Me: Go out with who?

She walked inside the kitchen and sat on the high chair by the counter. She faced my direction. She put her phone and keys on the table counter.

Alondwe: I was out with my friends.

Me: Which friends because Zenande is your only friend.

Alondwe: Zenande will be leaving high school. I will be alone mom. I have to make new friends. You and dad should understand that.

She was right. Zenande was going to leave high school for varsity and she was going to be alone. At least she needed to make new friends.

Sam: I won't understand that. Why didn't that friend of yours come here?

She jumped off the chair. She was surprised to see her father.

Alondwe: Dad?

Sam: Answer my question!

Alondwe: We wanted to go to the beach daddy.

Sam: For the whole day til late? What were you doing?

Her phone rang. She looked at it and then back to her father. Samkelo took the phone.

Sam: Who's Sphe?

Alondwe: That's my friend.

He answered the phone.

Sam:" Who are you\_\_ Boy what do you want with my daughter?\_\_ stay away from her. Do you understand!?! \_\_ listen if you know what is good for you, you'll stay away from my baby girl. Tsk!"

He hung up the call. Alondwe was crying.

Sam: Why are you crying? Come here.

Alondwe: Dad?

Sam: I said come to me Samkeliswa!!

Me: Samkelo calm down.

Sam: Thandeka don't.

He grabbed her by her arm and walked out of the house with her. I knew he was going to beat her up. I don't condone what Alondwe did. She was still young to be dating but Samkelo was being hard on her. I sighed and continued cooking. I finished up. Alondwe came inside the house running. She was crying and she had strips on her body showing that she was beaten up. She took her things and ran upstairs. Samkelo walked in after her.

Me: What did you do to her?

Sam: I beat the disrespect out of her. Who said she must be friends with boys?

Me: It's part of growing up Samkelo.

Sam: She won't have a boyfriend not while she stays in my house. Boys are going to hurt her. What if she meets the wrong guys.

Me: Boys with missions?

Sam: I don't want that for my baby. She is my only girl.

Me: You should have thought about that, way back when you were still a boy.

Sam: I fixed my mistakes. All I want is for her to see that I am trying to protect her.

Me: Just go and shower. I will talk to her before she sleeps.  
He walked upstairs. Mesuli came back on his pyjamas. I set the table and later his dad and Alupheli came downstairs on their pyjamas. Alupheli came to me. I picked him up.  
Alupheli: Mama lambile manje. (Mom I am hungry now)  
Me: Okay. Come and eat.  
Sam: Go and call your sister Kuhle.  
He ran upstairs. We went to the table. They both came back. Alondwe was on her pyjamas. Samkelo prayed. We ate. Samkelo and the boys were talking. Alondwe was awfully quiet. She ate a few spoons and put her food on the microwave. She made her way upstairs.  
Sam: Who'll wash the dishes for you as you're going to your room now?  
Alondwe: I will come back when you're done with eating.  
Sam: Come and sit down here. Take that food and eat it.  
Alondwe: But dad I am done eating. I am full now.  
Sam: I won't repeat myself.  
She was angry, I could see the expression of her face. She took the food, sat down and ate it. The boys continued eating and talking. I didn't want to get involved. We finished eating. Alondwe washed the dishes and cleaned up while we were watching TV.  
I followed Alondwe to her room. She was talking to someone on her phone. She said her goodbyes immediately when she saw me. I sat on the bed with her.  
Me: Are you alright?  
Alondwe: Dad was beating me up and you didn't protect me mama. Look at my body?  
She stood up and took off her pyjamas.  
Me: I am sorry baby. But what you did was unacceptable. Your father was angry and so was I.  
Alondwe: You guys don't want me to go out. You want me to stay here and do what? Because if I watch shows or movies of my choice dad says they are older than me. Can I go and stay with gogo?  
Me: Your dad won't allow that.  
Alondwe: Uncle Andile ke mama. Maybe he'll be better or one of grandpa's wives.  
Me: No baby. You will stay here and start behaving like a child or your father will beat you up everyday.  
Alondwe: I was with my friends mom.  
Me: Stay away from boys they'll break your heart. You're still young. If you don't listen I will send you to boarding school with girls only. I mean it Alondwe.  
Alondwe: You're unfair mom.  
Me: Just focus on your books. I love you.  
Alondwe: I love you too.  
Me: Now sleep baby. You'll be fine.  
She nodded and wore her pyjamas. I fixed the bed for her. She climbed the bed. I covered her. I brushed her hair and kissed her forehead. I turned off the lights and left her room. I went to shower. I joined Samkelo and Alupheli in bed. Mesuli was sleeping alone...

---

Themba Smith...

This is the time where I wish my kids never grew up. Looking at Uyathandwa I just wish his mother was with us. Maybe she was going to manage his behaviour. My son was hanging out with a bad crowd of boys. I have tried a lot to talk to him but he always say it's his friends. I honestly think Cape Town is not good for him. I asked for a transfer from his school. I wanted him to go and stay with his mom until he finishes high school. I was failing him and I didn't want my only son to be around boys who do drugs and gangsterism. He is only 15yrs old. But he is hanging out with older guys. And with my dad being sick everything is hard.

Kimberly is trying to help mom and sometimes she leaves me with the kids and spend a few days with mom and dad. It was a Sunday I was waiting for Samkelo to come and fetch them. Kimberly and Sisipho were at my dad's house.

Uyabongeka: Dad what is taking him so long. I want to see my mom now.

Me: I don't know baby. But I think he left this morning not last night.

Uyathandwa: Take a chill pill hawu. What's the rush?

Uyabongeka: Mxm. Leave me alone.

Me: Missy can I talk to your brother in private.

Uyabongeka: Meaning I should leave the room?

Me: Yes my angel.

She nodded, stood up and left. I sat next to Uyathandwa. He looked at me.

Me: Look I think you should stay with your mom until you finish school.

Uyathandwa: What? Why?

Me: This place is not good for you. Your friends are corrupt Ethan Junior and you don't listen to me. Maybe you'll listen to your mother.

Uyathandwa: I will be a good guy dad please. Mom is too much. She'll ground me and do all sort of things. She'll treat me like a child.

Me: You're a child Junior. You should behave like one. You're going to stay with Thandeka that's final.

Uyathandwa: You're giving me away now!!!

Me: Don't use that tone on me. I'll smack you right now young man. How am I giving you away if I want you to stay with your mom? Huh? She's your mother not your stepmother. If I go hard on you. I will loose you. So it's better if you stay with your mom. You'll come back after matric with good results Ethan Junior otherwise you'll see the real me. And I don't want to hear that you are giving your mother headache do you understand??

Uyathandwa: Yes dad.

Me: Good. I'll talk to her husband.

He stood up and went upstairs. I was only doing what was best for him. I don't want my past mistakes to haunt him. Though I had no parents but I was too young to sell drugs for a living. Life was tough out there and we had to do what we had to do just to survive. After a few minutes Samkelo was on the gate. I opened up for him. We greeted each other and I told him the whole story about Uyathandwa. He understood and agreed that Uyathandwa was going to live with them. He was going to talk to Thandeka himself. I was grateful for that. They said their goodbyes and they left. I then made my way to my father's house....

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

Sunday morning we went to church. Samkelo had left to fetch the kids. Alondwe's mood was still off. It was better when she was still young now that she was a teen things were not really easy. But on the other hand I was relieved that I only had her to handle. Imagine if Uyathandwa was living with me. They were going to drive me crazy. After church we drove back home after buying lunch at Nandos.

Alupheli: Mama yena ubaba unihedeni akayanga esontweni. (Mom why didn't dad go to church?) I laughed.

Kuhle: Hawu ngizomtshela ubaba wena. (I will tell Dad)

Alupheli: Usho!!

Me: Akekho ubaba wakho Thando. Ingakho engayanga esontweni. (Your dad is not around that's why he didn't go to church)

He smiled and nodded. I shook my head. We arrived at home. Samkelo was already home.

We stepped out of the car. Uyathandwa was outside he was busy on his phone.

Me: You can't even see us.

Uyathandwa: Oh hey mumzo. I was busy. I am sorry hey.  
I shook my head and he came to me.  
Uyathandwa: Please don't kiss me nor brush my head.  
Me: Really?  
Uyathandwa: I am serious mom!  
Me: Give your mom a hug.  
We hugged each other tightly.  
Me: I have missed you baby.  
Uyathandwa: I have missed you too mom.  
We let go. He quickly backed away. I laughed. He hugged his siblings.  
Uyathandwa: My sister.  
Alondwe: Hey are you alright?  
Uyathandwa: Yes. What's wrong with you?  
Alondwe: Nothing. Come let's go.  
We all went inside the house. Uyabongeka was watching cartoons.  
Me: Look who's here?  
Uyabongeka: Mamami!!  
She laughed and stood up. I hugged and kissed her.  
Me: Look at you. You're beautiful my baby.  
Uyabongeka: Thank you mama.  
She giggled and hugged her siblings. They followed me to the kitchen. I prepared lunch while we were having a conversation with Uyabongeka and Mesuli. Alupheli was eating.  
Me: How's your dad and mom?  
Uyabongeka: They are fine but grandpa is sick.  
Me: Really? Your father didn't tell me. He'll be fine though. You must pray for him okay?  
Uyabongeka: Yes mom.  
Samkelo came downstairs. We hugged and kissed each other. He told the kids to excuse us. Alupheli didn't leave.  
Sam: Themba said Uyathandwa will live us.  
Me: What? Why?  
Sam: He said he has a bad crowd of friends in Cape Town. He doesn't want them to corrupt his mind. Specially that he doesn't want to listen to him when he says he must leave them.  
Me: This is not getting any better. I was thinking this morning that it's better because he's with his dad now he's back. Alondwe is giving us heartaches.  
Sam: Loyu nje udinga induku qha. I will never stop beating her if her head is hot.  
Me: Samkelo? Can't you see that you're doing the same thing our parents did to us.  
Sam: If they didn't beat we would've been worst.  
Me: That didn't stop us from sleeping together. Remember we used to sneak out after exam papers just to bang each other.  
Sam: Things were different Thandeka.  
Me: Different how?  
Sam: We're trying to make her see the dangers out there Thandeka. Please let me handle my daughter. I will handle her my way.  
I didn't say anything. I continued with what I was doing. He took Alupheli and left. I didn't like his approach but I was going to let him be. I was worried though. I didn't think being a parent was this hard. My phone rang Themba was calling. I answered.  
Me: Smith.  
Themba: Hey mam. How are you?  
Me: I am fine and you?  
Themba: I am fine. Did Samkelo tell you about Uyathandwa.

Me: Yes. Themba this going to be hard. Alondwe is already giving us headaches.  
Themba: He's your son hhaybo.  
Me: Huh? It's like that now?  
Themba: No but I am trying to protect him. That's our son Thandeka. He doesn't have other parents beside us. So we have to do what is best for him and now Cape Town is not what is best for him.  
Me: Okay I understand. Did you tell Sesethu because she'll be angry.  
Themba: No I didn't. You'll tell her.  
Me: Ulahlela konke kimi manje.  
Themba: You're the mother you know best.  
Me: Kwaze kwamnandi yazi ukuba nguwe.  
Themba: That's why I fell in love with you. Because you're strong and nothing can bring you down no matter what.  
Me: Usuyazincengela. (We laughed) why didn't you tell me that my father is sick?  
Themba: You're suppose to know that what kind of a daughter are you? (We laughed) I forgot to tell you.  
Me: I will come back with Sesethu I want to see him.  
Themba: He'll be happy to see you.  
Me: Like who wouldn't vele?  
Themba: Kimberly.  
Me: Mxm usuyabheda manje.  
Themba: Why don't you ask why?  
Me: Because I know the answer to that.  
We laughed again.  
Me: Okay goodbye then.  
Themba: Bye.  
We hung up. I set up the table and I called my family to come and eat lunch. They came, we prayed and we all ate....

---

Nobuhle Mthembu.....

I was in my room thinking about Rajiv. My sister walked inside my room. We sat together in my bed.  
Philisiwe: I can't believe this is my last semester in DUT.  
Me: Yeah hey. I just wish you can find the job.  
Philisiwe: Relax I am already covered. But don't tell mom and dad yet.  
Me: What do you mean you're already covered.  
Philisiwe: I have someone who is going to give me a job in Cape Town.  
Me: Cape Town? What about me?  
Philisiwe: If I don't go who will pay for your studies?  
Me: I thought maybe you'll find a job that's near by. You'll leave me.  
Philisiwe: I will come back and visit lil sis.  
Me: Okay.  
Philisiwe: But promise me that you'll focus and stay out of trouble.  
Me: You know I am always focused.  
Philisiwe: There's no potential bae even now?  
Me: Phili??  
Philisiwe: What? You're my lil sister and it's not like you're 17yrs. Come on you're 22yrs for crying out loud and you're still a virgin.  
Me: Some of us are not as clever as you.  
Philisiwe: Okay but now?

Me: There's a potential one but he's Indian.  
Philisiwe: Mmm so? If he's Indian?  
Me: There's no problem with that?  
Philisiwe: No. Wait who's that on your laptop.  
Me: Oh. That? Uhm. It's just a guy.  
Philisiwe: He's yummy. Is he taken?  
Me: He's married.  
Philisiwe: And what are you doing with his picture if he's married?  
Me: I am just –  
Philisiwe: Nobuhle?  
Me: Come on I was just fantasizing. Can't a girl dream?  
Philisiwe: She can but not with other people's husbands.  
Me: Whatever!!  
My phone rang. Rajiv was calling. I took my phone and smiled.  
Me: Can I take this call?  
Philisiwe: It's the husband or the Indian?  
Me: Indian.  
She laughed and stood up. I answered.  
Me: Hey.  
Rajiv: Hey beautiful. About tomorrow.  
Me: Yeah?  
Rajiv: Can you please meet me at DUT Steve Biko campus. 9am please. We'll go together. I don't know your place so.  
Me: Okay. It's understandable.  
Rajiv: You're such a bae. (I laughed) so I will see you tomorrow beautiful.  
Me: Tomorrow. Goodnight.  
Rajiv: Goodnight. Rajiv Pillay loves you.  
I giggled and hung up the call. I smiled and screamed a little. I took my laptop and I Photoshop the pictures. Where there is Thandeka's head with Samkelo. I pasted my head. I smiled. "We look good together bae, only if you can see that" I kissed the picture. I closed my laptop and I drifted off to dreamland.

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

Samkelo thought beating me up will stop my feelings for Sphephelo. He was wrong! Very wrong! I love my dad but he treats me like a 9 year old daughter. And my mom on the other hand doesn't stand up for me to my dad. If she does they spend the whole week fighting and shouting at each other about me that doesn't sit well with me but I just want to be free. Dad doesn't want me to grow up just because he raised me he thinks I am still that little girl. I just wish mom and dad never broke up. I love my siblings but mom loves Uyathandwa more than any of us. Now having him around that meant mom was going to shift her attention from me and focus more on him. I on the other hand was going to have dad on my case. Believe me Samkelo can do the beating very hard . My life was not so nice. I didn't want to make bad choices because I wanted to prove my dad wrong.

Me: So are you happy that you're going to live with us?

Uyathandwa: No. Who wants to have Thandeka on her back.

Me: If she can hear you calling her by her name that can mean trouble for you.

Uyathandwa: Tell me about it. Dude what happened to your body?

Me: Dad was beating me up yesterday. He thinks I am dating.

Uyathandwa: Are you dating?

Me: No I am not. Sphe is my friend.

I didn't want to tell him because I didn't trust him enough to talk about relationships with him. What if he tell on me? No!

Uyathandwa: Sorry. They better not think about beating me up.

Me: You can't stop dad from doing that if he wants to do it.

Uyathandwa: He's not my father. So he must chill. And besides this is child abuse. You must report him.

Me: I am not mad to report my father. He'll go to jail and where will I get another father?

Uyathandwa: Ah! Suit yourself then. Look let me leave you dude. I want to rest.

Me: Okay.

He stood up and left. Believe me when I tell you that people change. I didn't think that my brother can say my dad is not his dad. And for him to tell me that I must report him. Like who does that? Report your parents? Mxm! Uyathandwa was acting like a big brother mxm! I took my phone and called bae. He picked up.

Sphe: My love.

Me: Hey baby how are you?

Sphe: I am fine. How are you feeling?

Me: I am feeling better. I will be fine.

Sphe: I am sorry that I made you stay late okay. It won't happen again. I didn't – "Papa" I heard a tiny voice at the background.

Me: Who's that?

Sphe: My sister's daughter. Look baby I have to bounce. I will call you later.

He hung up the call immediately. Okay? That was so unlike him and I didn't know that his sister had a child. At least it wasn't his child because I didn't want to find myself in a baby mama drama. I placed my phone aside. I took my physical science text book and I kept myself busy.

---

Nobuhle Mthembu....

Monday morning I woke up and cleaned the house. Everyone had left except for my brother because he was on school holidays. After cleaning the house. I prepared myself. I wore a yellow short dress, black elbow coat and black platform wedges. I fixed my weave and applied light make up. I took my handbag and I walked out of the house.

Sakhile: Are you going to west street?

Me: No. I am going to work but I have a night shift. Why?

Sakhile: I wanted to go with you.

Me: What are you going to do there?

Sakhile: Nothing I am just bored.

Me: Call your girlfriend. I will see you tomorrow morning.

He laughed. I went to catch a taxi. I made my way to DUT. I called Rajiv and he saw me. I went to him. We hugged each other.

Rajiv: You look beautiful.

Me: Thank you.

Rajiv: Let's go. Let's go and have fun first.

I giggled. He held my hand. We went to the door and he drove to ushaka first. We played games. It was so fun and he was a free spirited guy. Maybe going after Samkelo was a bad idea. I found love there. After that we drove to uMhlanga. We arrived in a fancy restaurant that I have never dreamt of going to. It was fancy. He held my hand as we walked inside the restaurant. He pulled the chair for me and I sat down. He sat down too.

Me: This place is nice.

Rajiv: Yeah it is. You're beautiful.

I blushed and looked down. He held my hand. I looked at him.

Rajiv: I love you Precious. Please love me back.

Me: I can I –

Gary: (behind us) So this was your plan brother?

We both looked at him. He was wearing a black tuxedo with a name tag written “Manager”

Rajiv: What?

Gary: You knew I love her but no you had to go after her first.

Rajiv: Come on. I didn't know you love her. I thought you like her.

Gary: I knew her first but you had to do this to me or is it revenge?

Rajiv: What are you talking about?

Me: Okay. I think I have to go.

Gary: Yeah that would be better and please stay away from this one. That's if you still value your life.

I took my hand bag and ran out of the restaurant. I called a cab. Rajiv followed me.

Rajiv: Stop please.

Me: Leave me alone. Please.

Rajiv: I didn't know that he loves Precious please believe me. I am sorry.

Me: I get it. This was just a game. You wanted to play with my feelings and I was dumb enough to love you. How can I be so stupid. How –

He grabbed me by my arm and he kissed me deeply. I tried to catch my breath. I kissed him back. “MY FIRST KISS” It felt so good and real. It gave me tingles all over my body. My blood was getting warm and his arms around my waist closer to his chest where I felt his heart beating fast. It was like his heart beat matched my heartbeat. I forgot about it all. I didn't care about anything I wanted him to hold me like that forever. For a moment I forgot about my obsession with Samkelo. The man was married. Maybe Rajiv was the right man for me....

Nobuhle Mthembu....

We finally let go. I looked at him and smiled.

Rajiv: I love you.

Me: You won't play with my feelings?

Rajiv: I will give you nothing but love.

Me: I love you too.

He smiled and hugged me tightly. He kissed my forehead.

Rajiv: Thank you baby.

I smiled and looked down. I was shy but inside I was so happy. He held my hand and we walked up to his car. We went to spur because we didn't eat on that restaurant.

Me: So baby tell what was that about?

Rajiv: Just a feud between me and my brother. He thinks I approached you because he cheated with my ex girlfriend.

Me: Wow! I am sorry to hear that.

Rajiv: It's cool I am over it. I just want to focus on you right now and let go of that past.

Me: I am happy to hear that.

Rajiv: You don't have a child right?

I giggled and looked down.

Me: No I don't.

Rajiv: Please be honest with me. I don't want surprises along the way. Baby daddy drama. I don't want that.

Me: Don't worry. I don't have a child.

Rajiv: Okay. I don't have one too. Currently I am doing my third year in electrical engineering. I will graduate next year.

Me: That's nice.

Rajiv: My brother told me that he met you on a club?

Me: Yes. I am working there. My parents couldn't afford my studies so that's the only job I managed to get. But next year my sister will be paying for my tuition. I want to BEd.

Rajiv: Okay. Can I have a request?

Me: I am listening.

Rajiv: I will talk to my father. We will try and get you something on a restaurant maybe. I don't like the fact that you work on a club.

Me: It's no big deal. I don't want to bother you with anything Raj. I am fine there.

Rajiv: Please it will make me feel better.

Me: But –

Rajiv: Please??

Me: Okay. But don't say you're helping your girlfriend out please.

Rajiv: I promise I won't.

Me: Thank you.

Rajiv: My pleasure.

I smiled and continued eating while making a good conversation with my boyfriend.

Me: So you're Christian or?

Rajiv: I am Hindu.

Me: Okay. I hope religion won't be a problem.

Rajiv: We're not married yet so it won't be a problem.

Me: Mm "Yet"

Rajiv: Yes. We don't know what the future holds for us.

Me: Yeah that's true.

He smiled. I was having a good time and Rajiv was such a wonderful human being. He was fun and full of life. Now who wouldn't want that type of a guy for a first boyfriend? Fate saved me from almost being a home wrecker. After that Rajiv drove me to South Beach. I was going to my friend's flat. Rajiv was driving a beautiful sport car that I don't even know. You know how Indians love to personalise their cars. It was beautiful. We stepped out of the car. We shared a brief hug.

Me: I had a wonderful time.

Rajiv: Me too bbe. I am looking forward to next time.

Me: I am looking forward to that too.

He kissed my forehead and peck my lips. He stepped inside his car and drove off after waving his hand at me. I smiled and I went to my friend's flat. She was not around. I went to the spare room and I took a nap. I was woken up by my phone ringing. I took it answered the phone. Thandeka was calling.

Me: Mrs Ndunakazi.

Thandeka: I thought we had a lunch date?

Me: Yoh! I am so sorry. I was drunk in love and I even forgot about our lunch date. Can we do it tomorrow please.

Thandeka: Okay no problem. You're working tonight?

Me: Eish yes. I wish I can run away.

Thandeka: You'll be fine relax. You know my husband is looking for a new personal assistant. The woman who was working for him has retired.

I thought about it for a second. Should I say I am available? No? I can't handle myself working with that man daily. I just have to be a good girl and decline.

Me: I can spread a word for him.

Thandeka: You wouldn't like to work for him?

Me: No. I can't and besides I will be starting school soon so that will cost him because he'll

have to look for someone again.

Thandeka: Yeah. You're right. We'll talk okay?

Me: Okay. Bye.

Thandeka: Bye.

I hung up and I immediately deleted every picture of Samkelo that I had on my phone. I sighed and thank God for saving my obsessed mind. I made a mental note that I had to delete the ones I had on my laptop. I set the alarm clock and I continued with my beauty sleep....

---

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

Monday morning my parents left for work. Sphephelo and I had plans. I had Zenande as my back up. I was going to tell mam' Nancy that I am visiting her. As the day went by I was alone in my room. Uyathandwa was with the kids watching TV. It was time for me to get ready. I showered first. I did the whole process. I wore navy jeans and maroon loose top. I Combed my hair loose. I put on lip balm. I fixed my sling bag. I went to my mom's room and I took some cash. They had a box of money where we took money to buy anything that we need. I went downstairs to mama uNancy.

Me: Mama I am going to Zenande's house I will come back just now.

Nancy: Does your parents know that? Your dad said I must not let you out.

Me: I told my mom.

Nancy: It would be better if you go with your brother or else I won't let you go.

Me: But mama –

Nancy: It's either that or you won't go.

I turned back and ran up to my room. I slammed the door shut and locked it. Life sucked big time. Mxm! I wanted to go and Sphe kept on calling me. I took two bed sheets and I tied them into a knot. I went to my balcony and I tied it up there. I went down using it. I sneaked out and used the small gate. I took a taxi and I left. He sent a text "Are you cancelling again? Or should I wait forever" I responded with "I am coming". He was being rude for no reason. We were meeting at Musgrave center. From Nanda rank. I walked up to Musgrave center. He was sitting outside by the entrance. He didn't look pleased at all.

Sphe: Alondwe you should stop this. You're always an hour late.

Me: I couldn't go out.

Sphe: Come on don't play smart with me. Your parents are at work. How come you couldn't go out?

Me: Nancy refused to let me go because daddy told her not to let me go.

Sphe: It seems like your father is going to be a problem in this relationship. Come.

I didn't say anything. I stood there and looked at him.

Sphe: So now you don't want to come with me. Or daddy will see you?

Me: Don't talk like that about my father. You should be grateful that I do all the things I do just to be with you. Nobody wants to make their parents angry but because I love you. I risk everything just to be with you. Now you can be sarcastic all you want but leave my father out of your sarcasm. I love my dad and I am not happy that I have to go against his word just to be with you. Now if you want to be with me. You'll stop being an ungrateful brat and appreciate my efforts. Tsk! You can go and eat your fucking lunch alone! Tsk! I got beaten for you and you rock up here talking about my dad being a problem. Uyanya wena awunambulelo tu!!

I left him there. I ran up to a cab and it drove me straight home...

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

I decided to pass by Zenande's house. Just to spend time with her. I arrived and buzzed the gate, their maid let me in. I went inside. zenande was watching TV. She stood up and hugged

me.

Zenande: My friend?

Me: Hey sister bae how are you? (we laughed)

Zenande: I am fine and you sister girl (we laughed)

Me: I am fine.

We went to sit down. She went to the kitchen and my phone rang. Sphe was calling. I answered.

Me: What?

Sphe: You shouldn't have left like that Alondwe. Okay I was wrong but you shouldn't have walked out on me like that.

Me: I don't want you to disrespect me anyhow just because you are older than me. It doesn't work like that Sphephelo.

Sphe: I am sorry MaNdunakazi please forgive me. You have to understand that I have never dated a girl who always complain about her parents.

Me: Then you must forget about me because my dad won't stop looking out for me. I don't want to be a problematic girlfriend.

Sphe: I can't do that I love you Owami.

Me: I love you too so you must start appreciating me and I will do the same.

Sphe: CONSIDER IT DONE.

Me: Good boy. (we laughed)

Sphe: So when will I see you again?

Me: I don't know. We are leaving on Thursday for Easter weekend. I will probably see you at school.

Sphe: I will miss you big time.

Me: Not like I will.

Sphe: You want us to open a debate about that now?

Me: NO! Because you'll loose and you'll have a broken heart. (he laughed)

Sphe: Today I wanted to ask you to be my partner on our matric dance.

Me: Really?

Sphe: Yes. That's if you don't have a problem.

Me: No. I don't. I will convince mom. I know she will allow me to go.

Sphe: Okay. You'll let me know.

Me: Okay. We'll talk later neh?

Sphe: Okay bae. SPHEPHELO LOVES YOU.

Me: ALONDWE LOVES YOU.

We hung up the call. Zenande was staring at me. I took the juice that was on top of the table. I sipped it. She kept staring at me.

Me: What??

Zenande: Mind sharing?

Me: He asked me to be his date on the dance.

Zenande: Really? I thought you'll be my date.

Me: Really? And Sabelo?

We laughed. We continued making a conversation. It was so nice. We destroyed her parents food like for real. We were the owners of the house. We went to swim outside and we had some fun. We stopped when her mom arrived. That reminded me that I had to go home. I showered and wore my clothes. We said our goodbyes when my cab arrived. I arrived at home. Along the way I was praying and hoping that I don't find dad home. I was scared. I opened my bag and my key was not inside the bag. "Shit! I left the key on the door." I took chances and buzzed the gate.

Nancy: Hello.

Me: Hey mama. It's Alondwe. Please open up for me.

Nancy: Where's your key?

Me: Please.

She didn't answer me nor open the gate. I couldn't see whether dad was home or not because both gates were not see through gates. I stood there waiting for someone who going in or going out. My mom's car drove through but she stopped the car.

Mama: Why are you standing outside the gate? Come.

I stepped inside the car. She drove through. Dad was already home.

Me: I left my key inside the house.

Mama: Where were you?

Me: I went to visit Zenande.

We stepped out of the car and walked up to the door.

Mama: I hope you're not lying.

Me: No I am not.

Dad was on the lounge with the boys. I didn't know how I was going to enter my room. We greeted them. Mom sat down and played with Alupheli. Dad was reading a newspaper. I turned back as means of going out.

Dad: Uyaphi Alondwe? (Where are you going?)

Me: Uhm. I am going to drink water.

Dad: Oh.

I went to the kitchen and I walked out using the backdoor. I went by my room's balcony and I blinked twice.

Dad: You're looking for this?

He had the sheets on his hands. I looked at him with fear.

Me: Dad I can explain.

Dad: I asked you a question?

Me: Yes I am looking for that.

Mom: What's going on?

Dad: Ask your daughter where she was?

Mom: Alondwe?

Me: I was with Zenande mama. You can call her mom or their maid she'll tell you that I was with her.

Dad: Mam'uNancy told you not to go but because you're stubborn you sneaked out through the window just to be with your friend? Huh?

Me: I am sorry daddy I was bored.

Dad: Go to the backroom.

Mom: Samkelo don't beat her. Just yesterday you were beating her and now you want to beat her again. Please give her a break.

Dad: You want her to disobey us Thandeka as she's doing? Is that what you want?

Mom: No but Ndunakazi she was with her friend. Is there anything wrong with that?

Dad: If an adult says don't go. She must go ahead and go? That's what you're teaching her. Uyamvuna u-Alondwe Thandeka?

Mom: No.

Dad: If she ever get pregnant or sick. Don't come to me. Don't tell me. Tsk!

He threw the sheets down and he went back inside the house. I was crying.

Me: I am sorry mama.

Mom: Go to your room Alondwe.

I nodded quickly and I went to my room. It wasn't locked. I walked inside. I didn't want mom and dad to fight because of me. I threw myself on top of my bed and cried myself to sleep. When I woke up my father was giving me a silent treatment. Uyathandwa on the other

hand was busy calling me a bad girl.

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

Things have been really hard. All we ever do is fight about Alondwe. It wasn't fair that Samkelo wanted to beat her up everyday she did something wrong. Samkelo and I weren't on talking terms. I tried to apologise but he was angry at me. Alondwe did apologies to him not even once but many times, but he was still angry. I even confirmed with Neliswa and she told me that Alondwe was with her daughter but Samkelo was just angry because I stopped him from beating Alondwe. We were both in bed on a Wednesday night. Thursday we were going to Johannesburg for Easter weekend. Samkelo was going to Cape Town with Alupheli and Mesuli. We were going to join them Saturday. I wanted to see my father first.

Me: Uyabongeka won't come back with us. I have to go and visit their grandfather. They told me that he's sick.

Sam: You'll go when?

Me: Sunday. I will come back Monday morning.

Sam: You'll sleep where?

Me: At his house.

Sam: Okay. Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight.

He gave me his back. We fell asleep. In the morning we woke up and we were all in a mission to get ready for our trip. Samkelo and the boys were going to leave first. I was driving them to the airport.

Alupheli: Mama uzofika nini? (Mom when will you join us?)

Me: Ngizofika ngomgqibelo. (I will join you Saturday)

Alupheli: Yoyondwe naye? (And Alondwe?)

Me: Yes baby.

Kuhle: I wanted to go and see Christian daddy and Luzuko.

Sam: You should've told me earlier. So you will see them some other time.

He didn't say anything. We drove in silence until we made it to the airport. We stepped out of the car and I picked my little boy up. I walked with them to join the line.

Me: Okay my boys have a safe trip. Be good boys don't give grandpa and grandma headache Okay?

Them: Yebo mama.

Me: Nginyanithanda.

Them: Siyakuthanda nathi.

I kissed them goodbye on their cheeks.

Me: I will see you on Saturday. Travel safe.

Sam: Okay. Travel safe.

We baby kissed each other. I kissed his cheek.

Me: I love you.

Sam: I love you too.

He kissed my forehead and I left. I drove back home. Where I found Alondwe and Uyathandwa arguing.

Alondwe: Please leave me alone Uyathandwa.

Uyathandwa: You must stop this nonsense. Who is Sphe? I heard you talking to him on the phone. You'll give mom unnecessary headache.

Alondwe: You must mind your own business.

Me: Stop it both of you! Go upstairs and get ready. Stop arguing.

Uyathandwa: So you're happy that she has a boyfriend?

Me: Don't talk to me like you're talking to your friend. Go upstairs and do what I said. Do

you understand?

Them: Yes. Mom.

Me: Missy come. Let's go and get ready.

She smiled and came up to me. I held her hand and we went to my room.

---

Uyathandwa's POV...

I hate what dad did to me. Let me stay with mom. Ever since mom married Samkelo she changed. Things were different and I wasn't comfortable around their house anymore. It was not the same like when I grew up. Mom and I were close before but now she does everything on her power to protect Alondwe even though Alondwe was wrong. She was forever fighting with Samkelo and the tension in the house was not nice. At least my dad and Kimberly didn't fight all the time. And whenever if they fought they tried by all means to act normal around us. Just that dad didn't trust me. I wasn't taking drugs nor doing any dirty things. I was always with those guys for protection. Grandpa told me not to tell Dad. Those guys were not my friends but they were my bodyguards. I ain't a fool to hang out with thugs. But what can I say it happened. And there's nothing I can do about it. I just have to accept that I am stuck with mom and her husband. I must probably forget about Amber.....

---

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

Being with my family gave me nothing but a peace of mind. My brother and his family they were so lovely and believe me I was happy to see them happy. My stepmothers were good and my dad too. They welcomed us with dinner that was mouthwatering. Even Charity and her mom was there.

Evelyn: So Aloe and EJ how is school?

Uyathandwa: It was great but I had to change so I don't know how will be the new school.

Alondwe: It's hectic but I am coping and working hard because I have to be a Doctor.

Dad: That's the spirit my baby.

Alondwe: Yes mkhulu.

Evelyn: What do you want to be when you grow up Ethan Junior.

Uyathandwa: For now I am not too sure. Maybe I'll know next year.

Uyabongeka: Why didn't you ask me about school grandma? (Everyone laughed)

Andile: Yeah Sese ask her.

Maud and Charity excused themselves.

Evelyn: I am so sorry baby. I was going to ask you alone.

I laughed and stood up. I walked out of the house. I went to the kitchen backdoor. I sat by the stairs. I took out my phone and dialed Samkelo's number. I then eavesdrop Maud and Charity's conversation.

Charity: I am leaving now mom. I can't stand the sight of your stepdaughter. She acts like a superwoman here.

Maud: She irritates me. But we can remove her like I did to her mother.

My heart started beating fast. Samkelo on the other hand was busy saying "Hello" I didn't answer nor drop the call.

Charity: How mom?

Maud: She was sick already so I just made her car breaks loose. I took Thandeka to your aunt. And I lied to her and I told her that she went missing. The daycare teacher said she left with her granny. She panicked and took her car keys and left to search for her. She caused an accident and died like Jktdfghhs....

I started panting, trying to catch my breath and I dropped the call. I threw my phone on the ground and placed my hands on my mouth trying so hard to breath in and out, then everything went blank.....

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

I woke up it was a new day in a hospital bed. I was confused a little. I rubbed my eyes. My brother and Evelyn were inside the room. Evelyn was on her coat.

Andile: Sisi.

Me: (clearing my throat) Hey. What happened?

Andile: Samkelo called me and told me to check up on you because something was not right with you but he didn't know what was wrong. I found you on the ground.

Evelyn: You must have heard something so disturbing because you're a little disturbed.

Me: Yeah. I will remember though.

Maud and dad came inside the room. That's where I remembered what happened.

Maud: How are you feeling Thandeka?

Me: Why did you kill my mother?

Dad: Thandeka!!?

Maud was shocked. She didn't answer me. Andile stood up and looked at me.

Andile: Sisi mom was involved in a car accident.

Me: She was sick Andile. Why did she drive while she was sick? Nobody ever told me why she drove her car while she was sick?

Dad: She had important things to do.

Me: What? Looking for me because I was missing?

Maud: You're exhausted Thandeka.

Me: Don't tell me that. Why did you kill my mom? Why my mom? Why her?

Dad: Thandeka all this accusations are not true. Maud did not kill your mom.

Me: Please leave this room. Dad take your wife and leave please.

Andile: Thandeka sisi –

Me: Just leave!!!

Dad and Maud left. I cried. Andile held me closer to him. He brushed my back.

Me: She killed her Andile. She killed mom. I heard talking to Charity. She planned it all and she made her car breaks loose. Mom went looking for me because I was missing. I hate her Andile. I hate Maud.

Evelyn: That's why you passed out.

Andile: I can't believe this. How can she be so cruel and play nice all those years.

My husband walked in calling for my name.

Me: Samkelo!!

Sam: Thandeka!

He opened up his arms for me. He hugged me tightly. I sobbed inside his arms.

Sam: I am sorry. I wasn't there for you. I have been angry with you just for no valid reason. I am sorry baby okay?

I nodded inside his chest. He brushed my head. The others excused themselves. He took off his shoes and joined me inside my bed. He pulled me closer to him.

Sam: What happened?

Me: I heard (I told him everything)

Sam: That woman is so unbelievable!

Me: Dad doesn't believe me.

Sam: What Will you do about it?

Me: There's nothing I can do Samkelo. There's no evidence.

Sam: I know it's not in our place but we can punish her. She deserves to feel pain.

Me: How? How can we do it?

Sam: We'll just have to use the ghost of her past. But for now let's focus on you getting better my love.

Me: Thank you bbe.

Sam: You know I'll do anything for you. I love you Okay?

Me: I love you too.

He kissed my forehead and I rested my head on his chest. He brushed my head until I fell asleep....

---

Maud's POV

Hearing Thandeka tell me that I killed her mom was the last thing I expected. I didn't know that she was listening to me. But I had nothing to worry about because her father didn't believe her. I never wanted to kill her mom but I was desperate. My husband left us with nothing and I did illegal treatment to people because I wanted a fast way to make them better so that I can get promoted. I didn't know that I was digging my own grave of hunger. I was never a bad person but I had to do something special after my first born Muzi left us. He was angry at me because his father was one of the patients I illegally treated. I wanted him to recover but I lost him. I really love Dhlomo but Thandeka hates my guts and I have no choice but to kill her. I can't let her stand in my way of happiness..

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

Seeing my mom on the floor was hard. I thought maybe she was dead. When uncle Andile explained what dad said. I thought maybe they had a fight about me again and she passed out. I felt so bad about it all. I didn't want to lose mom nor give her stress. I cried a lot that night, begging God to keep her alive. I was with Uyabongeka in a room that we slept in.

Uyathandwa was with Grandpa.

Uyabongeka: Mom will come back sisi?

Me: Yes she'll come back don't worry.

Uyabongeka: I want her to come back.

She started crying. I couldn't help but cry too. I held her closer to me. Our door swung open.

My dad came inside the room.

Dad: Hey girls.

I let go of Uyabongeka and went to dad. He hugged me tightly.

Dad: Don't cry baby your mother is fine.

Me: I am sorry daddy. I didn't mean to make you and mom fight.

Dad: No. That is not the reason she's in the hospital. Don't feel bad about it okay?

Me: Yes daddy. When will she come back?

Dad: Probably tomorrow Nana.

I nodded and we let go. I went to my bed.

Dad: Sese.

Uyabongeka: Daddy?

They hugged each other. Dad sat down and he made Uyabongeka sit on his lap.

Uyabongeka: We want to talk to mom.

Dad: Her phone is here with your uncle. But she'll come back baby okay?

Uyabongeka: Yes.

Me: Why didn't my brothers come back?

Dad: They are still with your grandparents.

Me: Okay. We went to church in the morning with aunt Shemah.

Dad: That's wonderful. I hope Jesus Christ touched your life.

Me: Hawu baba.

Dad: What? I am serious.

Me: I hope he did too.

Dad: (laughing) Hhaybo baby you didn't feel him kanti?

Uyabongeka: I did feel him in my heart. I don't know how because the Pastor said he's dead.

Dad and I laughed really hard. Uyabongeka looked at us. She wasn't laughing.

Dad: He died ages ago baby. But he woke up on the third day after his death.

Uyabongeka: What? So if grandpa can die now he'll wake up on the third day. Wow! What disease did Jesus had?

We laughed again. She was so serious.

Me: You must tell your father to take you to Sunday school girl.

Uyabongeka: But we do go to church.

Dad: Yes but Sunday school is for children. They will teach you about Jesus.

Uyabongeka: Yes! Let me go and tell grandma Eleveln (Evelyn) to call dad now.

She stepped off dad's lap and ran out of the room. I laughed.

Dad: So how are you baby?

Me: I am fine dad. Just that I was so worried about mom.

Dad: Don't worry about her. She's fine. (He stood up) I love you Nana.

Me: I love you too daddy.

He kissed my forehead. I giggled. He smiled and he left my room. I smiled. I took my phone and called bae. He answered on the last ring.

Me: Hey bbe.

Sphe: Bae now is not the good time.

The baby was crying on the background.

Me: What's wrong?

Sphe: I am babysitting here. The baby is sick.

Me: Let me sing for her. Put the phone on her ear please.

Sphe: Okay.

He told me to sing. I sang for the baby. She ended up being quiet.

Sphe: You're the best baby. She's asleep. Thanks. You have a beautiful voice.

Me: Where's her mother? Your sister.

Sphe: She's studying at UCT.

Me: Okay. So are you fine.

Sphe: Beside the baby being sick. I am fine bbe and you?

Me: I am fine. You're such a wonderful uncle.

Sphe: (chuckle) I try babe. Did you ask your mom to go to the matric ball?

Me: No. She's in the hospital. I will talk to her when she's alright.

Sphe: I am sorry to hear that. Is it serious?

Me: No. She's alright now.

Sphe: Okay. Let me put the little one on her bed. We'll talk later okay?

Me: Okay bbe. I love you.

Sphe: I love you too Nana.

We hung up. I stood up and joined the rest of the family. We were playing with dad and uncle Andile. It was very fun and refreshing. Later we went to church for a afternoon service....

---

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

I was discharged the following day. I was much better. Samkelo was with me. He gave me my phone.

Me: So baby how are things going?

Sam: I found the picture. When we go back home we will find the best surgeon. Who will create his face.

Me: And the man?

Sam: I will find him don't worry.

Me: Thank you my love.

Sam: Anything to make you happy.

I smiled and kissed him. We took my bags and we left.

Me: Bbe I have to go tomorrow.

Sam: But you just got out of the hospital Thandeka.

Me: I have to see him bbe.

Just then my phone rang and I took it. Themba was calling me. I answered.

Themba: Hi Thandeka.

Me: Hey how are you?

Themba: I am not okay. My father didn't make it. He is dead. Thandeka. My father is dead. I didn't know what to say. For a moment I was just shocked. I didn't expect that.

Me: You can't be serious Themba.

Themba: I am serious.

Me: I am so sorry Themba. I don't know what to say. I will come tomorrow.

Themba: Please bring the kids with you.

Me: Okay I will bring them.

Themba: Thank you.

I hung up the call.

Sam: What happened?

Me: Joe is dead Samkelo.

Sam: Tjo. That's very sad. You'll go tomorrow?

Me: Yes I have to go. He said I must come with the kids. So this Maud issue?

Sam: Trust me I will take care of everything. I will sort her out baby.

Me: I trust you my love.

He told me what his plan was. I was very much sure that it was going to work. We arrived at home and I went to my room after seeing my kids. I wanted to rest. I prayed and fell asleep afterwards.

"Thandeka my child wake up!! Why are you sleeping?" My mother said. She was on a white gown.

"I am tired mama. I want to rest" I said trying to rest. I was exhausted.

"Wake up! Thandeka wake up!" She shouted! I woke up something was on my face. I tried to breathe but I couldn't. I traced the hands that were pressing the pillow I guess. I dug my nails on them and I pushed them off. Maud had a pillow on her hands.

Me: You wanted to kill me old Bitch!!

Maud: You deserve to die.

Me: You're insane leave my room before I call my husband.

Maud: Go ahead nobody is home dear. Now listen to me. You'll go to your dad and apologies for lying. Or else your husband will be the next victim. I love your father but you just want to keep on making me a bad person.

Me: That's because you're a bad person.

Maud: I'll have to kill that husband of yours.

Sam: (by the door) Dream on Maud.

Me: Bbe.

I got off the bed and ran up to him. I hugged him.

Sam: Please leave Maud.

Me: She wanted to kill me bbe.

Sam: What?

Samkelo let go of me and went to her. He grabbed her by her dress. He pinned her against the wall.

Sam: What did you do to my wife?

Maud screamed. I went to them.

Me: Sam let go of her please.

Maud: Let me go dog.

Samkelo let go of her with one hand and he slapped her hard. She screamed.

Me: Samkelo. She's older than you!

Sam: That doesn't give her the right to kill you.

Maud: She deserve it.

Samkelo pushed her back and forth. She was hitting the wall. Andile and dad walked in. Dad grabbed Samkelo by his clothes and he punched him. His nose was bleeding.

Dad: You're disrespecting me young man.

Sam: Your wife wanted to kill my wife so what was I supposed to do. Be happy?

Maud: They're lying! I would never do that.

She was crying. Dad went to her and comfort her. He brushed her back. I gave my husband attention because he was bleeding.

Dad: Leave my house Samkelo.

Andile: Dad you can't just throw him out without trying to get to the bottom of this.

Dad: Everyone knows that Thandeka doesn't like Maud. She'll do anything to get rid of her and her husband will help her. So please leave now!

Me: If you're throwing him out. I will leave too.

Dad: Oh. Fine leave!

I couldn't believe it. Dad was drunk in love that much? Huh? I nodded. I went to the wardrobe and I took my gown.

Me: Can I crash at your place bhuti.

Andile: Yeah sure.

Samkelo took my bags. We left the room. I called my kids and we drove straight to my brother's house...

---

Nobuhle Mthembu.....

Rajiv was the most – I don't know the right word. He was everything I could ask for in a man. He managed to help me get a job at Nandos West Street. I quit working on the club. Everything was going very well between us and we were just in love with each other. It was Saturday we were chilling on his apartment which he was sharing with his sister in Berea. We were watching a movie and eating popcorn. I looked at him and we started kissing each other. We kissed each other intensely that I could feel him. I was turned on and the feeling was too nice. I was in paradise. He stopped along the way. I looked at him.

Rajiv: I am sorry. I just got carried away.

Me: That's not wrong.

Rajiv: We have to slow down. I can't have sex with you.

Me: Oh.

Rajiv: Look bbe. It's against my beliefs. We must only do it when we're married.

Me: I understand. I am sorry. I didn't mean to lead you on.

Rajiv: I know. My previous relationship failed because I couldn't give her sex so my brother took advantage of that because he's doesn't care about our religion. I hope you won't leave because we're not having sex.

Me: I will wait and besides I have never done it before so I don't want to rush into anything.

Rajiv: Are you trying to tell me that you're a virgin?

Me: Uhm. Yes. You're my first boyfriend so I think it's obvious.

Rajiv: I am blessed hey.

I giggled and we kissed each other. We broke the kiss when we felt someone else's presence in the room. It was an Indian woman.

Girl: This must be the piece of meat you snatched from Gary.

Rajiv: Nadine please.

Nadine: Gary loved her you know but you decided to hurt him brother!

Rajiv: I love her too so what are you suggesting?

Nadine: You're going to ruin your relationship with your brother just because of a girl. Even mom is not happy about this.

Rajiv: Stay out of my business Nadine. Precious let me drive you home.

Nadine: Yeah run! And you watch your back with this one. He's bad news!

Rajiv held my hand and we walked out of their apartment. He drove me home. We were both quiet along the way. I was in deep thoughts....

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

My father was mad at me because it looked like I was framing his wife but I didn't have any evidence to show him. I wanted Maud to pay for all the pain she caused my family. I trusted Samkelo with everything. Sunday morning I was leaving for Cape Town. In fact we were all leaving just that I was going with my Smith kids. Samkelo was going to go back home with our kids.

Andile: I hope you'll be fine sisi?

Me: Yes I will be fine.

Shemah: Please be safe dear.

Me: Thank you.

I hugged Shemah. I hope hugged my nephew and niece. Andile drove us to the airport. Along the way my phone rang. Nobuhle was calling. I answered the phone.

Me: Nobuhle.

Nobuhle: Hey Thandeka are you alright?

Me: Yes dear. And you?

Nobuhle: I am fine. Are you around? I need your advice on something.

Me: No. I am not around but I will come back tomorrow. We can meet up for lunch.

Nobuhle: Okay thanks sisi.

Me: Okay bye.

Nobuhle: Bye. (I hung up)

Sam: Who's Nobuhle?

Me: The girl we met at the club the other day.

Uyathandwa: Mom you went to a club?

Me: We're not talking to you Uyathandwa.

Uyathandwa: I am sorry. I was just asking.

Sam: She's your friend?

Me: Yeah. I thought it was going to be nice to make some female friends again.

Andile: That's nice. Thobelani got me worried.

Me: Why should you worry because my husband is not worried.

Sam: Who said I am not worried?

Me: Samkelo?

Sam: (they both laughed) What?

Alondwe giggled. I looked at her. She looked down. I shook my head.

Sam: I am kidding bbe I am not worried.

I sulked and rested my head on his shoulder. They laughed at me. Alondwe's phone kept on beeping. And she was busy on it.

Sam: What's exciting on that phone Laa Laa?

Alondwe: Really dad you're going to call me Laa Laa?

Sam: It's your name and you love it.

Alondwe: I LOVED it. Past tense baba.

Sam: Okay. Can I see what's exciting on that phone.

Me: Samkelo? Stop it.

Sam: What? I bought that phone?

Me: But you must give her some privacy.

Andile: Nonduduzo won't get a phone until she finishes her matric.

Sam: I should've done that too.

Me: You're being tough Daddies.

Andile: We don't want them to get heart broken. That simple means we love them and we care about them. We only want what is best for them.

Sam: Yeah. I hope you heard that Samkeliswa?

Alondwe: I heard that daddy.

I looked at her. She smiled. Uyathandwa had his earphones on. Uyabongeka was sleeping. Within a few minutes. We were at the airport. We hugged each other goodbye and we went to join the line. We took a plane to Cape Town...

---

Themba Smith....

My father's death came to me as a shock. Nobody expected him to die. Yes he was old but death is something that happens almost everyday but it's hard to accept. I was with Kimberly in our room at home. We wearing our clothes after showering.

Me: Please prepare a guest room for Thandeka. She's coming and she'll sleep here.

Kim: Why is she going to sleep here?

Me: You want her to sleep where?

Kim: Hotel or her husband's family is around Gugulethu.

Me: Do you feel threatened by her?

Kim: No but –

Me: Stop acting like a jealous wife. It's so annoying.

Kim: That woman wants you Ethan. You may not see it but I know that she does.

Me: Woman! Just listen to me! Just because I got you while you were working for her it doesn't mean she still has that grudge against you. Or she wants me back if I wanted her back I would have won her back. So please try to take a chill pill and do what I said to you. And stop annoying me. My father is dead for goodness sake!

I finished up and left her. I love my wife but sometimes she thinks like a teen. Thandeka was my past and a nobody but the mother of my kids. Okay I do care about her and back then I used to miss her but there's no going back to her now. I love her but our love is forbidden. I joined the other men outside. They were talking about old times. For a moment I forgot that my father was dead. During the day, I was about to go out. I saw my ex wife and my kids walking inside the premises. Uyabongeka ran up to me. I smiled and met her halfway. I picked her up.

Me: You're heavy Missy.

Uyabongeka: I am your baby.

Me: Sisipho is the baby. You're 11 yrs.

Uyabongeka: Daddy please.

I laughed. She was acting childish and a part of me loved that. I put her down. She ran inside the house. Uyathandwa greeted me and followed his sister. I went to Thandeka and she looked at me with teary eyes.

Me: Yeah hey.

Thandeka: I can't believe he's gone for real. It's like he was going to be with us forever.

She broke down and cried. My parents were really fond of Thandeka. They've always taken her like their own daughter even after our divorce they didn't stop to love and support her.

They were not happy about our divorce and specially that I married a woman who was working for us. So I understood her pain because they were more like her parents. I held her

hand and hugged her tightly.

Thandeka: I don't know if dead people get mad or what but he's probably mad that I didn't come to see him.

Me: But you were going to come mama ka Uyathandwa. Just that God took him before you could see him. Don't cry now. Our father is at peace okay? Your dad is at peace.

She nodded inside my chest. Thandeka was one emotional woman I have ever met in my life. And she was also caring. Now you can hurt her but when bad things happen to you in return she'll feel pain for you. I didn't think that after everything that my dad did to her, she'll actually get along with him and call him her dad. She backed away and wiped her tears.

Thandeka: I am sorry that I ruined your shirt.

Me: It's Okay. Just go inside you'll be fine.

Thandeka: Are you fine?

Me: I am trying. Don't worry about me.

Thandeka: What about the kids? I didn't tell them?

Themba: Mom and other older women will tell them. Don't worry.

She nodded. I hugged her once more and kissed her forehead. She smiled shyly and walked inside the house. My brother Silumko came to me.

Silumko: Hey mjita. Don't you think you made a mistake.

Me: By?

Silumko: Divorcing her?

Me: (laughing) Ayi! Fusegi wena! I didn't make a mistake.

Silumko: But she's a real deal Brah. Did you see that ass.

Me: Someone died and you're checking my ex wife's ass?

Silumko: Some things can't be ignored even if you're in pain.

We laughed and went to my car. We drove to the mall...

---

Alondwe Ndunakazi...

The following day was a Monday. We all flew back to Durban. The previous night. I slept with my step grandmother. Grandpa was not home. We were just talking about girls stuff and it was so nice. I wished I was like that with my mom, though I wasn't sharing too much information with her but she was with me. She told me about her first boyfriend, her flaws, and things that she wished she never did. She gave me advises and told me not to be weak to boys. It was a special night and I listened to her. In the morning the cab arrived. She and my aunt (dad's half sister) walked with us to the gate. We hugged each other.

Grandma: Don't forget what I said Samke. Don't give your mother and father stress okay baby?

Me: Yes grandma.

Dad: And please tell her to forget about boys mama please.

Grandma: Samkelo this conversation is between me and my granddaughter.

Dad: I was just trying to add.

We laughed. Dad was something else. But I loved him as he was. I couldn't ask for a better father.

Me: I won't forget grandma. I love you.

Grandma: I love you too baby.

I hugged my aunt and we left. The boys were impatient. The cab drove off. I was one blessed child. I had three grandfathers and four grandmothers. I smiled at that thought. I took my phone and logged on Facebook. I read through the news feeds. Sphephelo was tagged on a picture. It was him, a lady and a baby girl. It had a caption "My mini family. How I miss them. Specially my baby girl Okuhle" I looked at the girl. It was not his sister. I read the comments. The comments stated that Sphe was the father of the little girl. I couldn't believe

my eyes. His comment was “She misses you too mama wakhe”. Tears streamed down my face because it was clear as daylight that he lied to me. That girl was not her sister. And people were praising him for being a great father.

Kuhle: Daddy. Alondwe is crying.

Dad: Why are you crying Alondwe?

I wiped my tears immediately.

Me: It’s nothing daddy. One of my friends lost her Dog so I can imagine the pain they are going through. Remember I also lost Nursy my dog.

Dad: Yes but you got Jackie.

Me: I know dad. But he’s also sick and sometimes I miss him.

Dad: He’ll come back don’t worry. They promised to take good care of him for you. Don’t cry. No father wants to see her baby girl crying.

Me: I won’t cry daddy.

Alupheli: Woza nikusule izinembezi zakho. (Let me wipe your tears)

I giggled and faced him. He wiped my tears off with his tiny hands. I kissed his forehead.

Me: Thank you little brother.

Dad: Good boy Thando.

He smiled.

Kuhle: Okay take my lollipop sisi. You’ll feel better. I want to be a good boy too.

Dad and I laughed. Even the driver laughed.

Me: Thank you bhuti.

I took it and sucked on it. He smiled.

Dad: Good Boy Scelo.

Alupheli clapped his hands. We laughed. I smiled and put my phone away. I had the best brothers and the best daddy.....

Nobuhle Mthembu....

I was so lost and confused. I love Rajiv but it seemed like his love for me was too good to be true. It looked like he had something that he was hiding from me. I wanted us to work but I had doubts about us after hearing what his sister Nadine said. I doubted our relationship. I needed an advice from Thandeka but she was also unavailable. It was understandable because the woman had a husband and kids. Surely she had a lot on her plate. I thought about calling my friend but calling her wasn’t going to help me because she was going to end up going on and on about how good her boyfriend is to her. I sat there in my room trying to think whether I should continue dating Rajiv or not. My mom walked in my room while I was in tears. I wiped them immediately.

Mom: Buhle baby what’s wrong?

Me: Nothing mom. I am just tired.

Mom: You’ve started dating isn’t?

Me: No mom I –

Mom: It’s Okay baby. You’re 22yrs old now and you’ve never had a boyfriend in your life but he should be making you happy not cry baby.

Me: Everything just feels wrong mama. I love him but his brother and sister had warned me to stay away from him. How do I do with that? I love him. I want to be with him.

Mom: What did they tell you?

Me: They said if I value my life I should stay away from him and that he’s bad news.

Mom: Maybe they have a reason to why they are saying that. They might not know you but they do want to protect you. You should listen to them. Look my baby you’re already crying.

Me: But I love Rajiv mama.

Mom: What kind of a name is that?

Me: He's an Indian mama.

Mom: Nobuhle mntanami?

Me: Mama?

Mom: Are you sure about him. An Indian.

Me: Race doesn't matter mama. It's the love that matters.

Mom: All I can say is be careful. I don't want to see you crying come and help me cook.

I smiled and nodded. She left my room. I stood up and I went to the kitchen to help her out.

Sakhile joined us he was cracking jokes and that made me forget about my problem a little.

My older sister joined us. And we were all bonding in the kitchen with our mother.

---

Rajiv Pillay.....

I was truly in love with Nobuhle and I knew that my brother and sister had planted the seed of doubt in her head. My intention with her were good. She was nothing but a humble woman with a free spirit. She had a smile that brightened up her whole face with cute dimples. Her voice was like melody in my ears. I wanted her now and forever. I wanted her to be part of my life. I wanted to share a life with her. I wanted her to be the mother of my children. My love for her was pure and I was going to protect it. I was going to fight for it. I went home as means to talk to my dad about her. My dad understood me a lot better. Luckily I found him alone. He was not with his wife.

Dad: My son.

Me: Dad.

We shared a handshake and a hug.

Dad: How are you?

Me: I am not well dad and you?

Dad: I am fine. I heard that you found a girl who your brother was after.

Me: I didn't plan on loving her dad. It just happened and now it looks like I am trying to revenge what he did to me in the past.

Dad: Everyone in the family is convinced that you're trying to do revenge. Your aunt, mother, sister and your brother.

Me: It's not like they love me anyway. Even with my ex girlfriend they weren't happy that I was happy with her.

Dad: I am sorry that you have to suffer for my sinful actions son. It was never my intention to do that.

Me: We all make mistakes dad. I am here now and that's all that matters.

Dad: And I want you to know that I love you my son. I really do. I will do anything just for you to be happy and to show you that I don't regret your existence.

Me: Thank you dad. After graduation I want to marry her dad. I want to make her my wife.

Dad: Are you sure Rajiv Marriage is huge step. You must be sure that she is the one son.

Me: I know dad. I can feel it in my heart and soul Precious is my true love. The one I've been waiting for.

Dad: If she doesn't leave you even if your siblings had planted the seed of doubt in her head. I will support you and you two will get married.

Mom: (joining in) By doing that you'll be hurting Gary. How can you even consider doing that huh?

Dad: The girl loves Rajiv and there's nothing you can do about that.

Mom: That's because you'll do anything for this shameful boy. You call a son!

Dad: ENOUGH!! Claudine. You asked me to cast him out and I did because he was a painful reminder of what happened but I will not let you stand in the way of his happiness. He's my son and I will support him.

Mom: If he gets married where will that wedding ceremony take place?

Dad: Here in my house and in the house of his bride. Him and his wife will have a place here in my house after their wedding. MY WORD IS FINAL NOBODY CAN CHANGE IT!!!

Mom: How about religion. I heard that the girl is Christian will she accept our culture and our beliefs?

Dad: Love knows no culture nor religion. If she loves him she'll accept everything. His gods will be her gods. His life will be her life. And nobody will stand in their way of happiness do you understand?

Mom: Yes.

He stood up and went to his room. Mom looked at me with nothing but hatred. She clicked her tongue and left. I took my phone and car keys. I stood up and I drove back to my apartment. All I could think about was Precious. What if she rejects me? Will I survive the reject from her too???

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

Seeing Mrs Smith in pain was not so good. I wish I could have done something to take away her pain. I couldn't imagine the pain she was going through for losing her husband. I was sitting next to her. Buzwe's wife and another woman, they were both with my kids. They were telling them about their grandfather's death.

Me: Mama this will pass. God is watching over you. Please don't think that he has forsaken you. He hasn't.

She held my hand and we hugged each other. She cried inside my embrace.

Mrs Smith: It's painful mntanami. I never thought he'll leave me. I never thought this day will come. I will miss him. He was my soulmate.

Me: All will be alright. I trust God.

We cried hugging each other. I couldn't imagine how painful it was to lose your soulmate. The person you've spent your whole life with. We stopped when someone started a song. I wiped her tears. The women were there to pray. Uyabongeka came to me. She was crying. I made her sit on my lap. I held her tight. After the prayer the women had to leave.

Mrs Smith: You will sleep here baby?

Me: Themba said there's no problem.

Mrs Smith: You're like my daughter. This is also your home.

Me: Thank you. Can I go and freshen up.

Mrs Smith: Kimberly show her the room you prepared for her.

Kim: Come.

Uyabongeka stood up and I held her hand. We followed her stepmother.

Kim: This is the room you'll use.

Me: Thanks. Where's your daughter?

Kim: I don't think that concerns you.

Me: Oh okay.

She looked at me up and down. She left.

Me: Baby do I look ugly in this dress.

Uyabongeka: (laughing) No mom you look beautiful.

Me: Okay thanks. Come let's go and catch up.

Uyabongeka: Yes!

I giggled. We went to shower first. We wore different clothes and we sat in bed.

Me: So how is school?

Uyabongeka: School is nice. I have a good friend mama.

Me: She's lucky to have you.

Uyabongeka: Yes and I like her. Mom grandpa won't come back like Jesus. Dad Samkelo told me that Jesus woke up on the third day.

Me: No baby. But if we do right we will see him again one day.

Uyabongeka: I want to live you with you now. I want to spend time with Alondwe. She's a good sister.

Me: Do you think dad can agree to that?

Uyabongeka: We can convince him mama.

Me: Uyathandwa is going to live with me Nana and you must live with dad.

Uyabongeka: (crying) What?? No! I will be alone mama.

Me: There's Sisipho baby.

Uyabongeka: I want to live with you. I am a girl I should live with you. Why don't you want me?

Me: I didn't say I don't want you Uyabongeka.

Uyabongeka: I was supposed to grow up with you mama.

Me: You won't understand now baby but you had to live with your dad.

Uyabongeka: Just because I am not your husband's child. You don't want me. Mxm. She stepped off the bed. I stood up.

Me: Uyabongeka come back!

Themba: (by the door) Let her be. I thought she was acting like a child. I thought I was wrong.

Me: This is wrong, now she thinks I hate her.

Themba: She knows you don't but Uyathandwa on the other hand doesn't want to live with you.

Me: Why?

Themba: He said you don't care about him.

Me: That's not true. Okay. I haven't got time to spend with him. Alondwe has been driving us crazy.

Themba: Did you even try to ask him why is he hanging out with bad crowd of friends.

Me: I have been busy Themba. I didn't get time.

Themba: I think Uyabongeka is right. You care less about my kids now. Your husband's kids are your number one priority.

Me: You want us to argue now?

Themba: No I am just telling you the truth.

Me: Okay bring them back to me Themba.

Themba: I don't have to bring them back so that you can show them that you care about them. You can do that even if they don't live with you.

Me: This is not easy for me. I didn't ask for this. Having kids with two different men and not living with others.

Themba: So you'll blame who this time around for all that? You slept with us. I looked at him without a word.

Me: Maybe coming here was a bad idea after all.

Themba: Why? Because I am telling you the truth. Now you think it's a bad idea.

Me: What do you want from me? What should I do vele?

Themba: Just care for them. You're their mother.

Me: It's not easy to connect with a child that you don't live with Themba. I do think about them but reality says my mind is always occupied by the ones that I live with. Not that I don't love our kids. I do. But being in my shoes is not easy.

He didn't say anything. He looked at me and left the room. I sat on my bed and sighed. I took my phone and texted Uyathandwa.

Me: "Can I talk to you?"

Uyathandwa: "I am busy. Talking can wait"

Me: "Please Uyathandwa "

Uyathandwa: "Okay I don't want to talk to you mom please."

I didn't text him back. I just didn't know what to do. And clearly Themba wasn't going to let him stay with me because he didn't want to. I stood up and I looked for Uyabongeka. She was with her grandmother, they were bonding. I kneeled down before her.

Me: Where is her father?

Mrs Smith: He's outside.

I nodded and went to look for him. He was sitting with Uyathandwa. They were talking. They didn't see me.

Themba: "She didn't respond?"

Uyathandwa: "No she didn't, I don't get the reason why you had to divorce her dad. This wasn't going to happen if you guys had suck it up and leave your pride aside. For the sake of our well-being. But you thought it was best to give us this kinda life. Well it's sucks dad because I miss my mom."

Themba: "I am sorry boy"

I went closer to them. I forced myself to sit in between them. They laughed and shifted just to give me space. I held both their hands.

Me: I am so sorry Okay?

Uyathandwa: It won't fix anything.

Me: We didn't plan this life Uyathandwa and just because we got divorced it doesn't mean we don't love you. We do love you. And I am sorry that I have been neglecting you.

Uyathandwa: I just wish it can be like old times.

Themba: It can't Uyathandwa. You have to accept that. But we love you.

Uyathandwa: You shouldn't have fucked each other and bare me if you were going to give me this life.

Themba: Don't talk like that to us. We're your parents.

Uyathandwa: Mxm.

He yanked his hand out of mine. I tried to reach out to it by letting go of Themba's hand. I fell off the table and landed on the floor. Uyathandwa ran up to me first. He held me.

Uyathandwa: Mom are you alright?

Me: I love you Okay?

Uyathandwa: I love you too mama.

We hugged each other for quite some time. We let go. I kissed his cheek. He smiled. He held my hand. I stood up. Themba opened up his arms for me. I hugged him. We let go.

Me: I didn't mean to leave you alone in this.

Themba: It's Okay. Uyathandwa go and clean your mom's wound.

Uyathandwa: Okay dad. Come ma'ollas.

I laughed. He held my hand and we walked back inside the house. He called his sister they both assisted each other and cleaned my forehead wound. That night. I slept with both of them.....

---

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

Tuesday morning we went to school. Mom was going to come back that night. The house was cold without her. We ate out Sunday and Monday. I can't cook and dad was lazy to cook for us. I asked him to teach me but he told me that I should ask mom. He didn't want to cook because he knew that we were going to make fun of his cooking so he was trying to save himself. Since Sunday my phone was off. Monday we didn't go to school. I didn't want to go to school but I had to. At home I had less stress because of dad and my brothers. They were all crazy. They were always on the mode "Mom is not home. We're having fun." They'll do everything that mom doesn't want, like putting their feet on the coffee table, eating sweets the whole day, playing on mom's couches. It was so fun because dad was leading them. We

were all sleeping with dad. And he would tell us his childhood stories. He'll lie and say he had magic but the day he met mom it all disappeared. The boys would be sad but I used to laugh because I knew that he was lying. So dad dropped me off. I walked inside the school premises. On my way to my class. Sphe came to me. It was still early but I didn't want to entertain him.

Sphe: Alondwe please wait.

Me: What?

Sphe: We need to talk.

Me: About? (I pulled a straight face)

He held my hand and we walked up to a cosy corner.

Sphe: I know that you are mad at me because of the picture. I am really sorry. I was going to tell you baby. I was just scared that you'll leave me.

Me: How can you lie to me. You have a child and you hid that from me Sphephelo. Who does that? How could you?

Sphe: I am sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you.

Alondwe: Please go back to your mini family and leave me alone.

Sphe: We're no longer dating with her mother. Please Alondwe.

Me: Leave me alone Sphephelo.

I left him there. I ran to the bathroom. I locked myself up and cried. I love him so much but I was hurting because he lied to me about the important part of his life. How was I supposed to forgive that?

---

Maud Dhlomo.....

Thandeka didn't succeed. Her dad didn't believe a single word she said. I had nothing to worry about. I was alone in my house. On a Tuesday morning. Dhlomo was coming to my house that night. Evelyn was another problem because I wanted Dhlomo to myself. My phone beeped interrupting my thoughts. It was a text message from an unsaved number.

"Maud bbe. I miss you. It's been years. I am coming back for you. I have forgiven you for everything. I love you.

From: Your soulmate."

I was confused. I started sweating. I called the number and it rang with no answer. I was worried and I didn't know what was happening or who was that person.....

Nobuhle Mthembu.....

During the day I was working. Though my mind was not there I tried to concentrate. Rajiv kept on calling me but I wasn't taking any of his calls. I wanted to believe in us but it was hard. I wanted us to work but I was afraid. I wanted to give us my best shot but there was a huge feeling of doubt in my mind. But my heart, body and soul yearned for his love. I wanted to take the best decision for myself. I was about to have my lunch break when Thandeka called me. I answered.

Me: Mrs Ndunakazi?

Thandeka: Hey dear. I have just landed. Where can I meet you for lunch.

Me: West Street. I will text you the address.

Thandeka: Okay dear see you in a few.

Me: Thank you.

I hung up the call. I smiled. I texted her where I wanted us to meet. I waited for her and after a few minutes she was right in front of me. I smiled and we hugged each other.

Me: You look exhausted!

Thandeka: You have no idea. Let's go for pizza. It's been a while.

Me: Yeah sure why not?

We went to workshop. We ordered and sat down.

Thandeka: So how have you been?

Me: Good. Not so good. In love. Confused. I just don't know.

Thandeka: Woah! Slow down! Tell me what's bothering you?

Me: My boyfriend (I told her my whole situation)

Thandeka: It's a tough one but easy too.

Me: What do you mean?

Thandeka: Love is like gambling. From the beginning you don't know whether you will win or lose.

Me: And that's it Thandeka I am scared to lose. I am so scared.

Thandeka: Investing or starting a business is taking a risk. It's either you'll make a loss or profit. That's how love is like. You can invest in love for years but only to lose in the end or you can win. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't take the risk just because you think you will lose. And you don't know why they are against your relationship. You didn't even ask Rajiv but you're here wanting to give up? He didn't break your heart nor hurt you but you want to give up on him? Come on. What will you do down the road if he does things you don't like you'll leave him? It doesn't go like that in love. You stay until you're really fed up. Then you can let go. What if his siblings are just jealous? Will you forgive yourself knowing that you let him go over a stupid thing?

Me: No I wouldn't forgive myself.

Thandeka: Then stop listening to people. Who probably never felt real love. Follow what you feel in here. (She pointed my heart. I smiled) It's too early to give up my love.

Me: Thank you so much. Now I know what to do. Thanks.

Thandeka: Anytime dear.

We ate our pizza. We conversed about our lives. She told me a little about her life and in my eyes she was blessed. After that I had to go back to work. We stood up and hugged each other.

Me: Thank you so much.

Thandeka: It's Okay. We should do this more often. It was so nice getting to know you.

Me: Yeah. We should.

We hugged each other once more and we went our separate ways. I was feeling guilty that I almost seduced her husband. I was just a Dutch bag. I sighed and went back to work....

---

Rajiv Pillay....

Precious wasn't taking my calls and that was driving me nuts. I wanted to talk to her and clear the air. I didn't want to be a bad person because that was the last thing that I was. I drove to Nandos. I waited for her outside the door. She came out with her colleagues. They were talking and laughing. She saw me and her face changed. I looked at her. She came up to me.

Nobuhle: Hey.

Me: Hey. I called you today and last night.

Nobuhle: I know. I am sorry I didn't take your calls just that-

Me: I understand. Can we please drive to my place so that we can talk.

Nobuhle: I have to go home.

Me: I will take you home. Or you can go in the morning and say you slept at your friend's place.

Nobuhle: Okay let's go.

I opened the front door. She stepped in and I did same. We drove to my place in silence. My sister was at home so I wasn't worried about her. We arrived and we went through. I had to pay for her sleepover. We walked inside.

Me: Make yourself comfortable.

She nodded and sat down. I went to the kitchen and got us drinks. I went to sit down with her. I looked at her. She looked down.

Me: I am the product of **infidelity**. My dad cheated on his wife Claudine. He was on a business trip in India. My mom was just a waitress. Apparently from what I was told my mom seduced my dad and she fell pregnant. Dad came back with her and got a place for her because she was pregnant. She died giving birth to me. Dad had to tell his wife the truth because he needed someone who was going to look after me. Claudine raised me but she was the cruel mom. Everyone treated me bad just because I was a baby of sin. When I was doing grade 8. Claudine told my dad to chase me out of the house because I was old enough to look after myself. And she couldn't look after me. She told him not to give me any money. He was going to pay for my education but dad secretly gave me money. I studied hard. And here I am today. My brother and I used to get along but Claudine didn't want me to get along with her kids. Even Nadine. She's younger than me but they influenced her. My dad is the only person who loves me truly regardless of how I was conceived. So they don't want to see me happy that's why they told you to stay away from me. I love you Precious and I don't want to live my life without you. I want to grow old with you. Please don't leave me. I –

She kissed me probably to stop me from talking. I kissed her back. We kissed for a long time. Her lips were soft and she was gentle the way she touched me sang nothing but love. She broke the kiss and pecked my lips. I wiped her tears.

Nobuhle: I am sorry you had to go through all that. Baby I love you and I want to spend eternity with you. Only you. I don't know how but we will find the way through.

Me: I will love you now, forever and always.

Nobuhle: I will love you in this life and in the next life.

Me: Please don't laugh at me okay.

She giggled and nodded. I pulled her closer to me and I sang for her.

Me: "You and I we don't wanna be like them. We can make it til the end. Nothing can come between you and I, not even the gods above could separate the two of us, no nothing can come between you and I..."

I sang the whole song. She smiled and looked at me. She pinched me.

Me: What?

Nobuhle: You played me. Why did you say I shouldn't laugh at you.

Me: I wanted to make you smile.

Nobuhle: That was beautiful my love.

Me: I love you more than you know it.

Nobuhle: I love you infinitely.

I kissed her forehead and she rested her head on my shoulder. I brushed her head. I was sure that my heart found a home. I found my true love.....

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

I opted to stand up and fix myself, at some point crying wasn't going to help me. I needed to stand up for myself. I took my bag and I went to my class. The first period began and that's where my day began. It was all a drag and I tried to concentrate. I didn't want to fail. Imagine dad beating me up for failing and you'll hear him blaming it all on boys. During my lunch break I was alone. Zenande was with her boyfriend. Sphephelo came with his food and sat next to me. I didn't say anything.

Sphe: How is your day so far?

Me: Cool yours?

Sphe: You're mad at me. My day can't be cool at all. I am sorry Alondwe. Bbe I was going to tell you and believe me when I tell you that I was just scared.

Me: Does she know that you and I are dating?

Sphe: Yes she does but she doesn't know that it's you.

Me: You're lying! Why would she do that if she knows that you have a girlfriend?

He didn't answer me. He took out his phone. Page through it and he showed me the inbox conversation. They were arguing about the post. She was mad at him because Sphe was telling that he has a girlfriend. She must stop acting like they are dating. I checked her profile and it was her. I gave him back his phone. He took it.

Sphe: I am so sorry for keeping my child a secret. (I didn't say anything) Okay can we at least talk about the dance.

Me: I haven't told my mom. I will tell her today. Then we can talk tomorrow. If they agree.

Sphe: I hope they will.

I faked a smile and I nodded. We ate our lunch in silence. The lunch break was over. He stood up, gave me a hug and baby kissed me.

Sphe: I love you Alondwe.

I smiled and nodded. We went our separate ways. The day went on and on until it was after school. I quickly packed my books and I ran to the gate. My mom's car was there. Mesuli met me halfway. I hugged him. He took my bag.

Kuhle: One day I will be schooling here right?

Me: Yes. In a few years time.

Kuhle: That's cool.

We stepped inside the car.

Me: Hey mom and little brother.

Them: Hey.

Alupheli: Phateyen Yoyondwe? (What did you bring for me. Alondwe?)

Me: Chips.

I took out a bag of chips and I gave them both. They thanked me.

Me: How are you mom?

Mom: I am fine baby and you?

Me: I am fine. Mom I need to ask you something.

Mom: Yes.

Me: Someone asked me to be his partner on the matric dance. Can I please go mom please.

Mom: Who's that?

Me: It's just a guy friend.

Mom: Okay. But you'll go when your father agrees to it.

Me: Do you think he'll agree mom?

Mom: I don't know maybe he'll agree.

I nodded and kept quiet. I didn't know what dad was going to say but I was hoping for a positive response. I really wanted to go to the ball.....

---

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

Themba and I decided that we shouldn't separate our kids. They were going to continue staying with him. Uyathandwa told us that those guys were not his friends but they were his bodyguards. His grandpa had them for him. I was going back for the funeral on Friday but I wasn't going to sleep in the Smith house because I saw that Kimberly didn't like it but I couldn't ask. It was all written on her face. Themba must've forced her to agree to the idea. After fetching my kids from school. I had to start preparing dinner.

Me: Thando?

Alupheli: Mama?

Me: Woza la..(come here)

He ran up to me. I was in the kitchen chopping vegetables.

Me: Hamba uyobiza usisi wakho. (Go and call your sister)

Alupheli: Ngiyancena. (Ngiyanqena)

Me: Excuse me!!

He laughed and ran up the stairs. I shook my head. After a few minutes, they both came back. Alondwe had him on her arms. She put him down. He ran off.

Alondwe: Mom?

Me: Your dad said I must teach you how to cook.

Alondwe: Eish mom. I was busy upstairs with my school work.

Me: It's Okay. You'll finish up after this session.

Alondwe: But mom I will be tired.

Me: This is also important Alondwe.

Alondwe: We can do it during weekends.

Me: No. Nabafana laba niyabathanda kodwa you can't even clean nor cook. Who'll marry a lazy wife?

Alondwe: He'll be marrying me because he loves me not because I have skills of a maid mom.

Me: Your marriage won't last if you think love can hold it til the end then you're so wrong baby. Start with taking a pot where we will boil the rice first.

She sulked and took it. I cooked together with her. I was teaching her everything.

Alondwe: But why do guys don't do things like us. It's unfair.

Me: Someone once said what makes a woman special is that they can do things that men can't do. They shouldn't try to do everything that men can do just to prove that they are women.

Alondwe: Wow! That's wise.

Me: Do you want to get married?

Alondwe: If I can find a guy like my dad I can get married mom. (I laughed)

Me: You don't know him as a husband.

Alondwe: But at least I know that he is a good husband. If you're not here. He takes good care of us. He loves us. He can cook good food though sometimes he makes us eat takeaways all the time. (I laughed) When you were pregnant with Alupheli. He took good care of you though you were always crying for him. He's a lovely father. He loves us equally and he'll do anything to protect us. The love he has for you is so beautiful and pure. I love my dad and I wish God can give me a husband like him one day.

I was looking at her as she was talking. I couldn't believe that she was so grown up to notice all those good things about her daddy. I wiped my tears because her words got me crying because I was blessed to have a man like Samkelo in my life. Samkelo was behind us listening to her. I smiled with tears. He came towards me. He wiped my tears. I laughed in between them.

Sam: That was beautiful baby.

Alondwe: Dad you were eavesdropping.

Sam: I am sorry.

We laughed. He kissed me deeply.

Alondwe: I am still a child mom and dad.

We broke the kiss and laughed. He kissed Alondwe's cheek.

Sam: I love you my girls.

Us: We love you too.

He smiled and walked away. He called the boys and they went upstairs. Alondwe and I finished up cooking. We were having a good conversation. After bathing and doing all other stuff. We went to have dinner together. After eating we washed the dishes with Mesuli. We watched TV. Alondwe was studying on the study room. After that we all went to bed.

Everyone slept in their rooms. Samkelo and I were in bed together.

Sam: It's beautiful to know how our daughter notices that we have something beautiful.

Me: Yes I was also amazed. She asked me to go to a matric dance a guy friend asked her to be his date.

Sam: Hhayi hhayi what friend now?

Me: Calm down baby.

Sam: No. What if they do something to her. What if they pour something on her drink and take advantage of her. That's my baby girl. I don't want anything to happen to her.

Me: It's just a matric dance. We won't allow her to go to the after party. We can meet the parents of the boy just to make sure. And find out when the ball will end then we can fetch her. Let's trust her to be responsible Samkelo.

Sam: What if she sleeps with that boy. Do you remember when I broke your virginity. It was the day of the after party.

Me: Alondwe is 16yrs old. I doubt that she's sexual active. Please let her go.

Sam: Eish. I don't like it but it's okay. She can go to the ball only.

Me: We will make that clear.

Samkelo nodded. I smiled and kissed him. He made me sit on top of him. We slowly took off each other's clothes and we made love countless times...

---

Maud Dhlomo.....

ONE MONTH LATER. I was still receiving texts from a mysterious person. I was confused and that made my BP to be high. Dhlomo noticed that something wasn't right with me but I tried to hold it together. This was worried me. It made my seat hot. It made my life miserable that I even lost weight. This phone was never off but the person never answered my calls. It was a Thursday night beginning of May. Dhlomo wasn't coming to me that night. There was a buzz on the gate.

Me: Who is it?

Person: I have a delivery for Maud.

Me: Okay. Come through...

I opened the gate. The door bell rang. I went to attend the door. I opened the door and I got the greatest shock of my life.

Person: Maud?

Me: ZULU?

Zulu: It's me. I am back. I am back for you mntakwethu.

I couldn't take it anymore. I passed out.

Chapter : 6

Love is a beautiful thing. I can't believe it's been a month and a few weeks since Rajiv and I started dating. He was just a beautiful soul. I couldn't understand why Claudine and her kids didn't want to know such a soul. He was an inspiring person who knew how to put a smile on a sad face. Thandeka on the other hand was a good friend. Patricia was still my friend but Thandeka was taking the medal for being a good friend. Patricia and I hardly spoke because I was no longer working at the club. But she knew about my boyfriend. I was trying to catch up with her by spending my weekend with her. I wasn't working so I took my things and I went to the lounge. Dad was sitting on the couch.

Me: Mvelase?

Dad: Kuyiwaphi? Sewuqomile yini ndodakazi? (Where are you going? Have you started dating my daughter?)

Me: Chabo baba. Ngiya kumngani wami. (No dad. I am visiting my friend)

Dad: Angishongo phela ukuthi angizifuni izinkomo. Usuziphathe kahle impela nodadewenu ngokunjalo. Sengikhulile nabazukulu bayadingeka. (I didn't say I don't want cows. You have been a good girl, along with your sister. I am old now. I want to see my grandchildren)

Me: Uzobabona baba. Ungakhathazeki. (You'll see them dad. Don't worry)

Dad: Kade ngicabanga nje ukuthi lo mfana wakwa Mbhense ave elungile. (I was thinking about that boy from Mbhense family. He's a good boy)

Me: Hhayi cha baba. Ngingakwenzela ukudla before ngihambe? (Can I make something to eat for you before I leave)

Dad: Cha phela ngiyamdinga umkhwenyana. (I need a son in-law)

I laughed and I went to the kitchen. I prepared something to eat for him. I finished and I served him. He thanked me. He was about to talk about a husband again. I quickly took my bags. I said my goodbyes. He laughed. I left him. My father was seriously in need of a son in-law. I wasn't ready for marriage. I didn't know a lot about relationships. I took a taxi to west street from West Street to South Beach. Patricia and I were going to the beach. I arrived in her flat and she was having sex with her boyfriend I guess. She was moaning loudly on her room and I wanted to laugh. I plugged in my earphones and I thought about sex. I mean why do women moan? Is it important? Does it make the sex special? Or more enjoyable? I laughed at my thoughts. I couldn't imagine myself doing it and enjoying it for that matter. I got disturbed when someone tapped my shoulder. It was my friend. I smiled and took out my earphones. Bradley said his goodbye and left.

Me: You're dirty!!

Tricia: Forgive me baby. My little one needs to grow.

Me: What do you mean?

Tricia: Bradley and I are pregnant.

Me: Wow!! I am so happy for you baby. Did you tell your parents?

Tricia: Mom is excited but dad is angry because I am not married yet.

Me: He'll come around.

Tricia: Yeah I guess. Okay let me go and change. So that we'll leave.

I nodded and she went to her room. She came back dressed up. We walked to the beach. We had a lot and lot of fun. We took pictures. We ate and went for a swim. It was so fun and relaxing.

Later we walked back to her apartment. I saw Rajiv's car.

Tricia: I thought you were going to spend time with me.

Me: He wanted to see me.

Tricia: Okay.

Me: Are you mad?

Tricia: No.

She walked away. Oho! I went to my bae. He smiled when he saw me. He attempted to hug me. I stopped him.

Me: I am wet bbe.

Rajiv: Let me kiss you then.

I smiled and kissed him. He laughed in between the kiss and stopped.

Me: What?

Rajiv: You're making my clothes wet.

Me: I am sorry love.

Rajiv: Can we go to my place. You'll bath there and you'll come back to your friend tomorrow.

Me: She won't be pleased.

Rajiv: Please baby.

Me: Okay.

I went back inside the house. Patricia was eating.

Me: Baby. I am leaving okay. I will come back tomorrow.

Tricia: That's unfair.

Me: I have to go please.

Tricia: Are you getting his dick already?

Me: No! I won't until he marries me.

Tricia: Good luck with that.

Me: It's not my choice.

Tricia: It was better when you were single. I am not used to this thing of sharing you with a man.

I laughed and kissed her cheek. I brushed her tummy. She giggled. I went to take my laptop bag and my other bag. I said my goodbyes and I left. Rajiv opened the door for me. I stepped in. He did the same thing.

Me: Your seat will be wet.

Rajiv: You'll clean it. (I laughed.)

Me: Even my weave my weave is wet.

Rajiv: I don't like weaves. You have to stop wearing them.

Me: That's the part I don't like about relationships. Being told what to do.

Rajiv: So I can't tell you what I don't like because you don't like being told what to do?

Me: I didn't say that.

Rajiv: That's what you're trying to tell me Precious.

Me: What's wrong with weaves?

Rajiv: What's wrong with your natural hair? God gave you that hair but no! You prefer fake hair. It's like you're telling him that he made a mistake by giving you that hair you have. (I didn't say anything at all.) Once you're my wife. You won't put on any weave. You better enjoy them while you can.

I looked at the road. I was just pissed off. I didn't even want to argue further. Because I saw nothing wrong with weaves. We arrived at his place. I opened the door for myself. We walked up to his apartment. I went to shower first because I was wet. I finished up. I looked for a pair of scissors on the drawers. I found one and I took off my weave. It was wasted. I was going to put a new one on, the following day. I finished up and I moisturised my body. Rajiv had seen my naked body a countless times because I used to sleepover whenever his sister was not around. I wrapped my body with a towel. I made my way to his room. He was on my laptop on the lounge.

Rajiv: What was going on here. Isn't this your friend's husband?

I looked closer. It was the pictures that I Photoshopped. Me and Samkelo. I forgot to delete them on my laptop. I deleted them on my phone only.

Me: Uhm. I was just playing with the pictures.

Rajiv: Really? By doing this? What do you call this?

Me: That's before we met Raj. I forgot to delete the pictures. I was a little obsessed with the guy. I am sorry.

Rajiv: Obsessed with your friend's husband? This is crazy?!

Me: I know but I am not there now.

Rajiv: Does she know?

Me: No. She doesn't.

Rajiv: You have to tell her.

Me: Excuse me??

Rajiv: You can't build friendship on lies. You have to come clean and tell her the truth. Then you can start on a clean slate.

Me: I can't do that.

Rajiv: If you don't I will.

Me: You can't do that.

Rajiv: I can.

Me: You know what. I will just wear my pyjamas and sleep right now. You've ruin my mood. Big time.

Rajiv: Ruin your mood by telling you the truth. Giving you an advice?

I didn't answer him. I went to his room. I wore my pyjamas and threw myself on his bed.

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

Samkelo was busy with the Maud situation. He didn't want me involved. I wondered what was going to happen to her but my husband was just ignoring me with giving me the full details. He was on the phone in our room. I went to sit on his lap. He kissed my lips. I giggled. He finished up and kissed me hungrily. I giggled softly. I stopped.

Sam: I want you now. (He unbuttoned my pyjamas top.)

Me: Slow down Mr Ndunakazi.

Sam: I need you. I want to squeeze your ass right now not tomorrow. (He kissed my neck)

Me: Samkelo! Ahh. Bbe please. Let's talk about Maud.

Sam: Maud can wait. This can't wait!

He flipped me over and he was on top of me. He went down on me. He took off my pants and separated my legs. He shoved his tongue on me. I moaned loudly. My body froze. I got the shock that made me feel my blood getting warm. He stopped and came up to my lips.

Sam: Do you want to continue talking?

Me: No bbe.

Sam: What do you want?

Me: I want you inside me.

I grabbed him by his neck and shoved my tongue down on his throat. We made love until we were both exhausted.

Sam: Shit! Woman I love you!

Me: I love you too Mr Magic!

We laughed. He kissed me deeply. My body started all over.

Sam: Don't you want a slow motion?

Me: I... Want...it!

Sam: Hhayi! Rest now!

Me: Samkelo!!

Sam: No bbe. You'll get sick.

Me: Really now? It's been 9 years since you've been fucking me. Don't count that time were not married. Not forgetting the high school sex. You never thought I will get sick!

Sam: You still have to go to work tomorrow.

Me: Please bbe. It's Saturday tomorrow.

Sam: You love this dick neh?

I laughed. Mxm! He gave me a goood slow motion. I felt at ease afterwards.

Me: That was good.

Sam: I know I am good.

Me: Mxm! So tell me about Maud.

Sam: Why?

Me: Hello? Maud was my project. You took it away from me.

Sam: I was giving you some time off.

Me: Give me an update please.

Sam: Okay so. We created her husband. That was the plan obviously.

Me: Did it work?

Sam: I don't know yet. But she will believe that her husband didn't die. Whereas he's dead. The guy will convince her that they are in love. He'll leave the country with her and he'll do whatever he wants with her. That way we will never see her again.

Me: Wow! But why did you make it this easy?

Sam: Do you think it was easy. I started by sending her messages. Her blood pressure went high. I had someone watching her.

Me: You should've made her see the ghost first before it can rock up on her door.

Sam: A.a I didn't think of it like that.

Me: We can change the plan fast. Give me your phone.

He gave me his phone and we changed his plan...

//////////

Alondwe Ndunakazi...

I forgave Sphe for lying to me. I couldn't be angry forever. I loved the guy and I wanted to be with him. I was still waiting for my parents response about the matric ball. They wanted to make sure that it's safe for me to go to the dance. I was in my room after cleaning the house. Yeah! I knew how to clean and cook. Dad told mom to teach me. I did all the chores while mom and dad were still sleeping. On Saturdays they took forever to wake up. Mesuli and Alupheli were watching TV. I had made breakfast for them. Dad ate breakfast made by his wife. I took my books and study under my blanket. The weather was cold. There was a knock on the door.

Me: Come in.

My mom came in. She was on her gown. She joined me inside my blankets.

Mom: What are you doing?

Me: I am doing physical sciences.

Mom: That's good. Your father and I wants to talk to you. Can you give us your time?

Me: Yes mom.

She took her phone and texted dad. Dad came inside my room. I put my books away. Dad joined us. I was in the middle.

Mom: We want to talk about the matric dance.

Me: Yes.

Dad: You can go to the ball.

Me: THANK YOU!!

I hugged them both.

Dad: But –

Me: Okay?

Dad: You won't sleep with that boy.

Me: Dad! I wasn't going to sleep with him.

Dad: Look baby. We love you and we don't want you to repeat the same mistakes we did.

Mom: You're still young Alondwe. You can't have sex now. You're 16yrs old.

Dad: When your mom and I started being sexual active. We were only 18yrs. We thought we got this game. But she fell pregnant towards the end of year. She found out that she was pregnant the following year.

Mom: It was hard baby. Your father and I broke up. The pregnancy was driving me nuts. And my dad chased me out of his house when he found out I was pregnant. He cut me off completely. Themba and Andile took care of me.

Me: Dad where were you when mom needed you the most?

Dad: I was angry at her. I thought she was cheating on me because of something I saw. I wanted to do things that will hurt her back but I didn't succeed.

Mom: All we ever wanted was to give you the best life you deserve though we were not together but we tried. And Themba played a huge role in that. Raising a baby is not easy

Alondwe. Specially when you're a teen mom.

We don't want you to be pregnant.

Dad: And there are diseases out there. You're our first born we don't want you to die. And don't think that if you can get pregnant we will hire a nanny for you so that you can continue with whatever you want. You must know that once you get pregnant you will take a gap year and raise your child yourself. We won't pay any nanny. So the choice is yours. It's either you choose your education or sex.

Mom: Do you understand Alondwe?

Me: Yes mom.

Dad: When a boy loves you. He'll wait for you. There is no rush. Once you get married or grow older you'll do sex your whole life. Whenever and however. Don't let boys fool you. I was once a player and all I wanted was to sleep with girls. Any girl I wanted. Lucky for me I didn't have to lie and say I love them but still I was breaking hearts. I had a motive. Your mother came to my rescue. She loved me back to life. Because I loved her I waited for her until she was ready. Waiting didn't kill me. So it can never kill anyone okay?

Me: Yes daddy.

Dad: We're telling this because we love you and it's hard to have a baby before marriage.

Mom: Look at me. I have two kids with my ex husband. I don't live with them. My daughter needs me but I can't be there for her fully. I don't want the same thing for you. There was a time where your dad and Themba drove me crazy. Because I had babies with both of them. Do you think I wanted that? To have two baby Daddies? No I didn't but it happened.

Dad: But through it all we love you and you all are the best thing that has ever happened to us Nana.

Me: I love you too mom and dad. Thanks.

They smiled. I kissed their cheeks. They stood up and told me to continue with my studies. I did just that. I spent my whole day Studying.

//////////

Maud Dhlomo.....

When I woke up I was in my room. Dhlomo was beside me. I panicked and looked around. Zulu was no longer inside the house.

Me: Where is he?

Dhlomo: He? Who?

Me: Him. That – my –

I started crying. My husband held me closer to him. Everything didn't make sense was I seeing a ghost or was my husband really alive? I was so frustrated. I didn't know what to do.

Dhlomo: Are you alright?

Me: Yes baba. I am fine. I think I was having a bad dream that seem so real.

Dhlomo: Okay. I will tell the maid to make you a strong cup of coffee.

Me: Ngiyabonga Dinangwe.

He stood up and he walked out of my room. I took my phone and called Olwethu. She answered.

Olwethu: Mom.

Me: I think I am going crazy baby.

Olwethu: What do you mean?

Me: I think I am seeing your father's ghost!

Olwethu: What? That's impossible.

Me: I know but it is pretty clear.

Olwethu: You need to rest mama or see a Doctor. Dad died we buried him.

Me: I don't know what's happening.

Olwethu: I have to go mama. My babies needs me. I will call you later.

Me: Okay baby.

I hung up the call. I sighed. I looked around. I sighed. "Maud" a voice came outside. I looked outside my bedroom window. I saw him again but he disappeared quickly. I screamed. I cried. Dhlomo came inside my room with a cup of coffee.

Dhlomo: What's wrong?

Me: (shaking) Please stay with me. Please.

Dhlomo: Shhh. I am here.

He gave me coffee. Which didn't taste like coffee it tasted like herbal tea. I drank it at once. After that cup my head was spinning. I head sounds like I was in hell. People were screaming. I looked at Dhlomo. He looked like he was crying blood.

Me: Make it stop! Please! Please!

I screamed. Dhlomo held me. I pushed him off and I ran around my yard. I was trying to look for my husband.....

Nobuhle Mthembu.....

The following day. I woke up. I was in no mood for Rajiv. I didn't see a reason why I had to tell Thandeka about Samkelo. I wasn't going to do it. I went to shower while he was still sleeping. He joined me inside the shower a few minutes later.

Rajiv: Good morning bbe.

Me: Morning.

Rajiv: Are you still mad about yesterday?

Me: No.

Rajiv: But I can see that you're mad.

Me: I am not.

Rajiv: lying Precious is never a good thing. I hate lies that's ONE big issue. I HATE LIES. I prefer the truth no matter how hard it is. So please don't lie to me. Do you still love her husband?

Me: No I don't.

Rajiv: Then why is it hard for you to come clean to her?

Me: I don't see the need.

Rajiv: What if it was her who was on your laptop? What if it was her who saw your pictures? How Do you think she was going to react?

Me: I don't know.

Rajiv: Please tell her. And ensure her that it was a silly fling. That way you'll gain her trust. She'll know that you're an honest person.

Me: Why is it so important?

Rajiv: Lies always find their way to the light. What if one day you two go out for drinks. Maybe you got drunk and you tell her mistakenly about this? It's better to tell her now not later. I am not trying to control you. But if you love someone you bring them to the light. You walk through life with them. Trinity is a good friend. Don't ruin this friendship baby please.

Me: Okay. I will tell her the truth.

Rajiv: Thank you. I love you.

Me: I love you too.

Rajiv: You have beautiful hair by the way.

I giggled softly and smiled. It was his first time seeing my Afro. He kissed me. We kissed slowly but passionately. I wanted him, I needed him but there was nothing I could do because we couldn't go that far. We pulled out from the kiss. He kissed my forehead and we finished up showering. We did the whole process.

Rajiv: How about we play games. Then afterwards we will have breakfast.

Me: Yes! FIFA 2010.

Rajiv: You'll lose.

Me: Never!

He laughed and we went to play. I was having fun. At the beginning I was winning until Rajiv started tickling me using one hand.

Me: Stop it Rajiv. (I laughed)

Rajiv: What?

Me: What you're doing!

He laughed and stopped. I scored more goals. I screamed because he was losing.

Rajiv: (screaming) Snake! Bbe! Run.

I quickly let go of the joystick and ran to his bedroom. But he wasn't following me. I heard him laughing. I came out and he was busy playing. He was winning. He knew that I am afraid of the snakes.

Me: RAJIV!!

He laughed hard. The game was over and he won. I sulked. He kissed me. I pushed him.

Rajiv: You can't say no to my lips.

I folded my lips. He tickled me. I laughed. He kissed me immediately and I responded. My heart was beating fast. I was in love with him with my everything. We pulled out after some time. He kissed my forehead.

Rajiv: I love you.

Me: I love you too.

Rajiv: Let me teach you how to cook Indian breakfast.

I giggled and stood up. We went to the kitchen. He taught me. It was so nice and fun.

After that we had breakfast. His sister walked in while we were washing the dishes. She didn't greet us.

Rajiv: You won't greet us or you don't see us?

Nadine: Get off my case. Please. I am not in a mood to entertain you. Tsk!

Rajiv: I am your brother and you can't talk to me like that.

Nadine: But I just did. What will you do? Shameful child! Tsk!

Rajiv's jaw tightened. He tried to take a step forward to his sister. I held his hand. He looked back at me. I shook my head trying to stop him. He closed his eyes and sighed.

Nadine: You should thank your girlfriend for that. Tsk!

She went to her room.

Me: I am sorry.

Rajiv: It's cool.

Me: No. It's not you don't deserve all this shit.

Rajiv: I am used to it though it feels fresh everyday but I am fine.

I hugged and kissed him. We went to his room. We took my bags and we drove straight to South Beach.

Me: Why is she living with you?

Rajiv: I don't know. She moved in earlier this year. They didn't tell me why.

Me: Okay. Please park by that saloon I want to do my hair.

He nodded. We parked there. He stepped out and opened the door for me. I stepped out. We hugged each other.

Rajiv: I will miss you.

Me: Me too. What are you going to do now.

Rajiv: I am going to study. I have exams coming up.

Me: Okay. I will see you soon. I don't know when Okay?

Rajiv: Okay.

He baby kissed me. We hugged each other. He left. I went to the saloon and I did Disney weave. I was looking good on it. I called Thandeka afterwards. She picked up.

Thandeka: Hey

Me: Hey. Can we meet up. There's something that I would like to discuss with you.

Thandeka: Okay. Can we meet later at the moment I am busy with my daughter.

Me: Okay. You'll tell me when you're free.

Thandeka: Yeah. Bye.

Me: Bye.

I was quite scared. But I was hoping that she'll forgive me and understand. I went to my friend's place. She was not around. I decided to change and go to the beach. I wasn't going to swim. I was going to chill. I walked to the beach. I bought ice cream and I went to sit on the soil. I was looking at people. Then I saw Thandeka's husband with his two sons and a young woman. They were having a lot of fun. I was curious to know that girl. I mean Thandeka spoke highly of her husband. Was it possible that he was cheating on her? I stood up when I saw them coming on the direction that I was in. I wanted him to see me, not because I want him. He saw me and smiled. Lord! This guy! He was cute. But he was off limits I understood that.

Sam: I will meet you there. I want to greet this lady here.

Girl: Okay. Come boys.

They followed the young lady.

Sam: Nobuhle right?

Me: Yes

Sam: I was going to give you a hug. Now I am wet.

Me: It's Okay. I can see you're having a good time with your boys. Where is Thandeka?

Sam: She is with Alondwe and some boy. They asked her to go with them. They are hunting outfits for the matric dance.

Me: Oh. Okay. I wanted to see her but she told me she's busy.

Sam: Yeah. Are you good?

Me: Yebo. I am fine and you?

Sam: I am good. Hey. Let me get going.

Me: Yeah. That nanny is young. You don't want the kids to get hurt.

Sam: (laughing) She's my sister not a nanny.

Me: Oh I am sorry.

Sam: No problem. Bye.

Me: Bye.

He smiled and ran off. I looked at him until he disappeared. That girl didn't look like him. Even a mad man could tell that they were not related. Mxm! There was no need for me to come clean to Thandeka because clearly her husband was a jerk..

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

With my mother's help Sphe and I found the designer for our outfits and we knew what we wanted. I was really happy about it and I was hoping that the day could be the great success. Only a few weeks were left then there was going to be the dance. After that long day I was in my room sleeping. My phone rang. I took it. My grandfather was calling me. My father's dad. I smiled and answered.

Me: Mkhulu?

Grandpa: Your grandma told me that you were here and yet you didn't think about waiting for your grandfather?

Me: Hawu mkhulu. We were supposed to go back to school. Indodana yakho yathi ngeke sikwazi ukulinda. (Your son said we can't wait)

Grandpa: Hayi MaNdunakazi bekumele uyenze ukuthi ihlale. Angisakubonanga phela ngoba uvele waya kwaDhlomo. (You were supposed to make him wait for me. I didn't see you

because you chose to visit Dhlomo)

Me: Hawu mkhulu. Sorry Ndunakazi wami. I will come and visit you. June holidays. I will stay with you until you tell me to go back home you'll see.

Grandpa: Okay. Your father told me that you're going to the dance?

Me: Yes mkhulu.

Grandpa: Uziphathe kahle laphaya. And be careful. Tell all these boys that you're taken by the most handsome man on earth. (I laughed)

Me: Charmer lami lakwa Ndunakazi. Haa mkhulu I will tell them. That I have ucream phela Mina.

Grandpa: White chocolate. (We laughed)

Me: Kodwa mkhulu why didn't you convince mom and dad that I must live with you? My aunt is leaving you soon and ubab'omncane left. You and Grandma will stay alone?

Grandpa: Don't worry. You will do your degree here at UCT. You will stay with us.

Me: That's way better.

Grandpa: Yes. I have to go now mzukulu. Syanithanda uyezwa?

Me: Nathi siyanithanda mkhulu.

Grandpa: Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight.

We hung up the call. My grandfather was the best of the best. I loved him. I smiled and went back to sleep. I woke up again. My phone was ringing. It was unsaved number. I answered.

Me: Hello?

Caller: Is this Alondwe Ndunakazi?

Me: Yes. And you're?

Caller: Sphe's girlfriend. Please girl stay away from Sphe. He's mine. Him and our baby they are more important to me. Don't cling on him or you'll regret it.

Me: Should I take that as a warning or a threat?

Caller: A warning. You home wrecker!

Me: Geez girl! That's a huge word! Home wrecker! Were you and Sphe married?

Caller: We love each other and you're a distraction. Please leave him alone.

Me: I will do that, once he tells me so. Bye bye dear. Oh and by the way you two made a very cute baby. Goodnight!

Caller: Bitch you-

I hung up the call and blocked the number. I was quite pissed. Alupheli walked inside my room. He was running.

Me: Awunqonqozi ngani wena? (Why didn't you knock?)

Alupheli: Fushegi!

Me: Hawu! Uyangithuka. Ngizomtshela ubaba! Woza! (You're insulting me? I will tell Dad) He laughed. He jumped up and down. I ran up to him. I picked him up. I went downstairs. Aunt Melokuhle was home.

Me: Hey aunty.

Aunt: Hey my baby.

Me: Daddy your son insulted me.

Dad: He said what?

Me: I was asking why he didn't knock and he said Fusegi kimi.

Dad: What? Thando?

Alupheli: Unamanga akaze nisho. (She's lying. I didn't say that)

Dad: Bring him here. Kuhle go and take your mama's wooden spoon!

Aunt: Don't beat the child bhuti.

Dad: Uyeyisa lo. Ubadlula bonke futhi. Bring him to me.

Alupheli was crying and kicking. Mom came to us.

Mom: Why is my baby crying?

Nobody answered her. Mesuli came back with the spoon. He gave it to dad.

Dad: Umthukelani usisi wakho? (Why did you insult your sister?)

He cried louder. He didn't respond. Dad started beating him up. He cried. He didn't stop.

Mom: Samkelo, myeke phela manje. (Samkelo stop now)

He didn't stop until Alupheli said "Sorry". That's where dad stopped. Alupheli ran up to mom. Mom picked him up and they went to the kitchen together....

////////

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

I couldn't meet up with Nobuhle because I was really busy with Alondwe and her partner. They were very excited about the dance. I could tell that they were really good friends they got along very well. I was in the kitchen trying to calm my son down. His father seriously beat him.

Me: Musa ukukhala phela baby. Thula yezwa. (Don't cry.)

He cried louder. He was rubbing his eyes. Alondwe came inside the kitchen.

Me: At least you should've told me not your father.

Alondwe: But he insulted me mama.

Me: Is it nice to hear him cry like this now? He's just a child for goodness sake.

Alondwe: We're all babies here. Why is it different with him? So he mustn't be beaten if he's wrong mama?

Me: Tsk!

I walked up to his room with his juice. We sat on the double bed. I gave him the juice. He drank it. I wiped his tears.

Alupheli: Mama?

Me: Thando?

Alupheli: Angisamfuni ubaba. Ungishayile yena mina. (I don't want dad anymore. He was beating me)

Me: Ungaphinde nawe uthuke inhlamba yezwa? (Don't ever use vulgar language)

He nodded and rested his head on my chest.

Alupheli: Zolala nawe namuhla angithi? (I will sleep with you tonight right?)

Me: Yes.

We both got in under covers. We conversed until we both fell asleep. I was woken up by Samkelo. I looked at him.

Sam: You won't sleep with me tonight?

Me: No I won't.

Sam: Why?

Me: I am sleeping with Alupheli.

Sam: But he's asleep now Thandeka.

Me: He'll wake up and cry.

Sam: Fine I will sleep here.

I didn't say anything. I closed my eyes and tried to sleep.

Sam: Are you mad at me?

Me: Mad? Because?

Sam: For beating Alupheli?

Me: He's your son. So why would I be mad. You were disciplining him your way.

Sam: Oh.

He slept with us. I was slowly drifting off then I heard him talking.

Sam: I love you.

I was too sleepy to respond. I just nodded and mumbled "Nami" then I was out.

//////////

Maud Dhlomo....

I didn't find him. My maid and my husband tried to stop me. I was so confused about everything. I didn't understand what was happening. Dhlomo held me tightly then everything went back to normal.

Me: What happened? Huh?

Dhlomo: You were running away like you're chasing someone.

Me: No you're not serious.

Dhlomo: It's Okay. Let's go back inside. I want to go to work. I am on duty.

Me: You'll leave me alone?

Dhlomo: I will come back Nkosikazi.

I nodded and we walked back inside the house. He kissed me and he left. I sat on my lounge and watch TV. The maid gave me tea. That tasted like herbal tea. I drank it at once. I then went watch TV in my room. The room was spinning. All I could hear was the cry of Thandeka when she was a baby. That cry she cried when she wanted her mother. It was so painful. I started crying.

Me: I am sorry Thandeka. Forgive me.

I was sweating and panting. And my late husband stood by the door.

Zulu: Follow me Maud. I will make it all go away. Come...

He opened his hands. Should I follow him?

Nobuhle Mthembu.....

I spent a few minutes just chilling, thinking about my life and Rajiv. I smiled, sighed and walked back to my friend's flat. While I was still walking my phone rang. My sister was calling. I answered. She spoke to me before I could talk.

Phili: Please come back home.

Me: What happened?

Phili: It's Sakhile. Hurry up please.

I quickly ran to the flat. I took my bags. I met my friend at the door.

Tricia: You're leaving?

Me: Yes. I am in a hurry. Philisiwe just called. She said something happened to Sakhile. I have to go.

Tricia: I am coming with you.

I nodded quickly. We closed the door and we went to take a cab. We took another one from workshop straight to eMlazi. I was so worried. I was panicking. I didn't know what had happened to my brother. We arrived at home. There were cars outside the gate. We walked inside the house. There were people inside the house. The Mbhense family was also there. We sat down and greeted them.

Me: What happened Sakhile?

Dad: I don't know what came over your brother.

Sakhile: I was angry sisi. He had no right to speak about you like that.

Me: What are you talking about?

Mom: Your brother stabbed Mbhense's son.

Me: Sandile?

Mom: Yes.

Me: What? Sakhile why would you do that?

Sakhile: I heard your conversation with dad. That he wanted you to marry him. I got angry because I don't want you to get married. You'll leave me. I confronted Sandile and I asked him if he wanted to marry you. I told him to forget about it. And he spoke ill things about you. Things that I can't even share. I got angry and I stabbed him twice on his ab.

Me: SAKHILE!! How could you do something like that? Are you mad. You'll go to jail. Do

you want that? Where did you get the knife for goodness sake?

Sakhile: No sisi I don't. I carry the knife for protection.

Me: Where is Sandile?

Sakhile: He's in the hospital. He wanted to see you and talk to you.

Me: Talk to me about?

Sakhile: I don't know.

Mbhense: What your brother did to my son is unforgivable but because your father is my friend I can try and convince my son not press the charges.

Me: But my brother is under age.

Mbhense: My son know people in high places. He can convince them to put him in juvenile prison. The place of safety, because it seems like your brother was high.

Me: Sakhile? You smoke now?

Sakhile: It was two joints of weed Buhle.

Me: You make it sound like it's a good thing.

Mom: I don't know what to do. He listens to you Nobuhle and now that you're always not here it's hard to get him back on the line.

Me: Dad?

Dad: I am also clueless when it comes to your brother.

Phili: Sis just go to the hospital first. We will deal with Sakhile afterwards.

I nodded. Mbhense was going to drive me to the hospital. Patricia stayed behind. We then drove straight to the hospital. Still in my mind I was confused. I know I have neglected my brother a lot for work but I never thought that I meant that much to him that he can try to kill someone just to stop me from leaving. This was very hard. Sakhile was like a child to me. He spoke to me about everything that bothered him and he listens to me. Surely I wasn't there when he needed me and he turned to weed for comfort. It was very hard. But I wanted to concentrate on what Sandile had to say .....

////////////////////

Rajiv Pillay.....

Sunday, during the day I was hungry. I went to Nandos at Berea. Precious's phone was off. She only sent me a text saying "Thanks for the advice bbe. Thandeka and I sorted our differences" I was relieved to hear that. Honesty is the most important thing in life. And I hate lies serious. They destroy people, relationships and families. I didn't know what was going on with her but something was not right. I tried not to worry too much because I was studying. I didn't need any kind of distraction. I walked inside the restaurant. I joined the line.

Me: I think I know you?

Thandeka: Oh yeah. Rajiv. You're Nobuhle's boyfriend. I am Trinity.

Me: You're one of the good friends. I thought maybe you were going to neglect her. I know it was wrong of her to get obsessed over your husband. When I saw those pictures she

Photoshop I was quite surprised.

Thandeka: Okay what are you talking about?

Me: I am talking about the obsession she had over your husband.

She was shocked like someone who knew nothing about what I just told her.

Cashier: Mam please order.

Thandeka: I am sorry. Bye.

She immediately left. I was also confused. But Precious said she told her the truth. What kind of the truth did she tell her. Mm. I felt so bad that I had ruin her day. She looked like someone who was coming from church because she had her Holy Bible on her hands. I ordered and I waited for my order trying so hard to digest what just happened.....

//////////

To claim the following Episode. I need at least 100 comments on each episode. That way I can be motivated to post the next episode. I need to hear your views about the episodes. If that can happen expect a maximum of four episodes a day. Or three at least. But on Wednesdays and Thursdays I am always busy. I hope my wish will come true.

Thandeka Ndunakazi...

I rushed back to my car with nothing. I stepped inside and I sighed.

Sam: Bbe are you alright?

Me: Yeah.

Alondwe: Where's the food mama?

Sam: Yeah.

Me: Uhm. Eh. Bbe please go and order. Something disturbed me seriously.

Sam: What happened?

Me: It's nothing to worry yourself about. I can handle it.

Sam: I don't like what you're doing Thandeka.

Me: Just buy KFC. We don't wait longer hours like Nandos.

He nodded and left. I sighed. I couldn't believe it. Nobuhle was obsessed over my husband? I mean I thought she was my friend. I thought we had a great friendship but no! She had other intentions of stealing my husband. My Samkelo? Yoh! Hhayi it was a hard pill to swallow.

Alondwe: Mom is everything alright?

Me: Yes baby. Alupheli ungalali ulambile. (Alupheli don't sleep while you're hungry.)

He started crying.

Me: A.a angshongo ukuthi cefa hawu.

He didn't stop crying. He kept on rubbing his eyes.

Alondwe: Aycha. Ngathi ubanga iscefe ke manje. Stop crying hawu.

Me: Mesuli stop eating sweets! Your teeth have a problem and you don't want to listen to me. You're always eating lollipops.

Kuhle: Hawu mama.

Me: Give that lollipop to Thando.

Kuhle: Howu angfuni. (I don't want to)

Me: Hheywena!

He gave it to Alupheli but he didn't want. He put on his hand. Alupheli threw it on the front. The lollipop hit the car mirror.

Me: Alondwe unbuckle him and bring him to me.

Alondwe: Okay mama.

She did that and she stepped out of the back seat. I opened the door and took him from her arms. She closed it. I made him sit on my lap.

Me: Thula wena!

He didn't stop crying. Samkelo came back with food.

Sam: Why is he crying?

Me: Uyeyisa nje. He's sleepy and probably hungry.

Sam: Okay. He'll be fine. Mesuli! And this lollipop here?

Kuhle: It wasn't me dad. It was Alupheli. He threw it there.

Sam: Wena khanda!

He said pointing Alupheli. Alupheli cried and buried his face on my chest. Samkelo threw the lollipop away. I tried to make my son stop crying. But he didn't until we arrived at home. I went upstairs with him. I bathed him with cold water. He cried until I finished. After that I went downstairs to feed him. Everyone was eating.

Me: You couldn't wait for us?

Alondwe: We were hungry mama.

Me: Kuhle why are you not eating?

Kuhle: I have something on my tooth mom.

Me: It's those sweets you eat.

Sam: Come here.

He stood up and went to his father. He made open his mouth widely and he picked out the pieces of sweet. He went back to his seat and started eating.

Sam: Your teeth are damaged Scelokuhle. If I ever see you eating sweets. Ngizokushaya (I will beat you) Be warned. Are we clear?

Mesuli nodded in fear. We continued eating. After that Alupheli was fast asleep. I went upstairs and put him on his cot. I took my phone and called Nobuhle. Her phone was on voicemail. I was quite pissed that clearly meant she was just playing with my feelings. Maybe being friends with her was a bad idea after all. I went to our room. Samkelo was on the phone laughing. He was talking about Maud. I took off my clothes and I went close to him. He played with my breasts while he was talking. He finished up and he kissed me. He kissed me for a while and we pulled out.

Sam: What's bothering you?

Me: It's Nobuhle.

Sam: What about her?

Me: Her boyfriend told me she's obsessed over you. She even Photoshop pictures.

Samkelo laughed really hard. I looked at him. He saw that I was serious.

Sam: Baby he was joking about it.

Me: Are you serious?

Sam: Yeah. Your friend never made a move on me nor look at me in a sexy way.

Me: But he was so serious. He wasn't lying.

Sam: Thandeka are you serious?

Me: Yes I am serious.

Sam: Hhaybo? I don't know what to say.

Me: Her phone is off. I wanted to talk to her.

Sam: But you know that I am yours. No woman can have the power to take me away from you.

Me: I trust you.

Sam: Please do. Angisiwo uthathekile Mina bbe. You and I have a beautiful family. I wouldn't do anything to jeopardise that. I love you. And only you.

Me: I love you too Ndunakazi.

He kissed me and we made holy love on a Sunday.....

//////////

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

Ever since Sphe's baby mama called. I didn't take any of his calls. I was still angry because clearly he was the one who told her that he's dating me. I wasn't going to entertain the baby mama. No! I wondered what happened because my mom seems so disturbed after she came back from Nandos. I was praying that it was nothing that can break them apart. I didn't want them to leave each other. They were good together. I was studying. My phone rang. I took it. Uyathandwa was calling. I answered.

Me: Hey bhuti.

Uyathandwa: Hey. How are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Uyathandwa: I am cool. Where's mom. I've been trying to call her but she's not picking up

Me: She's in her room. I think they are bathing with dad. We just came back from church.

Uyathandwa: Yoh! I know they'll take forever.

Me:(laughing) She will call you back as soon as she see your missed calls.  
Uyathandwa: Please tell her to check her phone because I know that when she's with her husband nothing in the matters beside her husband. (We laughed)  
Me: They are in love bakithi.  
Uyathandwa: I think it's over love now. They are dying. (We laughed) Think about it sisi. Having to burry them both.  
Me: The cause of death: being in love.  
We laughed really hard. It was funny.  
Uyathandwa: Hey. I will check you some other time okay?  
Me: Okay bhuti. Be a good boy there.  
Uyathandwa: Always am.  
We laughed and hung up. I stood up and I went to mom's room. I knocked. I could hear her giggling inside. I shook my head and smiled.  
Dad: Who is it?  
Me: It's Alondwe. Uyathandwa is calling you mama please check your phone.  
Mom: Oh! My phone is on silent mode. I will call him back just now. Thank you baby.  
Me: Okay.  
I walked away and mumbled "enjoy". I laughed alone and I went to my room. My phone was ringing. Sphe was calling. I decided to answer his call.  
Me: What do you want?  
Sphe: What have I done to deserve such treatment from you Alondwe?  
Me: How about you ask your baby mama?  
Sphe: My baby mama? What did she do?  
Me: Like I said ask her. I am trying to study here. You're disturbing me.  
Sphe: Alondwe don't do this to me just because I love you. I know she can be a nuisance but please don't let her win. I love you.  
Me: I love you too Sphe but I don't want any drama in my life. I am too young for that.  
Sphe: I will talk to her and tell her to back off.  
Me: You better!  
Sphe: Trust me. So how do you feel about the dance? Only a week is left.  
Me: Yoh! I am nervous but I know it will be a beautiful night.  
Sphe: Yes I bet. Thank you for being my beautiful girlfriend.  
Me: (giggles) My pleasure. Handsome boyfriend. (We laughed)  
Sphe: Okay. Let me let you study in peace.  
Me: Okay thanks.  
Sphe: I love you.  
Me: I love you too.  
We hung up the call. I smiled and I continued studying.....  
/////////  
Maud Dhlomo.....  
I wasn't scared anymore. It was him in flesh. I walked closer to him and smell his scent, he still use the same UOMO. I looked at him.  
Me: It's you Zulu?  
Zulu: It's me Mkami. I came back for you.  
Me: You are alive how?  
Zulu: Muzi took me to a very good medical centre and they treated me. I am here now. I am alive my wife. Where are our daughters.  
Me: It's you. It's really you.  
I hugged him and he hugged me back. His hug was not the same but it didn't matter. I was happy to see him again. We backed away from each other.

Me: How will you make it all go away Ndabezitha?

He smiled. He held my hand and told me to sit down. I did. He walked out of my room and came back with a cup of tea. I drank the same herbal tea. He was standing a little bit far holding a camera.

Zulu: Confess it all mkami. That's the only way. I will count down.

I drank the tea and after a few minutes. My head started spinning. I started talking. I felt the need to say it all because Thandeka's cry was ringing in my ear. I was crying.

Me: I killed her. I killed Dhlomo's wife I wanted a way in. I needed money I was desperate. I took Thandeka and I told my sister to stay with her. I then went to tell her mom that she's missing. Her car breaks were loose. I did all that. She drove out of the yard to search for her daughter. She left alive and came back dead. I am sorry Dhlomo. I am sorry Andile and Thandeka. Please forgive me. Please.

After that I just broke down. Zulu came close to me. He held my hand.

Zulu: Let's go and start a new life away from South Africa. Just you and I. Our son and daughters will join. Let's go.

I sobbed and nodded. He told me to go to his car. I did and he was behind packing a few things. He came back after some time and we left my house. I didn't know where we were going and I didn't care I was just happy to have him back.....

Nobuhle Mthembu.....

I arrived at the hospital and we went to Sandile. He was topless with his chest covered with a bandage. I sat down. He looked down at me. He looked at his father.

Sandile: Dad can I talk to Nobuhle in private please father.

Mbhense: Okay ndodana. You will call me when you're done.

Sandile: Yes.

He left. Sandile looked at me without a word. I didn't say anything. He smiled and shook his head. Okay this was wired. Sandile was a cute yellow bone guy. He was medium sized. He sighed. He closed his eyes. And opened them.

Sandile: So your brother told me that you are a virgin.

Me: Excuse me?

Sandile: What is that a lie? I find it very interesting and good. He said you're a very good girl that you can marry a looser like me. But I don't see how am I a looser. I have qualifications not just qualification but QUALIFICATIONS. I can change careers like you when you're changing pads. But you have nothing but a matric certificate.

I was angry. Hearing him talk like that hurt me big time. I just stared at him.

Me: Why did you call me here?

Sandile: I want that virginity of yours since your brother bragged about it. How about I have it and he can be free.

I laughed sarcastically. Surely he was crazy.

Sandile: Oh it's nice hey. You're laughing?

Me: Are you crazy? I won't do that.

Sandile: Then you'll watch your brother's life vanishing like dust into air. You don't want that now do you?

Me: You can't do that Sandile!

Sandile: What's wrong with that baby?

Me: I am saving myself for my husband. And you're not my husband.

Sandile: What do you us want to get married? We can do that in the court of law.

Me: I don't want to marry you and I don't want to sleep with you.

Sandile: Marrying me was just a choice but sleeping with me. You don't have a choice dear. You'll do it. I am giving you until tonight to process this after a week I will organise

everything and I will have your vagina raw. You can leave now.

I stood up quickly. His voice was soft but it had full authority. I walked out of the hospital. I was so confused. I didn't know what was going to happen. What was I going to do to save myself from all this shit. I didn't even wait for his dad. I took a taxi back home. I arrived at home and I went to my room. Before I could open the door my mom saw me.

Mom: What happened Hle?

Me: I need to be alone mama. We will talk later.

Mom: Okay my child.

I went inside my room. I closed the door. I cried while trying to charge my phone. I needed someone to talk to. I had no clue on what I was going to do. Thandeka was the only person I could talk to. My phone got a few bars and I called Thandeka. She answered.

Me: Hey Thandeka.

Thandeka: Hey. (She sounded down)

Me: I need your advice on something.

Thandeka: On how to stop the obsession you have over my husband?

Me: Excuse me?

Thandeka: Don't act like you're surprised. You know what I am talking about. How could you? I trusted you.

Me: Rajiv told you?

Thandeka: That's not important right now.

Me: I am sorry Thandeka. I was going to tell you but I saw your husband with a woman.

They were cosy at the beach and I thought he's a jerk so there's no need for me to tell you the truth because I am over that obsession. I am with Rajiv and I love him.

She didn't answer me but she dropped the call. I was sad. I just broke down and cried.

Everything was just a mess. I placed my phone aside. I cried myself to sleep.

I woke up later. I called Rajiv. He answered when I was about to hung up.

Me: Hey.

Rajiv: Hey.

Me: I am sorry.

Rajiv: For?

Me: Being dishonest with you. Just that I saw no need –

Rajiv: Right now I am busy studying. You're disturbing me.

He hung up on me. I called him again. He didn't answer. I just cried. Everyone I care about was giving me a cold shoulder. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know who to turn to. After crying. I stood up and I went to join my family. They were eating. I joined them. Sakhile kept on staring at me.

Me: Stop looking at me. I am in this mess because of your stupidity. Do you know what Sandile wanted from me to make this go away?

Sakhile: I am sorry sisi.

Me: You're sorry? It won't fix anything!

Mom: Calm down Hle.

Me: (crying) No mama why should I?

Dad: Hlehle don't cry mntanami.

I stood up and I went to my room. I buried my face on the pillow. I cried. I stopped when my phone rang. It was an unsaved number. I answered.

Me: Hello?

Sandile: So have you give it a thought.

Me: I'll do it.

Sandile: Really?

Me: Yeah I'll do it.

Sandile: Okay that was easy. I will contact you after I have organised everything for us.

Me: Okay. Sure.

I hung up the call. I put it aside. I let it all out. I cried.....

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

After Alondwe left. I took my phone. Samkelo was busy licking my neck.

Me: Ndunakazi stop it. I want to make a phone call.

Sam: You'll speak with your mouth not mine.

Me:(giggles) Matthew you're disturbing me. Please stop.

He laughed. He eventually stopped. I sat up straight and called Uyathandwa. He picked up immediately.

Me: Baby.

Uyathandwa: Hi mama. How are you?

Me: I am fine boy and you.

Uyathandwa: I am not fine hey. Dad doesn't want me to go on a school trip.

Me: What school trip?

Uyathandwa: We gonna have a trip in July. The trip to Limpopo. I have never been there mom. I want to go and Amber is going too.

Me: Who's Amber?

Uyathandwa: My girlfriend.

Me: Your what?? Please repeat that.

Uyathandwa: She's my girlfriend mom. My friend. That's what she is.

Me: You're dating Uyathandwa? Are you?

Uyathandwa: No mom I am not.

Me: Okay good. How much is that trip?

Uyathandwa: It's R700. I know that dad doesn't have cash problems but please convince him to let me go please mom.

Me: Okay. I will talk to him. Where is Sesethu?

Uyathandwa: I don't know where she is. But she left with Grandma. They went to meet the buyer of her house somewhere around Cape Town.

Me: Okay. Let me call your father now.

Uyathandwa: Thanks mom. I love you.

Me: I love you too boy.

I hung up the call. I dialed Themba's number. Samkelo was half asleep. I kissed his lips. He smiled and spoke on his sexy sleepy voice.

Sam: Wenzani? (What are you doing)

Me: Kissing my golden boy.

Sam: I will take you on and you'll cry.

Me: (laughing) Behave!

Themba answered his phone.

Themba: This is a surprise.

Me: What? I gave you butterflies on your tummy?

Themba: Do men feel that?

Me: I don't know you tell.

Sam:(whispering with his eyes closed) Stop flirting with him Thandeka sizoxabana.

I giggled and went straight to the point.

Themba: Why are you giggling?

Me: Nothing. Ethan called me.

Themba: No I didn't.

Me: Little Ethan Themba.

Themba: Oh.

Me: He told me about their trip to Limpopo. Why did you refuse to let him go?

Themba: I don't want him to go. How sure are you that it's safe for him to go?

Me: It's a school trip Themba. The trips are always safe. Nothing will go wrong just let our son go. I am sure that he'll be happy. And Amber is going too. (I giggled. Samkelo looked at me. I closed my eyes.)

Themba: (laughing) Who is Amber?

Me: Amber is a friend of his.

Themba: Ayi. It's a girl?

Me: Yes it's a girl.

Themba: And you're convinced that it's his friend because?

Me: Because I also have a friend who is a guy. And he's nothing but a friend.

Themba: Oh okay. I will let him go mama wakhe.

Me: Yoh! Thank you so much. He'll be happy.

Themba: Yeah.

Me: Okay bye bye then.

Themba: Bye.

I hung up the call. Samkelo was still half asleep. I looked at him for a while and thought to myself. "I have a cute husband" I smiled and kissed his forehead. I stood up.

Sam: Where are you going?

Me: Ngizele nje. I want to check up on my kids and start cooking.

Sam: Okay. Let me rest.

Me: Rest then baby.

I wore my gown and I went downstairs. Alondwe and her brothers were playing the car race game.

Me: Alondwe I didn't see you studying today.

Alupheli: Yes mom tell her to go.

Alondwe: I did study mom. The time I came to your room I was studying.

Me: I am not convinced. Go and study.

Alondwe: But mom I did.

Me: I should not repeat myself.

Alondwe: I will go.

Me: Is your aunt back yet?

Kuhle: She said she'll come back Wednesday. She went to visit someone.

Me: Did she tell your father?

Kuhle: No she told me to tell her.

Me: Ayi bazoxabana ke.

I made my way to the kitchen and I started cooking. While cooking I received a call from Nobuhle telling me that she's over that obsession she had about my husband. Something that got me upset was the fact that she saw my husband with a woman. My husband? After that call I continued cooking with anger inside. I mean Samkelo will never cheat on me. I mean like never! I finished up cooking and I went to the lounge.

Me: Usahleli la wena. Ngitheni kanti kuwe? (You're still here? What did I say to you?)

I walked a few steps closer to her. She stood up quickly and ran away laughing.

Me: You won't laugh if you fail.

Alondwe: But mom I did study.

Me: Hhaybo Alondwe musa ukungigugisa wena. I said go and study! And you Mesuli stand up.

Kuhle: Hawu mama?

Me: Hawu mama ini? I said go and study. Do your homework. Do you know N.S?

Kuhle: But –

Me: Just go.

Alupheli: Go boy! Go!

Me: Wena come and bath.

I switched off the TV. They sulked and stood up. I carried Alupheli. We went to my room.

Samkelo was working on his laptop.

Alupheli: Hi daddy.

Sam: Hey boy how are you?

Alupheli: I am fine thank you. And you?

Sam: I am good. Boy.

I sat down and took off his clothes. I took off mine too. I went to the bathroom with him.

Sam: Bbe are you alright?

I nodded and closed the door behind me. I mixed the water on the tub and we bathed together.

We were both singing. After bathing we went to lotion. I put him in my bed while I wore my

pyjamas. Samkelo went to bath too. I went to Alupheli's room and I made him wear his

pyjamas. He ran out of his room afterwards. I checked up on my kids and they were studying.

Kuhle was doing Maths homework.

Kuhle: Mom please help me.

I went close to him and I helped him. After that I went to dish up for everyone. Samkelo and

Alupheli came downstairs.

Me: Thando go and call your brother and sister.

He nodded and left. I sat down and looked at my food.

Sam: Thandeka what's wrong with you?

Me: Nothing is wrong with me. Why should there be something wrong?

Sam: Don't talk like that. I was just asking because I can see that you're not fine. Is it Nobuhle that's bothering you or your other kids? What's wrong?

Me: Please leave me alone Samkelo.

Sam: (shouting) Don't tell me that. Because right now you're acting strange. And you're telling me to leave you alone. That's bullshit. What's your problem?

Me: Are you cheating on me?

He looked at me without a word. He didn't say anything at all.

Me: Look who has a problem of talking now?

He pushed his plate off and walked up to our room. The kids were standing by the end of the stairs listening to us. I looked at them. They had a worried look on their faces. Alondwe ran back to her room.

Me: Come and eat.

They slowly came closer to the table. Alupheli prayed and we ate in total silence.

Alupheli: Mama please feed me.

Me: Come.

I took his plate. I made him sit on my lap and I fed him his food. Mesuli kept on looking at me. I didn't say anything at all. I just continued doing what I was doing until we were done.

Alupheli: Mama please can I sleep with you and dad tonight?

Me: Okay. Go upstairs. Tell your father to help you wash your hands and face.

He nodded and left. I cleaned up the kitchen and washed the dishes. Everyone was on their rooms. I went to sit on the lounge and tried to think if is Samkelo really cheating. I started crying.....

//////////

Maud Dhlomo.....

I don't know where we were but after long hours on the plane. We finally made it to our destination. We took a taxi. Zulu gave juice. I drank it. After drinking it. I was sleepy. I

passed out. I woke up later. I tried to move my hands I couldn't. I tried to speak. I couldn't. I looked up. There was a man with me. We were in a dusty place and it was so dirty.

Man: You thought I am Zulu? Dear I am not Zulu. Your husband died. You're a fool. How was it when you killed Thandeka's mother?

My heart started beating very fast. I started crying. The guy removed the tape on my mouth. I screamed. He laughed really hard.

Man: Baby. We are in the middle of nowhere. Nobody will hear you.

Me: Where are we?

Man: Under ground in Zimbabwe.

Me: Please don't kill me. I promise I will go away and Thandeka won't see me ever again.

Man: That's too easy. I will do whatever I want with you.

Me: You can't do that.

Man: I can. And I will.

He took out a gun and shoot me on my stomach. I screamed.

Man: Pray that you'll die tonight. Because if you don't. I will come back tomorrow night. I will remove that bullet and I will take you to a car with loose breaks. You will drive it and you'll feel what Mrs Dhlomo felt when you played with her breaks. Enjoy the pain today.

Maudy.

He kissed my forehead and tied my mouth again. He left me there. All I could was cry. The pain was too much.....

//////////

Dhlomo (Thandeka's dad)

After work I drove back home. I was worried about my wife. Ever since Thandeka accused her of killing her mom. She wasn't herself. I know that Thandeka doesn't like Maud but to lie about her killing her mother. I hated that. My relationship with my daughter was dead.

Sometimes I miss her because she's my daughter but I didn't want to talk to her. I didn't like the fact that she always has a way of getting rid of people. And saying Maud killed her mother was one of her ways to get rid of her. I couldn't accept that. I arrived in the house.

There was a camera on the table with a note written "Play me". I sat down. I took the camera and I played it. It was Maud confessing that she killed my wife and she even confessed how she did it. That's where my heartbeat dropped. I took my phone and called Andile. He picked up.

Andile: Old man.

Me: Help! Andile help. I – am – in – Maud's- House- I –

I couldn't say anything more. I was having a heart attack. I landed on the floor and everything went blank.....

Nobuhle Mthembu.....

Monday morning I was going to work. Rajiv wasn't taking my calls. I was going to see him after work hours. I was so desperate. I didn't know what to do. I decided to text Thandeka as I was in a taxi. I wrote:

" The first day I saw your husband. That's where I had an obsession over him. The time you guys came on the club. I agree that I went wild with the pictures but I wasn't planning on hurting you Thandeka. I was going to tell you the truth. I am so sorry. And I am truly over that obsession. I love Rajiv and you're my friend I know that your husband is off limits. But right now I am desperate for your help. Please. Can you please see me. Please " I sent the text. I put my phone on my pocket. Before I started working when I arrived at work. I checked my phone. Thandeka had text me back. I read the text"Come to my workplace during the lunch hour " I replied with a Thank you. I started working. My mind was all over the place. I didn't know what to do. I was so clueless. I wanted to run away from everything

but that was not a choice at all. The time for my lunch hour came. I took a cab to Thandeka's workplace. I passed by the reception. From there I took a lift to her office. The door was opened slightly. She was on the phone crying. I wanted to turn back and leave but I waited for a few minutes. I didn't know who she was talking to. I decided to knock. She immediately looked up. She wiped her tears and told me to come in using her hands.

Thandeka: "Okay. I will call you later neh? \_\_\_\_ Yeah \_\_\_\_ Thanks"

She hung up and removed all the tissue paper that was on her desk. She sniffed.

Me: What's wrong?

Thandeka: Argh! It's nothing I can't handle. Sorry for the mess.

She said fixing up her desk. She disposed the waste on her office bin. She sat down and sighed.

Thandeka: So how can I help you?

Me: Are you alright Thandeka. I don't want you to listen to my problems while you have enough.

Thandeka: I am fine.

A tear escaped from her eye. She wiped it immediately.

Thandeka: Please talk.

Me: I have a problem here. My brother (I told her the whole story)

Thandeka: Yoh! Sandile is insane. What did you say to him?

Me: I told him I will do it but now just thinking about it. Makes my skin crawl. I am afraid.

Thandeka: You don't have to do it just to save your brother. I am sure if you can talk to him. He'll understand.

Me: He did this because I have neglected him a lot lately. I just want to save his life.

Thandeka kept quiet for a while. She was thinking. I looked at her without a word. I realised this woman was beautiful shame. Not only her husband was a cutie but she was the ish too. I shifted my mind from that when she started talking.

Thandeka: We have to find a call girl. Who has a skin tone like yours.

Me: What Will she do?

Thandeka: She'll take your place.

Me: But a call girl won't be a virgin. I am.

Thandeka: There are lot of things young girls use to make their vagina tight like they are virgins.

Me: Yes! And I know of one. The drug that is used by old women and people who have amadlozi (ancestors)

Thandeka: What's that? My step sister once told me about something called Qo.

Me: No. The trending one is isnemfu.

Thandeka: Hhaybo. My granny used to smoke that.

Me: Yeah. Girls use that nowadays.

Thandeka: Good Lord! So where will we get that thing?

Me: I know a shop emlazi that sell it. But Sandile will see that it's not me.

Thandeka: Don't worry my husband –

She cried. I didn't know what to do. I stood up and I went to hug her. She cried inside my chest. After some time she stopped.

Me: What's wrong?

She wiped her tears off.

Thandeka: I will find someone who can make a facial mask of your face. She will be done by the end of the week. I will contact her today.

Me: But that will cost money.

Thandeka: Don't worry. I will pay.

Me: I don't know what to say. Thank you so much.

Thandeka: It's Okay.

Me: And I am seriously sorry.

Thandeka: I will call you. The guy must draft a contract that will ensure you that he won't come back for more. Okay?

Me: I will talk to him tomorrow.

Thandeka: Okay. Time is up. I would like to go back to work.

Me: Thanks. But are you sure that you're fine?

Thandeka: Yes. Oh I need something in return for my help.

Me: Okay?

Thandeka: You'll cut all ties with me. This will be the end of our friendship.

Me: What? Thandeka I said I am sorry. I don't want to lose you as a friend.

Thandeka: That was all Nobuhle. You can go.

Me: But –

Thandeka: Please go.

I nodded. I took my bag and I left. I was so heartbroken. Only if I listened to Rajiv or if I told him the truth. None of this could've happened.....

//////////

Rajiv Pillay...

I love Precious but she disappointed me with telling me lies. I didn't expect that from her. I thought she got the fact that I hate lies but clearly she thought I was just saying it because I was bored. I was so embarrassed and I made a fool of myself in front of her friend. If I knew that she didn't tell Thandeka the truth I wasn't going to say anything about her obsession with her friend's husband. I wanted to calm my anger by avoiding her calls and focus on my studies. After writing my test. I went to the library and studied for my next test. After that I drove straight to my apartment. I wanted to sleep. I was tired. I saw Precious standing outside the building. She didn't look like someone who was in a good mood. I stopped my car and I opened the door for her.

Me: Come in.

She nodded and stepped inside the car. I drove in.

Me: Why were standing there?

Nobuhle: I was waiting for you to come back. Your sister told me that you're not back yet.

Me: Oh. What do you want I am tired. I want to rest.

Nobuhle: I am sorry Raj. I didn't mean to lie to you. I wasn't ready to tell her the truth. (I didn't know what to say) please forgive me.

Me: You made me look like a fool. Here I was complementing your friend because of that SMS you sent. But she didn't know a thing about what I was talking about.

Nobuhle: I am so sorry. Please forgive me. I love you and –

Me: Don't do that. Telling me you love me. You didn't think of that love when you were telling me lies right? Did you think of it?

She didn't say anything. She looked down.

Me: I suppose you didn't think of it right? Because if you did you were going to tell me the truth that you're not ready to tell her. But you decided to lie. So don't use love.

Nobuhle: I wasn't thinking straight.

Me: If you ever lie to me. It will be the end of us Precious.

Nobuhle: Does that mean you forgive me?

Me: Yes I forgive you.

Nobuhle: Can I get a kiss for that?

I smiled and kissed her. Every moment with her felt so special and real. I felt like I can go beyond but I couldn't. I wanted to love her without sex being involved. I wanted to love her as she is. Love her soul. I wanted to love her all my life because she was special to me.....

Maud Dhlomo(3rd person narrator).....

Maud endured the pain the whole night. It was so painful to her. She kept on praying but She could see that she was going to die soon. She prayed to God.

Maud: "Father I come to you as I am. I have wronged many souls. Please forgive me and give them peace. Look over my children dear God. Accept my soul in the name of Jesus Christ Amen."

She was hoping that she was going to feel something but no the pain didn't stop the whole night, morning and during the day. She was in pain..... Until she felt like life was slowly leaving her but no it wasn't. The pain became more intense all she could do was cry.....

////////

Fake Zulu's POV.

In all the jobs I have ever done. This one was difficult. I understand that Thandeka and her husband wanted Maud to pay but to drug her and make her see me as her ghost husband was something else. The good guy in me felt sorry for her but whenever I thought about how my parents were killed that's where the rage and hatred start. Yes it is not in our hands to crucify these people who wrong us but crucifying them does bring closure. Maud had no right to take Thandeka's mom's life. She was supposed to ask for help to Dhlomo and his wife but no! She thought killing her was the best option. I was going to do that to her. And I was going to make her body disappear. I drove to the underground house that I kept her in. I wanted to check up on her. When I arrived there. I tried to wake her up but there was no response. She was dead and cold.

Me: Rest in peace Maud.

I then made preparations to get rid of her body. By midnight her body was no longer with us. Chemicals made it vanish. That was the end of Maud.....

////////

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

When I arrived in our room. Samkelo was working on his laptop. I needed answers.

Me: You didn't answer me Samkelo.

Sam: Please leave me alone Thandeka.

Me: So you're cheating on me huh?

He didn't say anything that alone drove me nuts. Why was he quiet! Why was he not answering me? I was going crazy. I went close to him and closed his laptop.

Me: I demand your attention.

Sam: Do you want me to cheat on you? Is that what you want? Tell me!

Me: How can you ask me that question?

Sam: Just answer me Damn it!

Me: I don't want you to cheat! I just want you to be honest with me!

Sam: Stop accusing me of things that I have never done Tsk!

Me: Samkelo –

He took his laptop and he walked away leaving me behind. I sat on my bed and cried. I didn't know what to do. Who to believe. But why would Nobuhle lie to me. She wouldn't! She had nothing to gain for lying. I stood up and I went to bath.

////////

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

When you have someone that you look up to. Disappointment from them is the last thing that you can expect. Hearing mom ask dad if he was cheating on her was not nice at all. I was so sad that they were fighting. That night I didn't eat. I just went to bed crying. There was a knock on the door.

Me: Come in.

Dad came inside my room. He tried to smile. I wiped my tears away. He sat next to me.

Dad: Hey. (I nodded) Don't cry baby.

Me: Are you really cheating on mom daddy?

Dad: No I am not. I love your mother I wouldn't do that to her.

Me: You wouldn't tell me the truth even if you are daddy because I am just a child.

Dad: So you don't trust your father now?

Me: I trust you dad but why would mom think that you're cheating?

Dad: I don't know where she got the idea.

Me: You two won't get divorced right?

Dad: No bbe we won't. We love you.

Me: I love you too daddy. (He kissed my forehead)

Dad: Now sleep my Princess. Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight daddy.

He opened up the covers for me and he covered me with my blankets. He switched off the lights and he left. I was wondering where mom got the idea that dad was cheating. I was slowly reaching my dreamland and they started it again. By judging their voices they were not in their room because their room is not close to our rooms so that we won't hear everything that they do. They kept on exchanging words. Mom demanded answers from my father. She was even crying dad was not giving her what she wanted to hear (Yes/No). He kept on telling her to stop accusing him of something that he didn't do. Then my mom told Dad not to sleep with her. There was a loud bang of the door. After a few minutes there was a soft knock on my doorstep. I went to open. My brothers were standing by the door crying.

Me: Hey Come in.

They came in. Alupheli was dragging his blanket. I opened my blankets and we stepped inside the covers.

Kuhle: Why mom and dad were shouting at each other?

Me: I don't know but don't cry.

Alupheli: (crying) I wanted to sleep with mom and dad. Why they do this?

Me: I don't know Alupheli. But everything will be alright okay? (They both nodded)

Kuhle: Let's go and sleep with mom because she was crying and she will sleep alone tonight.

Me: Okay let's go.

I carried Alupheli in my arms and we went to mom's room. We knocked on the door. She sniffed inside her room.

Mom: Who is it?

Alupheli: It's us mama.

Mom: Come in.

I opened the door and we walked inside the room. She came out of the bathroom after a few minutes. We were already inside her bed covers. She smiled faintly.

Mom: Hey. You'll sleep here tonight?

Us: Yes mommy.

Mom: Okay. Let's sleep. It's Monday tomorrow.

She joined us. My baby brothers were talking. Mom and I were listening to them until they were tired. They were both asleep.

Mom: Alondwe?

Me: Mama?

Mom: Please go and sleep with my husband. I don't want him to sleep alone.

Me: Okay.

I stood up and I went to the door.

Mom: Nana?

Me: Nanesh? (she smiled)

Mom: Tell him I love him okay?

Me: Yes mom I will. I love you.

Mom: I love you too baby. Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight.

I walked out of the room. I searched for my father on the guest rooms. I found him on one of the rooms. He wasn't asleep. I jumped inside the bed. I wanted to break the tension inside the room. Dad laughed.

Dad: You'll break my bed and you'll pay.

Me: That can never happen.

We laughed. He covered me with the blankets.

Me: Your beautiful wife said I must tell you that she loves you.

Dad: You're lying.

Me: I am serious dad. I won't lie to you. She's the one who told me to sleep here. Because she doesn't want you to sleep alone.

Dad: You know I love her to right?

Me: Yes daddy.

Dad: That's good. Now let's sleep.

Me: Goodnight daddy.

Daddy: Goodnight Princess.

He switched off the lights and we conversed until we fell asleep.....

//////////

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

In the morning I woke up with my kids. I bathed together with Alupheli. I dressed him up and I went downstairs to prepare breakfast. He was on the table eating cereal. My phone beeped. I read the message. Nobuhle was requesting a meeting with me. I agreed because she said she needed my help. I finished up and I went to my room and wore my clothes. Samkelo came out of the bathroom naked.

Sam: Morning.

Me: Morning.

I brushed my weave, took my bags and I went downstairs. I joined my kids for breakfast.

Me: Morning Alondwe.

Alondwe: Morning mama. Today Sphe and I are going for fitting.

Me: You won't get lost?

Alondwe: (laughing) No we won't.

Me: Okay. I will give you cash.

She smiled and nodded. My phone rang. Andile was calling. I answered.

Me: Bhuti.

Andile: Hey how are you?

Me: I am fine. Are you alright. You don't sound Okay.

Andile: You were right Thandeka. Maud confessed. She killed mom.

Me: How did you know that?

Andile: She made a confession video. Dad saw it and he had a heart attack.

Me: What? Is he alright?

Andile: Yes he'll be fine.

I felt tears streaming down my cheeks. I hated the fact that my father didn't believe me. He chose Maud over me. I hated that.

Andile: Are you still there?

Me: Yes. Yes.

Andile: He asked for you. Please come and see him.

Me: I won't do that Andile. This is the second time that dad chose Maud over me and whenever he's sick because of Maud he wants to see me? No. Not this time. But I wish him a

speed recovery.

Andile: But Thandeka-

Me: No bhuti no. Please understand. I have to go.

I hung up the call. My kids were looking at me.

Me: Grandpa is sick but he'll be fine.

Alupheli: Why mom?

Me: He's old now Thando but he'll be fine.

Alupheli: He won't die?

Me: No baby.

Alondwe: When will we go and see him?

Me: Please eat your breakfast. We will be late for school. We won't go and see him.

Them: Mom but –

Me: Just shut up and eat!

They did that. Their father joined us for breakfast. I stood up.

Me: Please drive them to school today. I will pick them up.

Sam: Can we talk?

Me: About?

He didn't say anything. He held my hand and we walked out of the house.

Sam: I am tired of this shit going on here.

Me: You're the one who's dishonest with me.

Sam: Dishonest? I don't know where you got the idea that I am cheating on you but you must do something about this because I don't know what to say to you now. Otherwise I won't live with a woman who doesn't trust me. Just because you cheated on me that doesn't mean I did too. So please! Decide what you want don't just accuse me of cheating. Tsk!

He walked back inside the house. I didn't know how I felt. My life was just not in order.

Maybe it was easy for me to believe Nobuhle because I cheated on him. I cried all the way to work. My father was also sick. Everything was not right. I didn't even concentrate on my work I was clueless about this situation. I cried a lot. During lunch time I met up with Nobuhle and she told me about her situation. I was willing to help her but I wanted to cut off ties with her after helping her. I didn't want her to complicate my life even if she was over my husband. Just when I was ready to go home. I got a call from Samkelo. I answered.

Me: Hell –

Sam: You thought who fetched the kids from school today!

Me: Yoh! I forgot. I am sorry. I had –

Sam: You're the one who told me you'll fetch them now you have abandoned them! You knew that Alondwe was going for fitting today but you didn't tell me. My kids were left stranded. Hhayi man! Tsk!

He hung up the call. I sat down on my desk and cried. My phone rang again. My father was calling. I didn't pick up. I took my phone and put it inside my bag. I clicked my tongue and I left. I arrived at home. Alupheli was playing with his brother outside. I took my phone and called Nobuhle. She answered.

Me: Where did you see my husband with that woman you saw him with?

Nobuhle: I saw them at South beach. They were swimming. Your boys were with them.

Me: When?

Nobuhle: last week Saturday.

Me: Mxm umbhedo kanti. Argh!

I hung up the call. I didn't know where I was going to start with apologising to Samkelo. He was with his sister on Saturday. I was so stupid not even to ask. I sat on my car. I was just clueless about everything. I buried my head on my hands. I didn't fetch the kids after school. I accused him of something he didn't do. What do I do?

Sakhile Mthembu... (Nobuhle's brother)

I was so stressed out about my sister. I didn't know what to do. I know I was wrong but Sandile really got to me. He made me upset. He had no right to speak about my sister in that manner. The only way I was going to sort this matter out was if I killed him myself. I thought about this very well and I was going to do it at night. Sandile was still in the hospital. I got everything under control because I had time to think this through all weekend. I knew his room. By 6pm I was ready to go. My sister was not back yet. I went to my mom with my school books.

Mom: Where are you going?

Me: I am going to Thabiso's house. We have a homework that we must do. I will come back.

Mom: Okay. Don't stay out late and please stay away from trouble.

Me: Okay mom.

Mom: I am serious Sakhile!

Me: I won't cause any trouble mom. I promise.

Mom: Good.

I smiled and I walked out. I took a taxi to the hospital. When I got there I went at the back entrance of the hospital. I knew the hospital very well because my mom worked there. I had stolen my mom's uniform. I got it fixed up so that it can fit me. I changed and wore the uniform and I wore the weave in my head. There was a female nurse who was skinny like me. So I knew that if someone sees me. They will think it's her. The nurse was my mom's friend. I knew her secret because she used to talk with my mom and I will eavesdrop on them. Silly hey? Yeah. They would think I am that nurse. She was in duty that night. I had to distract her so that she can not go around and confused other people. So I had stolen her number from my mom's phone. I called her. Her name was Nandipha. She answered.

Me: Hello.

Nandi: Hello who is this?

Me: Can you please meet me at the back of the hospital. I have something that you will like.

Nandi: I won't do that. I can't meet up with strangers.

Me: If you don't want Mike to find out that who is the real father of your son. Then you better hurry up now! (I didn't even know the real father of her son but I knew that her husband wasn't the father)

Nandi: What? Who are you?

Me: I said come!

Nandi: Please don't tell my husband.

Me: I said come.

Nandi: A lot of people will get hurt. Even my friend can get hurt over this. Please.

Me: Okay I won't tell. Just come!

I hung up the call and I waited for a few minutes. She opened the door. I tried to hide. She called out "Hello" She didn't see me. I hit her head with a wood plank and she passed out. I placed her behind the rubbish bins.

Me: I am sorry Nandi dear.

I took her phone and her name badge. I walked inside the hospital and I pulled the walk. Her phone beeped. It was a message from a number saved by Mam Mthembu. The message read "Tell me when you knock off. I have something you will like. I love you. Mntakwethu." I clicked my tongue and shook my head. Clearly the bitch was cheating on her husband. And she saved her lover with Mam Mthembu so that her husband will think it's a woman. "That's my surname you're playing dirty with bitch" I said out loud. I put her phone back in my pocket. Then I went to the drugs room. I took a few prescription drugs and needles. I made my way to Sandile's room in the ward. I made sure that nobody sees me. I don't know why he was in a public hospital because he was rich! Luckily for me he was asleep and alone. I

closed the curtains. The other nurses were watching scandal. They were not even paying attention on patients. I then put the drug on needle. As I was about to put it on his drip my sister walked in. I got a fright and I quickly put the needle on the drip.

Nobuhle: Hey sister how is our patient today?

She was looking at Sandile. I quickly took my things and left before she could see me. I wanted to leave the hospital before anyone could see me. Before I could reach out for the door. There were emergency sirens. Other nurses pushed me over as they were running.

Nurse: Sista Nandipha please hurry up! There was an accident so we must help. People have been really injured! Please.

I panicked and I didn't even know what to do.

Male Nurse: Nandipha don't just stand there help.

I looked down and I tried to help. My friend Thabiso was also there. He saw me. I closed his mouth quickly.

Me: Shhh!

Everyone was so busy and that was my chance to leave. I quickly walked out using the main door. Luckily it was very busy nobody saw me. I went at the back then boom! Nandipha was not there. I didn't know what to do about her badge and her phone. I changed my clothes and I disposed my mom's clothes because they weren't going to fit her. I had to give back Nandipha's things. I walked inside the hospital and I left the badge and her phone on the complaints box. Then I took a taxi back home. I sighed and laughed softly. I had to save my sister from whatever bullshit that dog told her to do. Though I don't know what drug I gave him but I was hoping it was going to work!

//////////

Nobuhle Mthembu.....

After seeing Rajiv I was more than relieved that everything was good between us. I wanted to tell him about what my brother did but he was too stressed over his exams. I didn't want to bother him. I was going to tell him when he was done with exams. After seeing him. I went to the hospital. The visiting hours were over but I softened my way in and because they knew my mom. I was allowed to see the devil himself. When I arrived in his room. The curtains were closed. There was a nurse there. She was skinny like Nandipha but she was definitely not Nandipha. I greeted her and asked her how Sandile was. She did not answer me but she immediately left. I looked at her back. She was walking fast.

Me: Unemilenze eyomile njengo Sakhile.

I laughed out loud. I shook my head. I sat down and held Sandile's hand. He was cute. I looked at him and smiled. I don't know why but I did. I even forgot that he was the devil.

Sandile: I think you should stop starrng at me like that. You will have me thinking that you're in love with me.

I snapped out of it and pulled a straight face.

Me: Oh please. I will never do that.

Sandile: Are you saying I am that bad that you can't fall for me.

Me: I am not here to talk about that. How are feeling?

Sandile: Agh I don't know but I am feeling a little bit hot. I don't know. Maybe I am getting fever.

Me: The hospital is not a good place to be.

Sandile: Yeah. So why are you here?

Me: I thought about what you want me to do then I realised that we had to seal the deal so that you won't keep on blackmailing me.

Sandile: Oh. So what's in your mind.

Me: I want you to draw up a contract for our agreement. I want to be sure that after I have done my part you won't blackmail me again.

Sandile: (he smiled) Mm I can see you want this dick legal not illegal.

Me: Mxm as if I really want it.

Sandile: Relax it's not that huge. I know that you girls love huge sizes.

I laughed. Not that I wanted to laugh but I just did. He laughed too.

Me: There's nothing funny about this.

Sandile: Tell you what. I will draw up the contract only if you can go out on a date with me.

Me: Are you catching feelings already?

Sandile: Is that so wrong?

Me: Very wrong. You shouldn't eye another man's woman. Just draw up the contract then we can talk after that.

Sandile: I was just trying to be nice. I guess you just want my dick only.

I stood up.

Me: Maybe the medication is doing something to you that it shouldn't do. You're imagining things. Look I have to go. I am only doing this to save my brother. And yeah I really hope you have a much bigger size.

I winked at him and left him with surprised look on his face. I really needed his size to be big so that it can be convinced that the call girl is a virgin. This was just twisted but I wanted it to be over already.....

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

When I arrived at school Zenande was by the gate. I was just stressed. My grandfather was sick, mom didn't want us to go and see him. She didn't even give us reasons. This was just a mess and I couldn't believe mom could be that cruel. Maybe this thing they were going through with dad was seriously stressing her out. I was really sad.

Zenande: What's wrong my friend?

Me: Family drama.

Zenande: Don't tell me your parents are fighting too?

Me: Yes they are and grandpa is sick. Mom doesn't want us to go and see him.

Zenande: I am sorry to hear that my friend. But maybe your mother has a valid reason and beside Friday we're going to the ball. When will you go?

Me: I was going to skip school tomorrow and come back Wednesday.

Zenande: Eish sorry then. So my biological mother came back.

Me: What?

Zenande: Yes! Can you believe it! After she left me for her education she thought now it's the good time for us to play happy relationship. Mother and daughter.

Me: Yoh! What did you say?

Zenande: I told her that I only have one mother and that's my father's wife. My grandmother raised me so I don't know her.

Me: Yoh! But friend she's your mom.

Zenande: Giving birth to me doesn't make her a parent to me. She failed to look after me so she's not my parent. And I don't need her. She's causing trouble between dad and his wife and I don't like it.

Me: I am sorry my friend. You'll be fine though?

Zenande: Yes I will.

I hugged. The bell rang and we had to go our separate ways. It was hard being in her shoes. I can only imagine what she's going through. I was glad that at least my parents were still together though they were fighting but they were still together. The day began and we studied. During break time Sphe came to my class. I smiled at him. He smiled back showing his dimples. He was cute man!

Sphe: Just a weekend away. You came back looking like a celebrity.

Me: Really now a celebrity?

We laughed. He hugged me and kissed my cheek.

Sphe: My beautiful Pearl.

Me: How are you my handsome boyfriend?

Sphe: I am cute and you?

Me: (laughing) I am beautiful.

We laughed and held each other's hands.

Sphe: Let's go grab a bite and join my friends. Your friend is busy with our class teacher. So I figured I should keep my bae some company.

Me: You're such a cutie who is so sweet.

He laughed. We went to buy food and we went to sit on their spot.

Thabang: We are sitting with Mrs Khumalo today.

John: What a pleasure.

Me: Guys please behave yourselves.

Sphe: Please tell them bae. They are disturbing us for that matter.

We laughed. We continued eating and chatting. It was so fun. His friends were really cool and I enjoyed myself with them. The lunch hour was almost over so we stood up before the bell rang. Sphe held my waist and kissed me. His friends cheered.

Thabang: Okay. Stop you too before you got suspended. (We giggled and stopped)

Sphe: And we won't want to go through what your mom and dad went through.

He was looking at me.

Me: Excuse me. What are you talking about?

Sphe: Nothing bae. Let's go to class before the bell rings.

I wanted to speak, he stopped me by kissing me. I responded to his kiss and then the bell rang. We went our separate ways. I was wondering what was Sphe talking about. The classes resume until it was after school. Sphe and I had to go to our designer. So we took a cap and it took us straight to her. Along the way we were talking about the dance. He was busy praising how good I will look. He made me laugh and blush until we reach our destination. We went to the designer we fitted our outfit and everything was perfect. We had already paid for them so after fitting. We took our outfit and left. I started having periods pain.

Sphe: What's wrong baby?

Me: I am having periods pains.

Sphe: Are you on periods?

He made me turn back. He looked at me.

Sphe: Shit! Bbe. You have blood on your skirt. Look you'll go to the bathroom and I will go and buy pads for you. And jeans by Mr Price.

Me: You'll buy pads?

Sphe: I buy nappies for my daughter so I don't think there's something wrong if I buy pads for my girlfriend.

I smiled and he left. I went to the bathroom and I took off my skirt. I took my panty. I waited for Sphe. I heard him whispering my name. I giggled. I opened the door.

Me: You'll get arrested!

Sphe: I know I won't. I will make the towel wet for you.

I nodded. He went to the sink and made the towel wet. He gave me the towel. And a plastic bag. Three girls walked inside the toilet and looked at him. He kissed my cheek and left. I went inside the toilet and cleaned myself. There was a new panties, pads and jeans. I changed. I then put my dirty skirt and panty in my plastic. Put it in my bag and left. He was outside waiting for me. I smiled and hugged him.

Me: Thank you for taking care of me.

Sphe: Only the best for my girl. Let's go and get some twister then we'll go. I don't want

your dad beating you up.

I laughed and we went to buy the twister and milkshakes. We took a cab. It dropped me off first. I took my bag and my gown.

Me: I will see you tomorrow.

Sphe: Okay bae. I love you.

Me: I love you too.

I kissed his cheek and I left.....

//////////

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

I stepped out of my car. I locked it. I walked up to the door.

Me: Hello my babies.

Them: Hey mommy.

Alupheli: Mom why didn't pick us today?

I gave kuhle my bags then, I carried Alupheli in my arms. We walked inside the house.

Me: Mommy forgot baby. I am sorry okay.

Mesuli: Please don't do it again mom. We were scared and Alondwe was not with us.

Me: I am sorry. What did you do?

Alupheli: My friend's mom saw us. It was late all kids had left. She offered to call dad. She said she was in a hurry. Then dad came and picked us.

Me: Okay that's better.

We went upstairs in my room. Samkelo was sitting outside on the balcony chairs. I put Alupheli down. They both went to their father who was staring at me. He looked pissed. His mood was off. I removed my eyes away from him. I changed my clothes and I went downstairs. I met up with Alondwe. She was coming up.

Me: And then the jeans?

Alondwe: I had my periods so I had to change my skirt because it was dirty.

Me: Who bought the jeans for you?

Alondwe: My partner.

Me: Okay. Please remind me to give you cash so that you can pay it back.

Alondwe: Okay mom.

She smiled and proceeded with her journey.

Me: Alondwe?

Alondwe: Mah? (She wasn't looking at me)

Me: Sphe your partner, is he your boyfriend?

Alondwe: (laughing) What no! He's not mom.

Me: Oh. Okay. Just so you know baby I was single when I was 16yrs.

Alondwe: Mom? Where does that come from?

Me: Just want you to know that I won't understand if you start dating now because I know you'll think I was also dating at your age.

Alondwe: Yoh! Mom please!

She laughed and ran up the stairs. I was worried about her. I didn't want her to be heartbroken. She was too young. While at that thought I took my phone and called Uyathandwa. I put the phone on speaker while I was chopping. He picked up.

Uyathandwa: Mumzo?

Me: Are you running? Why are you panting?

Uyathandwa: I am playing with my little sister.

Uyabongeka: (at the background) "Is that mommy?"

Uyathandwa: She called me not you.

Uyabongeka: "I don't have a phone. Let me talk to her"

Uyathandwa: No!

Me: Ethan junior give your sister the phone please.  
Uyathandwa: But mom you were still talking to me.  
Me: I will talk to you after speaking with her.  
He didn't respond, I heard shuffling sounds.  
Uyabongeka: Mommy!  
Me: Hey my baby how are you?  
Uyabongeka: I miss you so I am not fine mom.  
Me: I am sorry baby but soon you will come and visit.  
Uyabongeka: We will play a lot?  
Me: Yes my baby. We will play a lot.  
Uyabongeka: Yes! I love you.  
Me: I love you too baby. How is school?  
Uyabongeka: School is bad mommy. I failed maths and daddy beat because I failed.  
Me: What? That's wrong! Tell him that I said he must teach you not to beat you.  
Uyabongeka: He said I don't listen when teaches me. (She was really sad)  
Me: Don't be sad my baby. I will talk to your brother he will help you. Okay?  
Uyabongeka: Okay mom.  
Me: Give him the phone.  
I heard shuffling sounds.  
Uyathandwa: Mom?  
Me: How bad did your sister fail maths?  
Uyathandwa: She got a 32% on her first term report.  
Me: Yoh! Please help her baby Okay?  
Uyathandwa: But Thembekeka doesn't listen mama. Dad always help her with her homework.  
Me: Maybe she'll listen to you. Please try.  
Uyathandwa: Okay. I will try.  
Me: Thanks. How is school?  
Uyathandwa: School is cool. I am doing well and I passed all my subjects. I got A+ on my majors.  
Me: Keep it that way. Amber should not make you loose focus.  
Uyathandwa: Mom?  
Me: What I was just warning you.  
Alondwe: (joining in) How come I know nothing about Amber.  
Uyathandwa: She's my friend and stop interfering on our conversation. It's our bonding session.  
Alondwe: Oh really now? When last did you bond with me? Or Amber is taking all your time? (We laughed)  
Uyathandwa: Mom? Your daughter!  
Me: What's wrong baby? You don't like it when we talk about your friend.  
Uyathandwa: Her ears will be itchy mommy.  
We all laughed at that.  
Uyabongeka: But sisi Amber is sweet.  
Alondwe and I: Ncoah!  
Uyathandwa: Really? Mom?  
Me: Okay baby. We are no longer talking about her. Are you happy?  
Uyathandwa: Much better! (We laughed) we miss you guys.  
Us: We miss you too.  
Me: We will call some other time then bye my babies.  
Them: Bye mom and big sis.  
Alondwe: Bye kids.

They laughed. I hung up the call and smiled. It felt good to smile and laugh with my kids. I had to call Themba so that we can talk about Uyabongeka. Alondwe assisted me with cooking. We were cooking and chatting about anything and everything. For a minute I forgot about my problems. Samkelo came downstairs with the boys. They were dressed up and look fresh.

Alondwe: Are you guys going somewhere?

Sam: Yes we're going out.

Alondwe: Dad? We cooked for nothing?

Sam: Don't worry we will eat tomorrow.

Alondwe: Can I join you?

Sam: No problem come.

Alondwe: Yes! Mom are you coming?

Me: No. You can go.

Alupheli: Let's go mom please.

Me: I will go next time baby. I am tired.

Kuhle: You will cry when you sit alone.

Sam: I will wait for you in the car.

He walked out. He didn't even care if I was going with them or not. That broke my heart.

They never leave me alone in the house. Samkelo would drag me out if I make excuses and I would end up going. It was the first time looking at him being so cold towards me.

Me: Please go before your father leaves you behind.

Alondwe: Mom?

Me: Alondwe! Don't push it. Take your brothers and leave.

She went to them. She took their hands and they left. I took a bowl and loaded a lot of goodies. I went to my room. I showered and wore my pyjamas. I then watched a horror movie just having a me time without worrying myself about anything that was happening that time. We all need that kind of escape from all our problems....

Nobuhle Mthembu.....

I took a taxi back home. I was just scared of the whole thing. It's like Sandile was going to find out what plan we have on him. But having a little faith wasn't going to hurt at all. I arrived at home mom and Sakhile were eating. I greeted them and joined them.

Me: Where is dad and Philisiwe?

Mom: Your dad is working tonight and your sister went to her boyfriend.

Me: Oh. I saw your friend at the hospital.

Sakhile: Which friend?

Me: Thabiso.

Mom: I thought you went to him.

Sakhile: Uhm... Yeah.

Me: They had an accident. How were you with him?

Sakhile: He wasn't at home so I went to my other friends.

Mom: Okay. I hope he'll be fine. You went to see Sandile?

Me: Yes. He's much better now. I don't know what you were thinking Sakhile. You almost killed the guy.

Sakhile: I am sorry sisi.

Mom: What did he want from you?

Me: I don't want to talk about it mama.

Sakhile: He better not think about marrying you. I will finish off what I started.

Mom & I: SAKHILE!

Sakhile: Okay. I am kidding but Sisi Philisiwe is getting married mama. At least Hle must not

get married.

Me: Phili is getting married?

Mom: The family of her boyfriend sent the letter to your father asking for a hand in marriage.

Me: What? Just because she's graduating next year he wants to marry her now.

Mom: Come on it's not like that.

Me: It's like that mama. Who will pay for my studies if Philisiwe is married? She hasn't done anything for you mom and she'll get married soon? That's unfair.

Sakhile: She's right mama. It's really unfair. At least she must build a house for you. Then she can get married.

Me: Dad agreed?

Mom: Yes. They are coming next weekend to negotiate.

Me: All dad wants is for us to get married! It's like he wants to send us away. This is just fucked up! Tsk!

I stood up and I went to my room. My sister's boyfriend was loaded. He could have married her anytime but he thought it was alright to marry her now that she was going to graduate!

My phone rang while I was in deep thoughts about my future. Rajiv was calling. I answered.

Me: Hey.

Rajiv: Hey sweetness..... Wait are you crying?

Me: No I am not.

Rajiv: What's wrong?

Me: My sister is getting married.

Rajiv: Wow! That's nice. That means we don't have to wait for her to get married first we will just get married.

Me: Really now?

Rajiv: What? You know that I want to make you my wife.

Me: You don't get it. She won't be able to pay for my studies. Everything will be about her new family.

Rajiv: Relax bbe. I will take care of you and I will take you to University.

Me: We're not married Rajiv. I can't expect that.

Rajiv: You're my wife. It's my duty to take care of you.

Me: Can we drop the marriage talk. It scares the shit out of me.

Rajiv: (laughing) I love you Nobuhle.

Me: (laughing) Please stick to Precious.

Rajiv: Am I that bad?

Me: Yes you're bad. (We laughed)

Rajiv: But you have to teach me your language so that I can convince your dad that I am the right husband for you.

Me: Rajiv!

Rajiv: Okay! Okay! But you will teach me.

Me: I will teach you my love.

Rajiv: I love you my Precious Pillay.

Me: I love you too my Rajiv Pillay.

Rajiv: Sleep well.

Me: Thank you. Sweet dreams.

He chuckled and hung up. I smiled. At least something was right in my life. I was just in love . I went to shower and I went to bed. I even forgot to laugh at Sakhile about the nurse that I saw. Who was like him.....

////////

3rd Person Narrator.....

Sakhile was really hoping that he killed Sandile but he didn't know that he helped the devil

himself. Sandile couldn't sleep that night. All he did was tossing and turning. He was slowly falling for Nobuhle but being a player that he was, he couldn't admit that. An old player! I always thought that players are young boys from high school and varsity but no I was wrong. Sandile was one. He was all about fulfilling his sexual desire. He cared less about love or settling down. Everyone thought he was a good guy but no! He wasn't holy at all. He was sweating and his body was hot. He decided to wake up and went to the bathroom. His wounds were also burning. When he arrived in the bathroom. He removed the bandages from his wound. And to his greatest surprise he had no wounds but just a mark that showed that something happened.

Sandile: "Holy shit! This is a miracle"

He laughed out loud. He was happy to see that he had no wounds and he wasn't feeling any pain. He decided to shower because his body was feeling hot. I wonder what chemical did Sakhile gave Sandile because clearly it did the opposite of what he wanted. After showering he went to his bed. The nurse who was curious followed him.

Nurse: "Is everything alright?"

Sandile striped naked. The nurse was shocked to see the whole package that Sandile had. Big and long! Clearly he lied to Nobuhle about his actual size.

Sandile: "What? I am sure you're also surprised that I have no wounds. I also don't know what happened... (He smiled) wait your eyes are not in my wound. (He measured her eyes using his hands) I got you! You're looking at my dick! How unprofessional of you to do that" He smiled. He was over the moon and stars. He changed his clothes. He took his bags.

Sandile: "I am discharging myself"

He left the nurse. And walked out of the hospital. Nobody actually took note of him they were up and down because of the patients who had an accident. Sandile took his phone and called his driver. He wasn't going to sleep at his father's house.

Driver: "Hello Sir"

Sandile: "Don't tell me you're sleeping at this beautiful hour!"

Driver: "I am sorry Sir"

Sandile: "Pick me up at the hospital now! Tell the maid to call Prudence. I want to see her now"

He hung up the call and waited for his driver. He laughed!

Sandile: "Oh! Life is definitely good! "

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

I sat in my room alone. I was really bored. I wanted my kids to come back. But I knew that wherever they were, they were having fun with their daddy. I remembered I had to call Themba. I took my phone and called him. He answered.

Themba: This better be good! Thandeka why are you calling me so late?

I could tell by the projection of his voice that he was irritated.

Me: It's late?

Themba: It's 10Oclock and you're calling me. Where's your husband?

Me: I am sorry. I didn't realise that it was so late. I am sorry.

Themba: Just say what you –

Mxm! I hung up the call immediately. I was in no good mood vele so I couldn't make him angry because clearly I woke him up while he was sleeping. My brother called while I was still thinking. I picked up.

Me: Bhuti.

Andile: You really want dad to die neh?

Me: Excuse me?

Andile: What kind of a child neglects her own father?

Me: I didn't neglected him. He chose Maud over me and I am choosing my family over him. Things are not good right now.

Andile: How will things be good if you just accuse your husband that he's cheating on you without even having proof that he did that. How will things be good?

Me: He told you that?

Andile: Of course he told me. Ucabanga kanjani vele wena Thandeka?

Me: I was so convinced bhuti. I know I was wrong but my friend had no reason to lie to me.

Andile: So Samkelo had a reason to lie to you?

Me: If he was cheating bhuti. He had a reason.

Andile: Do you hear yourself right now?

Me: I am speaking the truth or you want me to lie to you?

Andile: Grow up Thandeka. You have three kids with this guy. You don't want them to have a stepfather when your marriage fails?

Me: No. I don't.

Andile: Then grow up. And just forgive dad. He's your father for goodness sake!

He hung up the call. I sighed. My brother was right I had to fix everything with my husband but I wasn't ready to face my father. I took my phone again and I called Samkelo. I was getting worried about them. His phone rang. He picked up after some time.

Sam: Yeah.

Me: When are you guys coming back home?

Alupheli: (shouting) We're on the road mommy.

Me: You're not sleeping late so?

Alupheli: Yes! Daddy said we are having fun mom.

Kuhle: We ate everything. Even lollipops.

Me: You'll be crying in the morning.

Alondwe: We were having fun mom.

Me: Oh. Okay. Please come back home. Mommy misses you.

Kids:(shouting) Miss you too!

I laughed and hung up. If they weren't kids. I was going to say they were drunk but they were kids just on hyperactive mode. I switched off the TV and played games on my phone. After a few minutes. Samkelo walked in with Alupheli on his arms.

Sam: He is sleepy. He wants to sleep with you tonight.

Me: Can you sleep with us. Please.

Sam: Is this how it's going to be, when ever it suit you I will sleep here and when it doesn't I will sleep on the guestroom?

Me: Samkelo I am sorry.

He clicked his tongue and walked out. I sighed. I fixed my baby and he looked at me.

Alupheli: Thandeka?

Me: Thando?

Alupheli: I am sleepy.

Me: Okay baby let's sleep.

I held him close to me and we drifted off to sleep. I couldn't sleep. I had to talk to Samkelo. I was so sad. I went to the guestroom. They were sleeping together with Mesuli and Alondwe. They were so cute. Alondwe was in the middle. I smiled. I turned back. Alondwe whispered my name.

Alondwe: Mama.

Me: Hey baby. Go back to sleep.

Alondwe: I love you mama.

Me: I love you too Nana.

I kissed her forehead and I kissed her brother. I smiled. She mumbled "What about daddy?" I

smiled. I baby kissed Samkelo. Alondwe smiled. I walked out of the room. I sighed. I went to sleep with my son.

In the morning I woke up early and made breakfast for my family. I went to bath and I bathed Alupheli. Samkelo and the kids were already up. They were downstairs making noise. I don't know what they were debating about.

Me: You'll be late, that breakfast won't eat itself.

They all shut up and went to the table.

Alupheli: Bayaphapha mama?

Me: Yes baby.

Alupheli laughed, they didn't laugh. Samkelo acted like a kid whenever he was with our kids.

Sam: Stop laughing and pray. Thando.

Alupheli: No! Daddy only mom calls me Thando. I am Ayupheyi (Alupheli) (I laughed)

Sam: Sorry Ayupheyi. Please pray.

Alondwe: We want to eat!

Alupheli prayed and we all started eating.

Alondwe: Mom today we are going to do my nails. Please go with me.

Me: Okay. I will pick you up. After school. And remind me to pay back Sphe.

Sam: Who is Sphe?

Alondwe: He's my partner on the dance baba.

Sam: What should your mom payback?

Alondwe: He bought jeans for me. My skirt was dirty.

Sam: Oh okay.

Alondwe: I thought you were going to offer to pay the money.

Sam: No. You can't talk about boys in my house without me knowing what you're talking about. I wouldn't know if your mom told you, it's okay to start dating.

That irritated me. How can I tell my daughter to start dating. I took my plate and I went to put it on the microwave. Mam' Nancy walked in.

Me: Sawubona mama.

Nancy: Hey how are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Nancy: I am fine. Have a nice day.

Me: Thanks, You too mama.

I went to my room upstairs. I wore my clothes. Samkelo walked in while I was still dressing up.

Sam: Is there any possible way that Alondwe can stop going to the dance?

Me: Why?

Sam: I just don't trust anyone with my daughter. What if something bad happens?

Me: What can possible happen?

Sam: I don't know Thandeka.

I went close to him. He was a little bit shaking. I held his hands.

Me: Hey stop worrying yourself. Nothing will go wrong. Let's trust her.

He nodded softly. I held his face and kissed his forehead. We looked each other in the eye.

Me: I am sorry for everything that I have accused of. I seriously didn't mean to hurt you. I know you love me. I just couldn't find it in my heart to let it go just like that. I just wanted to hear a straight answer. I am really sorry Ndunakazi. I am sorry. Please forgive me. I love you (tears streamed down my cheeks) Samkelo. I don't –

He kissed me deeply. I wrapped my arms around his neck. The kiss got heated up. It was freaky. He walked with me to our bed. He stripped my shirt off. "The kids Samkelo -" he didn't let me finish it off. He was really fast. I wasn't on my skirt yet. He ripped off my panties. He threw me on top of our bed. I was breathing heavily. I wanted him so bad. He

took off his gown and boxers. He wasn't on his clothes yet. We did a very steamy freaky quickie! The kids were banging the door.

Alondwe: Mom and Dad! We are late. Can we go please.

Sam: Your manners Alondwe! Can't you wait for us!

Alondwe: We're sorry.

They walked away.

Me: They are late Samkelo. Actually we are all late.

Sam: It's your fault Thandeka.

Me: Samkelo?

Sam: You couldn't keep your paws off of me.

I laughed and stood up. He spanked my ass. I giggled. He stood up. He held me closer to him and kissed me. I giggled in between the kiss.

Me: Samkelo.

Sam: I have missed you. Why can't we skip work. And we can work on each other.

Me: And the kids? No baby. Come.

We went to take a quick shower. We lotion and dressed up. We took our bags and went downstairs.

Sam: the hospital called, Alondwe's dog is fine now. Please go and pick it during lunchtime.

Me: Why can't we tell her that the dog died. I don't want this dog back.

Sam: Hhaybo Thandeka. You will go and fetch my daughter's dog.

Me: Yebo baba.

Sam: Good. Now where are our kids?

Me: Alondwe!..... Alupheli ..... Mesuli!

Mam'Nancy walked inside the house.

Sam: Where are the kids mama?

Nancy: They asked me to take them to school.

Me: Shame Samkelo.

Sam: It wasn't my fault. Let's go.

I laughed. We went to our cars. We kissed each other goodbye.

Sam: I love you.

Me: I love you too.

We both drove our separate ways. I started doing the project for Nobuhle while doing my job.....

//////////

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

The day FINALLY came! It was the farewell. Things were going very well at home. Mom and dad were back to being those love birds. Sometimes it was even annoying because they were always together. We were always those kids who are disturbing their bonding moments. Dad was very strict. He shouted at my aunt for going without telling him. And the most loving thing about this week was I GOT MY DOG BACK! It was now a girl not a boy. Nursy died. It name was Juliet. I was ready on my dress. Our colour was black and gold. I was looking beautiful. Mom was taking pictures. My dad was not around with my baby brothers. They went to Johannesburg to see my grandfather. Mom didn't go with them.

Mom: Please behave there and don't drink alcohol Alondwe. Don't drink anything that you didn't order okay?

Me: Yes mom.

Aunt Melo: You look beautiful baby.

Me: Thank you Aunty!

I smiled. A few minutes later. Sphe came he was looking so lovely. My mom gave us a whole lot of lecture about being responsible. My dad also called and asked to speak to Sphe. Sphe

gave me the phone afterwards.

Me: Papa.

Dad: Hey baby. Your mom sent me your pictures. You look very beautiful. You look like a Princess. My Princess.

Me: Thank you daddy.

Dad: Please be careful Nana and take care of yourself. Don't go to the after party. Okay?

Me: Yes daddy.

Dad: Daddy loves you.

Me: I love you too daddy.

Dad: Have a good time.

Me: Thank you.

He hung up. I smiled. My mom hugged me.

Mom: Please take good care of my daughter. Okay?

Sphe: Yes mam.

Sphe held my hand and we walked out. We went to the car and it drove us straight to the hotel. The farewell was at Hemisphere hotel in Balito. We walked in and took pictures as we entered the door. Everyone was lovely and looking very good. The ceremony began. It was just a lovely evening, speeches, awards and the dance. At our school we adopted the American culture of Prom King and Queen. The matric students came up with the idea for their farewell. Sphephelo and I were the Prom King and Queen. It was so lovely and we were very happy to win the first Prom King and Queen title. The dance was beautiful. Everyone went their separate ways after the ball. Sphe and I were going to a private party at his friend's house but I was going to spend an hour then go back home. We changed and wore casual clothes. Sphe gave me an energy drink. I downed it one time. I was so nervous about the whole thing. We arrived at the party. The house was already full. I was feeling a little bit dizzy.

Sphe: Are you alright baby?

Me: Yeah. I am fine.

I went to sit down and I relaxed on the couch. I was sleepy so I ended up falling asleep... When I woke up. I was lying on the bed. There was a lot of blood on the bed sheets. I didn't understand whether I made the bed dirty or what because I was still on my periods. I was half naked. I tried to remember what happened but my mind was just blank. Sphe walked out of the bathroom with a wrapped around his waist.

Sphe: You're awake? Your mom has been calling non stop. Please get dressed so that I can drive you home.

Me: What happened?

Sphe: Do you want to leave or not?

Me: What happened Sphephelo!?

Sphe: Your father happened. At least I had mercy on you I didn't let you feel the pain when I broke your virginity. You were so damn tight.

Me: What?

Sphe: You begged for it so I gave it to you. At least everyone will think you begged for it. You thought I was in love with you?

Me: What are you talking about?

Sphe: What I am trying to say is. I broke your virginity. You don't have to worry about anything because you were on your periods. At least that means you won't fall pregnant. Your father played with my sister's feelings. He broke her virginity while they were still in high school. He took a video and he leaked it on the internet. He was smart because only my sister's face showed up on that video. My sister couldn't take it. She killed herself. My parents also died in an accident while they were rushing her to the hospital. I am an orphan

living with a foster family because of your father. I know all this because my sister left her diary for me to read it. And I read all the horrible things your father did to her. I made it my life to revenge my sister and with you I just did. I hope your father will be happy.

I was in tears as he said all those words. He was also crying but his voice had nothing but hatred for my father. I couldn't believe it all. It was really a hard pill to swallow. I didn't say anything. I wore the dress and I took my bag. I took my phone. Sphe was looking at me. I approached the door.

Me: You can go to hell! You coward pig! Tsk!

My vagina was sore but I tried to run as fast as I could. Everyone was looking at their phones, laughing and pointing at me. I ran out of the house. I was crying and shaking. I hated my dad for all the horrible things he did because I was the one who suffered. I waited for the cab until it arrived. It arrived and and it drove me straight home.....

Nobuhle Mthembu.....

Everything was going accordingly. In my eyes I was going to win this whole game. I was always praying that everything can go well. On Wednesday Sandile requested to meet up with me after work. We were going to meet each other at his father's house. He was out of the hospital. Apparently he told me that a miracle happened. His wounds were totally healed. Wednesday morning I got a call from Thandeka. I answered immediately.

Me: Hello.

Thandeka: Morning baby how are you?

Me: I am fine Mrs Ndunakazi and you?

Thandeka: I am fine dear. I got the call girl. The Doctor is almost done with everything.

Me: Thank you so much.

Thandeka: It's Okay. Her name is Prudence. I will send her details to you. So please meet up with her before she does the job.

Me: Okay I will do that.

Thandeka: Okay I have to go bye.

Me: Bye.

We hung up. I smiled and placed my phone in my bag. My sister walked in.

Me: Ndodakazi yolahleko.

Phili: Come on.

Me: I would love to chat but I am rushing to work some of us don't have rich husbands.

Phili: Nobuhle wait, I won't neglect you and our family just because I will be getting married. I know how hard it was growing up. We didn't have everything we need but please sisi do support me and at least be happy for me. Please.

Me: I am happy for you but believe me I would like to believe that you'll take care of us when that happens.

Phili: Please don't be like that.

Me: Dad is happy to give us away and you see nothing wrong with that? Come on. I have to go I am late.

Phili: I am pregnant! (I turned back) You know Philani is a Pastor's kid so his mom encouraged us to get married before I even show. I am really sorry sisi.

Me: Does mom and dad knows?

Phili: They don't know and please don't tell anyone.

I nodded and left. I was just angry. How can my sister be so secretive and selfish! I didn't expect this from her. Yes Her fiance was a Pastor's only son but that didn't mean he was the Pastor! I just didn't understand it all. It was just crap. Tsk! I went to work with a very ruined mood but I had to channel my mood and serve my customers with love and a smile....

////////

3rd Person Narrator...

Philisiwe was really sad because her sister didn't trust her at all. Philisiwe wasn't the saint but it happened that she got pregnant. Her and Philani didn't plan on it but it just happened. The saint was the Pastor's kid. He was the youth Pastor so he got tempted and slept with Philisiwe. Who was his girlfriend since High School. According to church laws and regulations they weren't supposed to date each other from the first place. But they started dating back in high school. Philani was not a youth Pastor. He was just a Pastor's kid. When Philisiwe found out that she was pregnant, the only person that she told was Philani. Philani suggested that they tell his mom only. That's where his mom told them that it will be their secret Philani will have to marry Philisiwe. These two were not ready for marriage but they had to do it just cover up their sin.

Philisiwe was on her room crying after her sister had walked out on her. Hormones were playing with her. There was nothing to cry for in what Nobuhle said. She was being a dramatic pregnant woman. Her phone rang while she was still crying. She took it and answered it.

Phili: "Philani?"

Phila: "Are you crying Philisiwe?"

Phili: "It's Nobuhle. She thinks I will neglect her just because we are getting married"

Phila: "You must ensure her that you won't neglect her. Philisiwe. Please stop crying. It's not good for our baby"

Phili: "I will try"

Phila: "Did you tell your family that it's me who'll be marrying you?"

Phili: "I haven't got a chance. I am scared. I know that mom will be really mad. It's not right that we were dating while you were a Pastor"

Phila: "I dated you long before I became a Pastor. I didn't ask for it, the church board elected me because they saw that I can be a good Pastor. So no one must judge"

Phili: "You know how people are."

Phila: "Stop worrying about people. Focus on your studies and the baby okay?"

Phili: "Okay. I love you Philani"

Phila: "I love you too Philisiwe"

They said their goodbyes and hung up. Only Nobuhle knew that her sister was dating the Pastor's kid. But their relationship was a secret because the congregation wasn't going to approve of it. For born again Christians things are done differently, Philisiwe and Philani failed to be good. The pregnancy was also going to be a secret until they get married. Philisiwe's parents didn't know that all along their daughter was dating their Pastor's son.....

On the other hand things were coming together nicely and well with Sandile and Nobuhle's sex night. Sandile thought he won a jackpot but he didn't know that his kind of a girlfriend Prudence was a call girl. They were all in the dark about this. Sandile met up with Nobuhle and they signed up the contract of their agreement. The only thing left was for the big day to come.....

Alondwe Ndunakazi...

I arrived at home, I was still crying. I wiped my tears as soon as I entered the gates. The house was quiet. I ran through the stairs.

Mom:(inside her room) Alondwe is that you?

Me: (swallowing hard) Yes mom.

Mom: Come and sleep here. We'll talk about the dance.

Me: I want to sleep mama. We will talk tomorrow.

Mom: Yoh! Usuyaphapha.

Me: (I faked a giggle) Sorry!

She laughed. I walked away. I went to my room. I closed the door and locked it. I was so heartbroken. I thought Sphe truly loved me but it was all a game. A game that I never saw coming. My phone rang while I was still crying by the door. I opened my bag and took it out. Zenande was calling. I answered.

Zenande: Not even a hello really?

Me: I am sorry.

Zenande: Anyway that's not why I am calling. Did you see the video? Alondwe how could you be so careless?

Me: (crying) I didn't know my friend. Sphe played me for a fool. I hate him.

Zenande: Sphe did this to you? I thought he was a good guy.

Me: I thought so too. I was a fool to believe him. I – (I just cried)

Zenande: I am so sorry my friend. Just hang on you'll be fine.

Me: (sniffing) Please don't show it to anyone. Don't tell your parents because they will tell my parents.

Zenande: But you must report him.

Me: No. It's cool Brah. I will eventually get over it. It will pass. I don't know when but it will pass. At least I am not going to school Monday. People will eventually forget about it.

Zenande: That's true. Soon they'll find something new to talk about. But did he even use protection?

Me: I don't know. I wasn't myself. I didn't even feel a thing going on. But I was on my periods.

Zenande: Sies! Ungcolile. At least you won't get pregnant.

Me: At least.

Zenande: How will you deal with him?

Me: I don't know. But I am going to visit my grandmother tomorrow since the school has closed for June holidays. I will be better there without any drama. I will spend the whole three weeks there.

Zenande: That's better. I am really sorry my friend.

Me: It's Okay. Thanks for calling.

Zenande: I wish I can be there for you.

Me: It's Okay. I know you care.

Zenande: Take care neh?

Me: Thanks.

I hung up the call. I threw my phone on my bed. I went to my bathroom. I took a long shower. I was just crying. I couldn't believe everything that happened. Everything was not right. The pain was just too much. I kept on scrubbing my body I felt so disgust and dirty. My life was useless and stupid. I eventually got tired. I dried my body and I wore my gown. I walked out of my room. I needed my dog. I called out her name.

Me: Juliet! Julie!

Mom: (inside her room) She's sleeping inside your closet!

Me: Thank you.

I went to my room. I opened the closet and she was inside.

Me: My poor baby. Come.

I picked her up and I went to my bed with her. She barked. Her tiny bark meant something. It was everything to me.

Me: At least I still have you. You won't betray me nor lie to me. You won't let me down. I took my snack pack and I shared it with my dog. My dog ate everything. I mean everything, even a lollipop, danone or whatever. I took my phone and I looked at the pictures I took with Sphe. We were so beautiful, one can think that we were in love. Okay I was in love with him

but it didn't matter no more because it was just a game to him. I deleted everything that reminded me him. His texts and his number. I blocked him on my WhatsApp. I then stood up and packed my sport bag. I had cash so I was going to leave in the morning before my Father come back. I didn't want to face him because I was in this whole mess because of him. I finished packing and I went back to bed with Julie. I cried myself to sleep.....

In the morning I woke up and took my phone. I had no good morning message from Sphe. Then it hit me, that he was no longer part of my life. There was a whole in my heart that he left. I started crying. My mom walked in without knocking. I wiped my tears away immediately. She came up to me.

Mom: Alondwe what's wrong? Why are you crying?

Me: Nothing mom. I was just thinking.

Mom: You can't tell me that.

Me: (I smiled) Serious. It's nothing. I am going to visit gogo today. I will come back after three weeks.

Mom: Why? Your siblings will also come here.

Me: I miss her mama. And I want to spend time with her and aunt Simthande.

Mom: What happened yesterday? You don't look happy?

Me: Nothing happened, it was just a beautiful night mama.

Mom: You know you can tell me anything. And it can stay between us without your father knowing about it.

Me: I know mama. But there's nothing wrong.

Mom: Okay. Come to me.

I stood up and I went to her. She gave me a very heartwarming hug. I let my tears out. She brushed my back softly.

Mom: Please talk to me Alondwe. Please.

Me: I am fine. (I sniffed)

She backed away from me and she looked at me. She was also crying. That broke my heart too. I wiped her tears.

Me: Don't cry mama.

Mom: Why are you crying Alondwe. Please talk to me baby.

Me: It's nothing, just a friendship drama with my other friends.

Mom: Don't let them hurt you Alondwe. There's nothing wrong with being friendless. I had no friend because my friend hurt me big time because of your father. Our friendship ended but I found another friend. Don't worry Nana okay?

Me: Yes mom.

Mom: Go and bath. I will drive you to Durban station.

Me: And here I was thinking you'll drive me to Empangeni.

Mom: (laughing and wiping tears) I have to come back early because your siblings are coming with their father today. And your dad is not here.

Me: Mom will you ever go to see grandpa.

Mom: Yes baby I will go. But not now. I am still helping out a friend with something.

I nodded and smiled. She kissed my cheek and left. I wish I could tell her but I just couldn't. I know she was going to end up in the hospital. Or her and dad were going to fight. If only I knew I wasn't going to start dating because I don't even know which guy was going to love me for real. I sighed and told myself "fuck boys I don't need them." I went to shower and I dressed up afterwards. My vagina was still sore but it was something bearable. I took my bags and I went downstairs. My mom and aunt were talking about boys and sex but they eventually stopped because they saw me. I pretended like I didn't hear anything. I sat down and ate.

Aunt Melo: How was the dance?

Me: It was very lovely and exciting.

Aunt Melo: So next year you'll be going on your own dance?

Me: Yes. But I don't think I will go. This one was the best (I faked a smile to hide my pain) And my partner and I became Prom King and queen.

Mom and my aunt made a scream. They laughed.

Mom: But that doesn't mean you should date him.

Aunt Melo: Hawu skwiza!

Mom: What? It's true.

Me: I won't mama.

Mom: Good.

She smiled. I faked a giggle. We ate breakfast and they took my bag. We were leaving. My dog came out barking.

Me: I am taking her with me mom.

Mom: No. You'll be using a taxi Alondwe.

Me: I will put her on her basin. Just in case she urinates.

Mom: I rather drive you myself. I don't think Themba is on his way.

Me: Much better.

Mom: Spoilt brat.

Me: You're spoiling me.

She laughed. I took my dog's things and we all went to my mom's car. She drove us to Empangeni. On the road she was talking to dad for about an hour. I even fell asleep. They were talking in riddles. I couldn't really tell what they were talking about. After two hours we arrived at my gran's house. Mom greeted and they catch up for a few minutes. Then she left after I begged her to give me money....

////////

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

After driving Alondwe to her gran's house. I headed back home. I was having a conversation with my sister in law. I was worried about Alondwe but my mother in-law ensured me that she was going to keep a close eye on her. I drove back home. There was car parked outside my house. I opened the gate and drove in. The car also drove in. I stepped out of my car and waited for the person who was in the car. A tall dark guy stepped out of my car. He came up to me.

Guy: You must be Thandeka Ndunakazi. The daughter of Mfaniseni Dhlomo.

My heart started beating pretty fast.

Me: Yes I am.

Guy: I am Muzi Zulu. I am here to see you.

Me: Uhm... Yes. Please come in.

He nodded and followed me. I started becoming nervous.....

3rd Person Narrator.....

The big day finally came. Thandeka, Nobuhle and Prudence were together in a hotel room. The Doctor was also with them. The musk didn't show up that much. You wouldn't tell that Prudence wasn't Nobuhle.

Doc:"I think everything is perfect"

Thandeka: "Thank you Doctor. Everything looks perfect."

Nobuhle: "One can say you're my identical twin sister"

They all laughed at that.

Prudence: "I just hope my vagina is more tighter than ever"

Thandeka: "Don't worry. Just act like someone who doesn't know a thing about sex and during the sexual intercourse make sure you keep your legs together. Don't open them

widely.

Prudence:” Why?”

Thandeka: “That helps keep the vagina tight and locks up the penis inside you”

Doctor: “Are you a sex therapist? I didn’t know about that”

Thandeka: (she laughs) “I just know”

Thandeka giggled. The other ladies laughed.

Prudence: “I think I need some sex tips from you”

They laughed. Prudence packed up everything and she was ready to go. Nobuhle received a call from Rajiv. She excused herself and picked up.

Nobuhle: “Mr Pillay”

Rajiv:”Tell me you’re on your way at least ”

Nobuhle: “On my way to?”

Rajiv: “Precious!?”

Rajiv roared his anger out. He was waiting for Nobuhle for about 30 minutes. They had a date which Nobuhle forgot about.

Nobuhle: “What?”

Rajiv:”Tsk! Screw you!”

Nobuhle: ” Raj -”

He hung up on her before she even finish up her sentence. She tried to call again but his phone went straight to voicemail. Nobuhle checked her to do list on her phone and she saw their date that she totally forgot about.

Nobuhle: “Shit!”

Thandeka: “Is everything okay? We should go now”

Nobuhle: “Yes everything is fine. Let’s go.”

Thandeka: “You will sleep in my house because I can’t drive you home now. My daughter is not home so my sister in law is home alone with the kids”

Nobuhle: “I don’t think that’s a good idea. Where’s your husband?”

Thandeka “He’s with his friends”

Nobuhle: “I don’t think it will be comfortable seeing her”

Thandeka: “You have nothing for him so I don’t see a problem. Unless you have plan B”

Nobuhle: “Okay. Let’s go.”

They went to the car. They hugged Prudence and wished her luck. She took a cab and they all went their separate ways. Nobuhle was nervous about going to Thandeka’s house and on the other hand she was worried about Rajiv.

Prudence was quite nervous. She didn’t know the kind of client she was going to take on.

They arrived at Sandile’s house.

Driver:”We’re here mam”

Prudence: “Are you sure. Did you check the address clearly ”

Her heart was beating really fast as she saw that she was at Sandile’s house.

Driver: “Yes mam. I am sure”

She swallowed hard and nodded. She paid and got off. She buzzed the gate. Sandile answered.

Sandile: “Hello.”

Prudence:(clears throat) “It’s Nobuhle”

Her voice was a little bit shaky but she tried to channel it.

Sandile: “Come on in baby”

He opened the gate and Prudence walked in. She had a whole lot of emotions going on. But through all those emotions she didn’t know that Sandile had something else planned. She was angry that her boyfriend wanted another girl but she was also nervous that she was going to get caught that she is a call girl. As much as Prudence knew that Sandile wasn’t a good guy.

She loved him dearly. Loving Sandile kept her out of the street, being a street prostitute was worst. She settled for being a call girl. She collected herself together as she approached the door. Sandile was already waiting for her with a glass of champagne. Prudence fake a nervous smile. Sandile smiled and kissed her cheek. He gave her a glass of wine. Sandile wanted to try something new and he thought Nobuhle could help him be the better man. As he had realized that he was old to be a player.

Prudence: "I don't drink alcohol Sandile"

She rolled her eyes trying to maintain Nobuhle's attitude towards Sandile. While her heart was saying "Oh baby how romantic of you" and her throat was just dry. And God damn the wine looked so good on the glass.

Sandile: "Just one glass won't hurt"

She rolled her eyes and took the glass. She walked inside leaving him behind.

Prudence: "Just so you know, I am not here for champagne so please don't waste my time"

Sandile: "You want my dick already? Come on. I thought we could eat first. Come."

He held her hand. Prudence's heart melt. She never knew this sweet side of Sandile. They walked up to the table which was in a romantic setting. He pulled a chair for her and they sat down.

Prudence: "How impressive"

She said trying so hard not blew up her cover. Though her real self was in love with Sandile. She even forgot about her problems. They got served by Sandile's workers. They started eating. Having a good conversation. Sandile kept looking at her. Something in him was surprised because he didn't expect Nobuhle to give in to his invite to dinner.

Prudence: "Why do keep on starring at me"

Sandile: "You're beautiful"

She smiled and looked down. They had dessert after the meal. Sandile took her hand and they went to the lounge. He put on a romantic movie and they cuddled up on the couch. Prudence was comfortable and happy. She was in paradise. The movie went on and on with them discussing the characters and their actions. After the movie. Sandile picked up Prudence and he walked with her to the guest bedroom. He put her on bed.

Sandile: "I had a wonderful time tonight. I hope you'll be comfortable here. Goodnight"

Prudence: "You won't"

Sandile: "Let's not ruin a beautiful moment, we just had with a stupid contract"

She smiled and nodded. Sandile kissed her forehead. He smiled and went to the door. Then Prudence blew it up.

Prudence: "I love you Sandile."

Sandile froze for a minute. He didn't believe what he just heard. He slowly looked back and he got the surprise of his life....

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

I went to the kitchen and prepared scones and tea for him. I was so nervous. I didn't know what did he want in my house and I didn't know how on earth did he find me!!?? I served him. My sister in law came downstairs.

Melo: Sisi I am going out. When will my brother come back?

Me: I think Monday or today.

Melo: I want to sleep out.

Me: Hhaybo and leave me here alone?

Melo: Your kids are coming nje.

Me: Just go and come back tomorrow early in the morning otherwise your brother will eat me alive.

Melo: Thank you. Usale kahle bhuti.

Muzi: Thanks. Uhambe kahle.

Melokuhle smiled and walked out. Muzi's Zulu was poor. He didn't sound African.

Me: How can I help you?

Muzi: What happened to my mother?

Me: Excuse me?

Muzi: I know that you know me.

Me: I didn't say I don't know you.

Muzi: Oh. Where's my mamma?

Me: You should ask her husband that not me. How am I supposed to know about her whereabouts?

Muzi: I know that she had an agenda with you.

Me: Oh What agenda?

Muzi: She killed your mother and you thought you can do the same to her.

Me: Mm that's a good thought except for I didn't kill that old woman. So please go to my dad and ask him not me.

Muzi: Mmm. You're good. You're good. I know what you did to my mom. Starting from that wedding that happened. I was not in South Africa but I know what has been going on here and ever since that day you took her out. I followed you very closely and I know everyone that you have taken out using your brains. For an example. Ava, the woman who kidnapped your son.

Me: What? How did you know about that?

Muzi: I was like your God. And I must say I really like how your brains work. You're very clever Thandeka. And I don't blame you for taking my mom out. She deserved it. She killed my father.

Me: What do you want from me?

Muzi: I want to make use of your skills. I want to open a secret organisation here in South Africa that will work on missions on taking out all the bad guys without them knowing it.

Me: Excuse me? I have a job and a family. I can't work on missions.

Muzi: It's your brains that inspired me. You know that guy who your husband hired to take my mom out. I know him and he didn't know that Maud was my mom. So he told me everything without knowing that it's my mom. And I have all the evidence of the job. (He said taking out. I read it and damn it was concrete!) It's your choice. It's either you work with me here in South Africa or you go to jail. Now my team wanted you back in America but I thought about your husband that loves you more than any other woman in this world. I thought about your kids, your friend Thobelani, your Dhlomo family, and the Ndunakazi family not forgetting your ex husband and his kids. My second in command and I came up with an idea that we can network and open this organisation here in South Africa.

Me: Why me?

Muzi: Because you're smart, beautiful and ambitious. So what is going to be?

I had no choice but to take his offer. I couldn't go back to America and leave my family. I couldn't go to jail for murder. At least I was going to work in South Africa.

Me: Do I have another choice?

Muzi: Yeah. That's going to jail.

Me: I will do it. I will work with you.

Muzi: Good! Thank you. Next month is July right?

Me: Yes.

Muzi: Beginning of July we're going to America. You'll have a one month training there. Though there are lot of things to be done but since you have a family, a month will be enough. End of July we'll come back to South Africa. August we will start building our organisation.

Me: What? I can't go back to America. And July is my birth month Brah. Come on.

Muzi: We don't have time Thandeka. And one more thing. Your husband and your family must not know about this. Your job will be a secret.

Me: What? What about my old job?

Muzi: You'll work on that relax. I have to go. Here is your package. Read about us and the details of the trip. We will sign the contract back in America. And I will keep in touch Mrs Ndunakazi.

Me: This is wrong.

Muzi: God knows I wanted you in my team so bad and he gave me you. It's his will. And everyone is happy about this because you're a genius Mrs Ndunakazi. I will see my way out. I looked at him. He smiled and stood up.

Muzi: And don't worry. I already know who will be your first assignment.

He smiled again and he left. I couldn't believe it. I wanted to believe it but I couldn't. It wasn't right. Everything wasn't right. I sighed. I took the package and I went to hide it in the safe that was in the guest room. I gave it the new password. Just in case Samkelo knew about it. I sighed. I was still planning on what I was going to do, then there was a buzz on the gate. I rushed downstairs. I went to attend the gate.

Me: Thandeka speaking.

Themba: Please open up.

I opened the gate and I went to the door. I opened the door. And there my kids walked inside my premises. I was so happy to see them again. I smiled. Uyabongeka ran up to me. I met her halfway and I hugged her.

Me: My baby.

Uyabongeka: Mama.

I kissed her forehead. She giggled.

Me: Are you fine?

Uyabongeka: Yes mom and you?

Me: I am fine baby. Boy?

Uyathandwa: Mom.

I smiled and hugged him. It was so nice seeing them again.

Me: Are you alright.

Uyathandwa: Yes mom I am fine.

Me: Okay.

I hugged Themba briefly and we let go. We walked inside the house.

Themba: I am not staying so please have a nice stay here okay.

Them: Yes daddy.

Themba: Good. I have to go. The other day you called.

The kids went to put their bags in their rooms. Themba and I walked out.

Me: Yeah.

Themba: I am sorry that I snapped at you.

Me: It's cool. I wanted us to talk about Uyabongeka. I think that we must hire a tutor for her.

Themba: For Maths?

Me: Yes. It's better if she gets attention early rather than later.

Themba: Yeah. That's true. I will work on it.

Me: Okay you'll tell me if you have found someone.

Themba: Okay. I have to go now.

Me: And please don't beat her up for failing Themba.

Themba: So now you gonna tell me how to discipline my daughter?

Me: No. But beating her won't solve anything.

Themba: Don't start an argument with me Thandeka special not about my kids.

Me: Our kids. You didn't make them alone.

Themba: I am raising them alone!

Me: Oh really? Whose fault is that? Mine?

Themba: Let's not go there. Thandeka please. I have some business I have to take care of. Before I go back home.

Me: Go Themba.

He walked up to the gate. I saw something that looked like a gun on his back.

Me: Themba? (He turned back)

Themba: What?

I walked closer to him.

Me: Are you carrying a gun?

Themba: Yes.

Me: Why are –

Themba: Non of your business.

He walked out of the premises. I walked back inside the house. That bothered me, but hey he's a big guy. He can take care of himself. One thing that was bothering was Muzi. But I tried to spend a good time with my kids. We went to sun coast. We had a lot of fun. We were catching up. They were telling me about their friends and school. Uyabongeka was the talkative one.

We went back home very late. Uyabongeka was asleep. I drove back home. Samkelo was home already.

Me: Take your sister Uyathandwa.

Uyathandwa: Hawu. Mama. She's heavy.

Me: I won't repeat myself Uyathandwa.

I walked inside the house. Samkelo was watching TV. He smiled and came up to me. I smiled back.

Sam: My beautiful wife.

Me: Hey baby.

We hugged each other and he kissed me. We broke the kiss. Uyathandwa walked in with Uyabongeka. Samkelo stood up and assisted him.

Uyathandwa: Tjo thanks. Mom wanted to kill me.

Sam: Sorry boy.

He laughed and walked upstairs with them. I went to the kitchen and drank water. I went back to the lounge. My husband came back.

Me: Where are my babies?

Sam: They wanted to visit my father so I took them there. They will come back on Saturday because Uyathandwa and Uyabongeka are home.

Me: Okay. I miss them. The last time I saw was Thursday.

Sam: Awu kwahle.

Me: What? They are my baby boys. Specially Thando nomsindo wakhe. I hope you told mom not give Mesuli lollipops.

Sam: I forgot but I will tell her.

Me: How is my dad?

Sam: He's doing well. They will discharge him tomorrow.

Me: Okay. Thank you.

Sam: You must go and see him.

Me: I will baby.

Sam: Good.

Uyathandwa came down to us.

Uyathandwa: Mom where is Alondwe?

Me: She's not here.

Sam: Where is she?

Me: She went to visit her grandmother Empangeni.

Uyathandwa: What? How can she leave without seeing us. Mxm.

He walked back to his room.

Sam: You should've stopped her Thandeka. Just yesterday she went to the dance and now she ditched her siblings just like that.

Me: She wanted to go Samkelo. I couldn't say no to my baby. Come on she also has a right to visit her grandparents.

Sam: And her siblings.

Me: She'll come back.

Sam: Sunday I am going to fetch her.

Me: Samkelo?

Sam: No. Ngeke sphathwe u- Alondwe phela.

He stood up and went upstairs. I had no problem with my baby going to her grandmother because clearly there was something bothering her around Durban. Maybe she was going to open to her aunt or her grandmother. But what can I say they want her back! I stood up and I went to my room.....

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

I saw the video and it was very bad. Everything looked like I was the one who seduced the guy. I was so ashamed of myself. Everyone was calling me with all sorts of names but Spending time with my grandmother was a little better. I got a peace of mind and I tried to forget about it all but it was hard. Everyday without hearing Sphe's voice or text was like getting cleaned up from rehab. It was so painful and I felt so lonely. One morning I was woken up by my ringing phone. It was my dad calling. I looked at the phone. I didn't want to answer it but it kept ringing and that was just irritating. I took it and answered.

Me: Daddy?

Dad: Hey Princess, how are you?

Me: I am fine dad and you?

Dad: I am okay. Your mom told me that you left. I just got home and you're not here.

Me: I am home with my grandmother.

Dad: You didn't tell me because?

Me: Dad? I told mom. I didn't think I was supposed to tell you too.

Dad: Just that I thought I was going to find my daughter home but you're not here.

Me: I am sorry to disappoint you.

Dad: It's okay. Enjoy the rest of the week with your grandmother.

Me: I will spend the rest of my holidays here dad.

Dad: That won't happen, I am going to fetch you on Sunday.

Me: But that's unfair. I still have to go to Cape Town and visit my grandfather. I promised him that I will visit him. I will spend two weeks here and a week with him.

Dad: It's okay. You will spend a week there and a week with your grandfather then you'll come back home.

Me: Mxm. That's unfair.

Dad: Excuse me what was that? Please repeat it.

Me: I said that was unfair.

Dad: You will not be disrespectful. Your siblings are here and you're not here. If you spend three weeks away you won't see them until they go back to their father now tell me how is that by any chance fair?

Me: I don't know okay! I just needed time away from home. Is that too much to ask!! Argh!

Tsk!

I hung up the call. I just cried. I hated my father and I didn't want to be in a same room with him. He called again and I didn't answer. My grandmother walked in and she held me tightly.

Granny: What's wrong baby?

Me: Why does daddy has to be so hard on me.

Granny: What did he do?

Me: He wants me to come back home. I told him after two weeks. I am going to Cape Town to grandpa. He said I will only spend a week here gogo. A week with Grandpa and go back home to my siblings.

Granny: But baby you haven't seen them for a while.

Me: But I don't wanna go back home grandma. I just don't.

Granny: Why?

Me:(crying) I am scared. I don't –

Granny: Shh! It's okay my baby. I will talk to your father. Did anything happen back home?

Me: I don't want to talk about it.

Granny: Don't you trust me?

Me: I do grandma but I am not ready to talk about it.

Granny: But it's not your parents? They didn't hurt you right?

Me: No it's not them.

Granny: Okay my baby. Whatever it is, it will be alright. Don't cry just get some sleep and you'll be better Okay?

Me: Yes. Thanks.

I kissed her cheek and I went back to sleep.

I was woken up by my aunt Simthande.

Aunt Sim: Baby, wake up. We're going to Richards bay today.

Me: Okay. That's nice. Shopping or?

Aunt Sim: Anything we want to do, just you and me dear.

I nodded and she left. I took my phone. I went to the bathroom while browsing through Facebook.

Grandpa: Alondwe!

Me: Mkhulu?

Grandpa: Hhayi hhayi! Ifoni ayikwazi ukuhlala phansi. Uyaphi nayo ebathroom? (Can't you leave your phone behind?)

Me: I wanted to play music while showering.

Grandpa: I will leave you girls behind and you'll use your own money for transport.

Aunt Sim: Alondwe! Hurry up please.

I nodded and ran to the bathroom. I put my phone aside and I showered quickly. I brushed my teeth and I went to my room to lotion. I wore blue jeans shorts with a little white lace at the end. I wore a white lacy crop top. Brown sandals. I brushed my weave and tie it up. My aunt walked in.

Aunt Sim: Change that please. It's starting to get cold outside and beside dad won't allow you to go out like that.

Me: Tjo!

I looked outside and the weather wasn't sunny. I wore black jeans, black long sleeve shirt and my black and red scotch jacket. I put on black ankle boots. My aunt was fixing my bed. I put on a red lipstick and took my sling bag.

Grandpa: GIRLS!!

Aunt Sim: We're coming daddy. Let's go.

We laughed and ran out of the house. We looked at grandma.

Granny: He's on the garage. You look beautiful.

Us: Thank you.

Granny: Go! That's his car.

She laughed. We ran out. Grandpa was driving out of the yard. We ran after him and he stopped. We stepped in the back seat. He drove away. He was shouting about wasting time until we made it to Richards bay mall.

Me: Thank you grandpa. You're the best. (We giggled)

Grandpa: Hhaysuka. Niyangimaketha.

We laughed. He gave us cash, though we had our own but he gave us anyway. We thanked him and went to the mall. My dad and mom called but I didn't answer.

Aunt Sim: Why ain't you answering your phone?

Me: I don't want to talk to them. Dad wants me to come back home. I don't want to go home.

Aunt Sim: Why?

Me: Is it wrong if I spend time with my grandparents.

Aunt Sim: No it's not.

Me: Thank you.

Aunt Sim: Ngiyamazi ubhuti Samkelo ubuye aphaphe.

We laughed and shopped around. It was so fun and nice. I really enjoyed myself. We went to eat at Spur after that we walked out. Aunt Sim was talking to the phone. I saw a little girl who looked familiar walking alone. She looked lost. I went to her.

Me: Hey baby.

Girl: I want Papa.

Me: Where is he?

Girl: I don't know.

Me: What's his name?

Girl: Sphepheyo Khumayo. (Sphephelo Khumalo)

I swallowed hard. My heart started beating fast. I stood up and looked around. Part of me wanted to leave her there and continue with my journey. But I couldn't do it. It was starting to get dark outside. My aunt came to me.

Aunt Sim: Your father is at home. He said let's come back.

Me: What? Argh.

Aunt Sim: Is she lost?

Me: Yes.

Aunt Sim: I think that's her parents. They look worried.

I looked on that direction, she spotted and it was Sphe and his baby mama. I let go of the little girl's hand.

Me: There's your Papa baby.

She looked at that direction and ran towards her father. He picked her up. Sphe's eyes met up with my eyes. We looked at each other. Tears rolled down my face. Before I knew it they were both in front of us. I wiped my tears.

Baby mama: What were you doing with my child bitch?

Me: Aunty let's go.

She nodded and we attempted to walk away. But the baby mama held my hand roughly. I turned back on her with a hot slap. She didn't slap me back.

Me: Next time keep your daughter next to you or you'll find her dead.

Sphe: Is that a threat Alondwe?

Me: No it's just a parenting tip. There's a lot of human trafficking happening. Now you don't want people to take her, raise her and train her to be a sex slave right?

They both didn't say anything. I looked at Sphe. He was also looking at me.

Aunt Sim: Your father is here Alondwe. Let's go.

Me: Tsk!

We left. I was angry at my dad and seeing Sphe made my fresh wounds hurt badly.

Aunt Sim: What's up with that guy?

Me: I know him from school. We just don't get along. I don't know what is he doing here.

Maybe his baby mama lives around here.

Aunt Sim: Okay.

We went to my father's car. He wasn't inside. I just didn't want to face him. I don't know what exactly did he want from me. He came to us.

Dad: Get inside the car.

Aunt Sim: Not even a hello girls.

Dad: Don't start with me Simthande.

She laughed and I didn't. He drove us back to my granny's house. I was thinking about Sphe. It was so painful seeing him again. I don't know how am I going face him at school. We arrived at my granny's house.

Dad: Alondwe take your bags now. You're going back home.

Me: What? Not even a week has ended but you want me to go home? Why?

Dad: Should I make you repeat what you said through the phone? You spoke to me like I am your friend! Don't make me beat you up right now and pack you back home do as I say!

Me: I don't want to go home.

Granny: Leave her alone Samkelo. Why are you being so hard on the child.

Aunt Sim: Let her stay Bhuti please.

Dad: She's not staying. Uyeyisa lo. Take your bags and we are going home.

Me: Mxm!

Dad: Uyamuzwa nje Mah? Ngiwu baba wakhe ngoba engeyisa kanje!

I didn't wait to hear my granny's response. I went to my room and I took my bags. They were already packed up. I walked out with them crying, thinking that dad was going to say I can stay but he didn't.

Me: Where's my dog? Julie!

She came barking. Dad took my bags and I picked up my dog.

Me: Goodbye granny.

Granny: Bye bye baby.

We hugged each other. My dog barked at them. They laughed and waved goodbye. I sat at the back of the car with my dog. Dad went to Grandma. They were talking. He gave her money and he came back to the car.

Dad: Angazi ubucanga ini ngampela uhamba unghahlalanga even a day with your siblings.

They are here for you but wena awukho.

I didn't say anything.

Dad: Tsk!

He drove straight home. I fell asleep with earphones on my ears..

Nobuhle Mthembu.....

We arrived in Thandeka's house. I was quite nervous but I had to suck it up. We walked inside, the house was totally beautiful and so stylish just like it's owner. There were other kids on the lounge and the lady that I saw with Samkelo on the beach.

Me: Hhaybo Thandeka – ( I pointed the lady)

Thandeka: She's my sister in law.

Me: Okay. I thought –

Thandeka: It's okay.

I swallowed hard and nodded I was so wrong. I should have asked instead of jumping into conclusion. Jeez! We went to them. The young girl jumped on Thandeka. She wanted her to pick her up.

Thandeka: Missy you're heavy please.

Girl: Mama please.

Thandeka: No. You're 11 yrs old please sit down now.

She sulked and went to sit down. Thandeka also sat down.

Thandeka: Where's your brother?

Sam's sister: He left after dropping off Alondwe.

Thandeka: Dropping off Alondwe? Alondwe is home?

Sam's sister: Yes.

Thandeka: Yoh okay. This is Nobuhle Mthembu, Nobuhle this is my sister in-law Melokuhle, my son Uyathandwa Smith and my daughter Uyabongeka Smith.

Me: Nice to meet you guys.

Them: Nice to meet you too.

Thandeka stood up.

Thandeka: Missy come to me baby. Sisi please show Nobuhle to the guestroom.

Sam's sister: Okay.

They went upstairs with her daughter. I went to the guest room that her sister in law showed me. I took my phone, I threw myself on top of the bed and called Rajiv again. He answered.

Raj: What?

Me: Bbe I am really sorry. I have been busy that I even forgot about our date.

Raj: You've been busy?

Me: Yes. I have been fixing the mess that my brother created. I am really sorry.

Raj: What are you talking about?

Me: I couldn't tell you because you were busy with your tests.

Raj: Where are you right now is everything alright?

Me: I am at Thandeka's house. I really don't feel comfortable being here.

Raj: I will come and get you. Send me the address.

Me: Okay.

I hung. I stood up and I went to knock on the door that looked a bedroom door. I assumed it was Thandeka's room. I knocked. I heard a voice telling me to come in. I opened the door and I went in. Someone was sleeping on the bed. They didn't look at my direction, just to notice my presence.

Me: Uhm. Hey can I get your attention.

Her: What do you want. (She asked without looking at me)

Me: I want the address of this house.

Her: Why don't you go and ask the owner of the house. I don't know the address.

Me: But you live here.

Her: Please leave my room. Samkelo and Thandeka are the owners of this house so please go and ask them. And stop nagging me.

I felt so disrespected and stupid. Though I couldn't see her face but I knew that it was Thandeka's older daughter who was talking. I was out of words.

Me: I am sorry. I didn't mean to upset you but –

Her: I SAID LEAVE MY ROOM!!

She shouted. This time, she looked at me. She was a mess. Her weave was messed up and she looked like she was crying. Someone walked inside the house. It was Thandeka's son.

Uyathandwa: What's going on? Alondwe.

Me: I was asking the address of the house. My friend wanted to come and pick me up and she just snapped at me.

Alondwe: Please take her and leave my room Uyathandwa.

Uyathandwa: What's wrong with you? Can't you see that this lady is older than you?

Alondwe: I said leave my room. I was at peace with my grandmother and because of you. My

dad dragged me back home. Here I am then home! So now can I have some peace! Please. Before I do something stupid both of you leave now!

Uyathandwa held my hand and dragged me out of Alondwe's room. Alondwe closed the door behind us.

Uyathandwa: Yoh!

Me: What's wrong with her?

Uyathandwa: I don't know sisi. Let me write the address for you.

Me: You know the address but she doesn't?

Uyathandwa: She does. She was just being rude.

I shook my head. Uyathandwa wrote the address for me on my phone. I sent it to Rajiv.

Me: Thank you.

Uyathandwa: My pleasure sisi.

His mother called him downstairs. We both went downstairs.

Me: Thandeka, Rajiv will come and fetch me.

Thandeka: Okay. There's no problem. Come baby I bought you something.

Her son smiled and followed her. I went back to the guest room. I wanted to go before her husband came back home. After a few minutes Rajiv texted me. I went to Thandeka. She was in the kitchen with her daughter and son. They were talking and laughing, while helping their mother cook. It was so beautiful just to witness such love.

Me: I am leaving now Mrs Ndunakazi.

Thandeka: Okay. You'll tell me tomorrow about tonight.

Me: I will. Thank you for everything.

Thandeka: My pleasure.

I hugged her and I left. I went to Rajiv and we drove straight to his place....

3rd Person Narrator.....

Sandile didn't think Nobuhle wanted him as much as he did. Prudence couldn't let this moment pass her by. She took off her gown and Sandile just stood there looking at her beautiful body. Sandile walked closer to her.

Sandile: "You don't have to do this Nobuhle. I don't want to destroy your soul"

Prudence: "I love you and I want this. I want to do it with you"

She said holding his face. Sandile's blood got warm. Prudence caressed his face. Sandile kissed her cheek, then down to her neck. Prudence moaned in pleasure. Her body could feel the tingles as Sandile touched her breasts. He took off her bra and exposed her beautiful breasts. Sandile sucked her nipples. Prudence held on to Sandile's neck and maintain her breathing on his neck. Sandile stopped what he was doing and looked at her. Sandile: You are beautiful.

Prudence smiled shyly. Sandile took a hair band and told Prudence to turn back. Prudence did as told. Sandile held her weave up as means of tying it. He saw the tattoo at the back of Prudence's neck. His favourite tattoo on Prudence's body. He tried to think and he remembered that Nobuhle doesn't have a tattoo. He grabbed Prudence by her weave and made her face him. Prudence screamed in pain.

Sandile:"Who are you? "

Prudence:"What do you mean? I am Nobuhle "

Sandile:"Don't fuck me up bitch you think I am fool huh?"

He threw Prudence on the bed. He clicked his tongue and left the room. He locked her up and he went to his bedroom. He took his phone and made a phonecall.

Sandile: "I have a job for you. Find Nobuhle Mthembu for me. And bring her to me alive"

Guy:"When boss?"

Sandile: "By tomorrow she must be in my house. And ask around. Find her boyfriend and bring them both."

He hung up the call and banged the dressing table.....

April 12, 2

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

We arrived at home and I took my bag. I walked inside the house. Uyathandwa and Uyabongeka were watching TV. Uyabongeka came to me and hugged me.

Uyabongeka: Hey sisi.

Me: Hey unjani?

Uyabongeka: I am fine and you?

Me: I am fine. Hi Uyathandwa.

Uyathandwa: Hey.

I didn't say anything further. Vele I didn't want to be home. I just wanted to be alone.

Uyabongeka: Can we play together sisi?

Me: Uhm, not now dear. I want to rest. We will play later neh?

She nodded and went to sit down. I went to my room. I locked it behind me and I threw everything on the floor. I crawled up to my bed. I called my grandfather from my father's side. He picked up.

Grandpa: MaNdunakazi.

Me: Mkhulu how are you?

Grandpa: I am fine mntanami and how are you?

Me: Mkhulu dad is not treating me well.

Grandpa: What? Why?

Me: After the matric dance. The following day, I asked my mom's permission to go and visit grandma. After that I will visit you. Dad was not home. He called me and told me that I must come back.

Grandpa: Why?

Me: Because my brother and sister are home. I wanted to stay with my grandmother. He came to granny's house today and he drove me back home. He gave me no choice.

Grandpa: That's wrong. Ungenelwe yini kanti uSamkelo. I will talk to him. Don't worry okay?

Me: Yebo mkhulu. Thank you.

Grandpa: Okay.

Me: Where's Alupheli and Mesuli?

Grandpa: Alupheli is here with me.

Me: Can I talk to him?

I heard shuffling sounds.

Alupheli: Hello...

Me: Yeah Thando. (Mimicking mom's voice)

Alupheli: (laughing) Namanga Yoyondwe akuyena umama. (You're lying Alondwe. It's not mom)

Me: Got you! Bengidlala hawu! (I was joking)

Alupheli: Zolala wedwa wena namuhla? (You'll sleep alone tonight?)

Me:(laughing) Yes. At least you're not here. You were going to wet my bed.

Alupheli: (crying) Yoyondwe! Mkhulu!

Grandpa: Alondwe!

Me: Ngiyadlala ke. Ngizokhala ebusuku ngoba awukho. (I am kidding. I will cry at night because you're not here)

Alupheli: (laughing) Izokudla iWU. Iyeyeye!

Grandpa: Yini iWU? (What us IWU)

Alupheli and laughed.

Alupheli: Awuyazi iWU mkhulu. (He laughed)

Me: iWU, it's a ghost mkhulu.

We laughed at that. Alupheli and I made the sounds of it. "WU! WU! WU!"

Me: It's like in cartoons mkhulu. Dad told us that it's iWU.

We all laughed. It felt so good to laugh again.

Grandpa: Uyadlala ngani lo baba wenu.

Me: Hawu mkhulu.

Grandpa: Serious.

Me: Bhuti. I will see you neh. Goodnight shain lami.

Alupheli: Nyt shain.

I smiled and hung up the call. That felt good. I sighed and took off my clothes. I wore my pyjamas. I went downstairs to feed my dog. I sat outside with her. My phone rang. It was a private number. I answered.

Me: Owami speaking. Hello?

Sphe: Hey. It's me.

Me: What do you want?

Sphe: I am just checking up on you.

Me: Why? To gloat? You want to do damage control? What do you want Sphephelo?

Sphe: I am sorry. I didn't mean for you to hate me. I just did what I had to.

Me: Fuck you!

Dad: (at my back) Hhaybo! Alondwe.

Me: Tsk!

I hung up the call. Dad was looking at me. I looked down.

Dad: Who was that?

Me: Just someone who pissed me off.

I stood up.

Dad: Sit down. Now.

I sat down as he said. He sat down with me. He held my hand.

Dad: What's wrong talk to me.

Me: Nothing is wrong baba. Beside the fact that you came to my granny's house and forced me to come back. I didn't like that.

Dad: So that's why you're insulting whoever you were talking to.

Me: That person deserved it. Can I go home and spend time with my sister. That's why I came back.

He looked at me with nothing but worry in his eyes. I didn't care. I was in pain because of him. I wasn't going to go through all the pain I was going through. If he wasn't a bad boy. I sat down with my siblings and we played, play station together. The private number kept calling me. I ignored it. I ended up excusing myself. I wanted to sleep. I went to my room. I put my phone on silent mode and I went to sleep. I woke up feeling empty. I just cried. Someone disturbed me. I snapped at them together with Uyathandwa. They left. I took my phone and called Zenande. She answered.

Me: (crying) Can you please come and sleep with me tonight please.

Zenande: You're not alright?

Me: No I am not Zenande. It doesn't get better. It should get better by now but it doesn't. It get worse.

Zenande: I will talk to dad.

Me: Thanks.

I hung up. I went to the door and locked up. I went back to my bed. I hugged my legs and cried.

//////////

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

Spending time with my son and my daughter meant everything to me. Not that I had turned a blind eye with Alondwe's situation. I was going to talk to her later. I just wanted to be with Uyathandwa and Uyabongeka.

Me: Did Samkelo say when he'll come back?

Uyathandwa: He'll come back mom. There's a match today. Not that late though.

Me: Oh. Okay.

Uyathandwa: You miss him already.

Me: What? No.

They laughed. I laughed too. There was a buzz on the gate.

Me: Please attend it Ethan.

He went to attend to it.

Uyathandwa: (shouting) It's Zenande Maphanga mom.

Me: Oh. Let her in.

He came back. Zenande walked in after a few minutes. She came up to me.

Zenande: Hi mama.

Me: Hey is everything alright?

Zenande: Yes. I am here for Alondwe.

Me: She's in her room. But please tell her to come down and eat.

Zenande: Okay.

She went upstairs.

Me: What's wrong with your sister?

Uyathandwa: I don't know. She snapped at us earlier. Your friend was asking the address of the house. She just told us to leave her room.

Me: I bet she's angry because she had to come back.

Uyabongeka: She doesn't want to stay with us.

Me: She does baby. Just that she also wanted to see her grandmother but daddy told her to come back while she was still enjoying her holidays.

Uyabongeka nodded. I dished up the food. Uyathandwa went to call them. Just then Samkelo walked in. He kissed me.

Sam: Did Zenande arrive safe?

Me: Yes. What's wrong?

Sam: I don't know. But something is up. And clearly we will find out when the schools reopens because Alondwe doesn't want to talk. I asked Zenande but she's also hiding the truth.

Me: But you shouldn't have done what you did. And don't tell me that it's about discipline because it's not about discipline.

Sam: I just don't want her to be near Richards bay for more than a week? No.

I didn't say anything at all. I knew that it was about his past. He was so afraid of it. And it's like he knew that it is going to affect our kids. That didn't sit well with me. The kids were on the table. We joined them.

Me: Where's Samkeliswa?

Uyathandwa: She said she's not hungry.

Sam: She ate what?

Uyathandwa: Nothing.

Me: Please let her be.

He didn't say anything. We prayed and eat. After eating. Uyathandwa and Zenande washed the dishes. I went to Alondwe's room. She was fast asleep. I sighed. I kissed her forehead

Me: I love you my Angel.

I then went to the guest room. Samkelo was busy showering. I took that time and read about

the organisation that Muzi told me about. I was reading the papers. I got a clear picture about the organisation. I shook my head and put the papers back on my safe. I went to check on Uyabongeka. She was sleeping with her brother.

Me: Goodnight babies.

Them: Goodnight. Mom.

I kissed my baby's forehead. Uyathandwa refused. I smiled and I went to my room. I sat on my bed I called my father. It rang, he picked up.

Dad: Thandeka?

Me: Ninjani baba? (How are you dad?)

Dad: I am healing baby. How are you?

Me: I am fine. I wanted to check up on you.

Dad: I am glad you called. Thank you.

Me: It's Okay. I will come before the school reopens. My kids are here and I have some things I have to work on. I can't come now.

Dad: It's okay. I am really sorry about Maud.

Me: Let's not talk about her tonight. Goodnight Mkhabela.

Dad: Goodnight Dinangwe.

I smiled and hung up the call. Samkelo was looking at me.

Me: What?

Sam: I love you so much Thandeka.

Me: (smiling) I love you Ndunakazi.

He smiled a very naughty smile.

Me: Don't start please.

He laughed. I went to the bathroom leaving him behind. I took a long ass shower and after that my husband and I satisfied each other's desires.....

TWO WEEKS LATER.....

It's been two weeks, the last time I spoke to Nobuhle was the time when she was in my house. Her phone was off. I didn't know what was going on but I assumed she needed space. I also had a lot on my plate. Alondwe was not in a good space and she was shutting everyone out. I even asked her friend Zenande but she didn't tell me anything. Samkelo refused to let go see her grandparents because she was hiding things from us. She was always sleeping and she hardly spoke to anyone. When looking at her you could tell that her mind was miles away. It was Thursday of the third week. Uyathandwa and Uyabongeka were going back to their father the following day. It was the first week of July. Muzi and I agreed that I will leave at the end of July because July was my birth month. I was coming back from work. Alondwe was outside with her dog. She was feeding her dog. Uyabongeka was with her.

Me: Hello girls.

Uyabongeka: Hey mom. How are you?

Me: I am fine baby and you?

Uyabongeka: I am fine.

Me: Alondwe?

Alondwe: I am fine.

Me: It's 5 O'clock and you're still on your pyjamas. Did you bath?

She didn't answer. I put my bags down and I went to her. I held her hand just near by her wrist. She cried in pain.

Alondwe: You're hurting me mama!

She was shouting at me. I let go of her wrist but I held close to me.

Alondwe: Leave me alone. What do you want from me?

Me: I am trying to help you.

Alondwe: Help me from what? Don't act like you care Thandeka because you don't!

I slapped her. She held her cheek. That's where I saw her wrist. It had so many cuts. Some were fresh wounds. My heart broke. Tears streamed down my face. She sat down and held her dog tightly. Uyabongeka was sad. I ran inside the house. I went Alondwe's room. I locked it behind me. I went to her bathroom. It was dirty. Her sink had razor blades with blood. I went to her closet. I opened her drawers. There was a drawer with nothing but empty papers of fritos chips and big bom lollipops. I wiped my tears and I went to her phone. She was banging the door.

Alondwe: Mom open my room! Mom!

I tried all the possible names to open her phone. I finally figured it. It was her dog's name. I went through her pictures. Then I went to her WhatsApp videos. I then saw a very disturbing video. I know it was a wrong thing to do. To invade her privacy but I had no choice. I couldn't finish watching my daughter on that horrible position. I just cried. I lost control of myself. I started shaking. I tried to walk up to the door but I couldn't make it to the door. I fell on the floor. I was beyond shocked. I struggled to breath. Everything went blank.....

Nobuhle Mthembu.....

we arrived in Rajiv's apartment. His sister was sitting on the lounge watching TV. I didn't know whether to greet her or just pass by. I decided against.

Me: Hi Nadine.

Nadine: Really? you just gonna bring your girlfriend while I am here.

Rajiv: One thing you're forgetting here is, this is my apartment. Who I bring here its non of your concern.

Nadine: Mom should definetly hear this.

Rajiv: Go and report to her little puppy. Tsk!

He held my hand and we went to his bedroom. I sat on his bed. He took off his shirt, I looked at him. He looked angry.

Me: You need to calm down baby please.

Rajiv: I am calm. can't you see that?

I didn't say anything. He clicked his tongue and walked out with his towel wrapped around his waist. I didn't like to see Rajiv being ill treated like that. It wasn't acceptable. I stood up and I looked for his sister. He was in the kitchen chowing down popcorn.

Me: Just because your father cheated on your mother doesn't mean you must disrespect

Rajiv. He is your older brother and he deserves your respect.

Nadine: I won't respect a child of shame.

Me: I don't know how the hindu religion goes but to God, we are all the same. I think the same applies to your gods. I don't think they do differentiate. For all I known you're of the same blood. There's no difference between you and him. I was also born within marriage but that didn't stop me from loving him even if his mother was a prostitute or whatsoever.

Because what his mother was, doesn't mean that he's the same thing. Just because your dad cheated doesn't mean any of you as his children are cheaters. So you can hate him all you want but he didn't ask for this to happen to him. Just like those kids who are born out rape.

They didn't ask for it. stop making his life miserable, he's your brother for goodness sake.

You're not holly so please start showing respect. Tsk! typical indians.

She didn't say anything. I turned back, Rajiv was standing behind us. I walked pass him, I went to take a shower. I finished and I went to his room. He was lying on his back, looking at the ceilling. I lotioned, I wore my pyjamas. I had a few clothes at his place. I sat next to him.

I looked at him and smiled. He smiled back.

Rajiv: I love you.

Me: I love you even more.

He held my hand pulling me close to him, he kissed me. I sat on top of him. We kissed each

each other. My heart was beating fast. I held on tight to his arms as he held my waist tightly. We broke the kiss after a few minutes. He smiled.

Rajiv: Its so cute when you stand up for me.

Me: We've got each other's backs. I am sorry about the date tonight. My brother (I told him everything)

Rajiv: Why didn't you tell me early! What if your plan blows up. Do you have back up plan?

Me: Rajiv Nothing will go wrong trust me on that one.

Rajiv: I am just worried.

Me: Don't.

I kissed him. We kissed each for a long time. After that we cuddled and talk about nothing and everything. We fell asleep on each other's arms.

The following morning, we woke up and took a shower together. We wore our clothes and we went to the kitchen. Nadine was making breakfast.

Nadine: Good morning.

Rajiv and I looked at each other. Nadine looked at us.

Us: Morning.

Nadine: I am making breakfast Precious, maybe you'll like to help. I can teach you a few things since you'll marry my brother.

I smiled.

Me: Okay. I'd love that Nadine.

She smiled, I went to her and we cooked together while Rajiv looked at us. We were having a mini conversation. I was suprised but I enjoyed my time with her. We then had breakfast together. Rajiv and I washed the dishes.

Nadine: You two have a nice day. I am off.

Us: Thanks you too.

She nodded and left.

Rajiv: Okay that was the first time in history that she ever called me her brother.

A tear escaped his eye, I wiped it and kissed his lips softly.

Rajiv: Thank you baby.

I smiled and nodded. We finished off and he drove me home. We were having a good conversation until we made it home. WE kissed each other goodbye and I went home. No one was home. I took a nap. I woke up when my phone was beeping. I took it and it was a whatsapp video from Sandile. I almost had a heart attack when I saw that he captured Rajiv.

Me: What must have went wrong?

His message was: YOU BETTER COME TO MY HOUSE BEFORE THE SUN GOES DOWN, OTHERWISE HE WILL DIE. A SLOW PAINFUL DEATH. YOU BETRAYED THE WRONG GUY BITCH!

# NOTEDI

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

Cutting myself made the psychical pain the main thing I had to deal with. The emotional pain became a little bit shallow. After my mom saw my wrists I didn't know what to do. I care about her too much. It didn't feel right to see her crying. But it was not easy that I could tell her the truth. I was ashamed of myself and the pressure that I had was too much because I had a few days before I go back to school. It wasn't right, nothing was alright. I followed her after just a few minutes later. I banged the door asking her to open up. I was worried because my phone was inside my room. She was going to figure my password out very easy.

Me: Mom please.

She didn't open. I heard a sound like something was falling. Then there was total silence. I panicked. Maybe she saw my video. Mom is one weak person. Her body fails to handle

shock. It's either she faints or she gets anxiety attacks. I quickly went downstairs.

Uyathandwa: What's wrong?

Me: It's mom.

I dialed dad's number on the house phone. He picked up.

Dad: I am on the road right now what is it?

Me: Dad. Please come back home now!

Dad: Slow down! What's wrong?

Me: (crying) It's mom dad. Please come back.

Dad: What happened to my wife. Alondwe?

Me: I don't know. She's in my room. I don't know dad.

He hung up on me. I placed the phone aside.

Uyabongeka: What's wrong sisi?

Me: I don't know.

I ran upstairs. I sat down near my door. Dad walked in after a few minutes. He ran up. I stood up quickly.

Me: She's inside.

Dad went downstairs and came back with a tool box. He broke the door handle and opened the door. Mom was on the floor. My phone was beside her. I took my phone. Dad picked her up and ran out with her.

Dad: I will be back. Stay here.

Uyathandwa: But I think we should come with you.

Dad: No stay here.

Me: Dad –

Dad: I said stay here!!

He walked out. I just saw that she saw my video. I deleted it immediately. I was so scared of what was going to happen. Uyabongeka sat next to me.

Uyabongeka: Mom will be alright?

Me: Yes.

Uyabongeka: Why does she always go to the hospital?

Me: That's because she's not okay.

Uyabongeka: I hope that she'll be fine.

Uyathandwa: She must've seen something in your room Alondwe. Are you pregnant?

Me: What? Are you mad?

Uyathandwa: I am trying to figure out what went wrong.

Me: The best answer you could come up with is that I am pregnant?

Uyathandwa: I don't know okay! But you're moody! You eat nothing but fritos and big bom lollipops.

Me: I always eat my food.

Uyathandwa: You're lying. You don't. Why? Alondwe. What's wrong with you.

Me: NOTHING! OKAY? NOTHING!

Uyathandwa: That's it. I am going to tell your father when he comes back.

Me: Tell him what?

Uyathandwa: That something is wrong with you! You're not the same sister that you were. You've changed. I don't know what happened to Alondwe but I miss her. Tsk!

He walked up to his room. Uyabongeka followed him. I just sat there wondering what was going to happen. Trying to make sense of what Uyathandwa said. Maybe it was time for me to accept that Sphe played with my feelings. I had to move on before I loose everyone that cares about me. I went to my room and cleaned up the whole mess that was there. I took all the papers that were on my drawer and I disposed them on the bin. I went to shower, then I covered my wrists with bandages. I went downstairs and I started cooking. I waited for my

dad because Uyathandwa and Uyabongeka didn't want to eat. I didn't eat too. I fell asleep on the couch.

I woke up when someone was putting me down. I opened my eyes. It was my dad. He was putting me on my bed. I rubbed my eyes and sat up straight.

Me: How is mom?

Dad: She'll be alright.

Me: Did she wake up?

Dad: No. She's still unconscious. When she fell on the floor. She hit her head badly so that is why she's still unconscious.

Me: I am sorry dad.

Dad: What happened?

Me: She saw my wrists.

Dad: What's wrong with your wrists?

He untied my bandages. He looked at them, then he looked at me with an emotionless face. I looked down.

Me: She came up here and saw how messy my room was and my bathroom. It had razors and blood. I think that must've shocked her. I am sorry dad. I am really sorry.

He held me closer to him because I was crying. He brushed my back softly.

Dad: Whatever that's bothering you. We will find someone who will help you deal with it. You'll be alright baby.

Me: I can't be alright without my mom.

Dad: Your mother is strong she'll pull through don't worry. Is it a boy?

Me: I don't want to talk about it.

Dad: Promise me that you'll talk to someone. I will get you professional help.

Me: I promise dad.

Dad: Now sleep. We'll go and see her tomorrow.

I nodded and he covered my wrists. He then covered me with my blankets.

Dad: Don't do it again baby okay?

Me: I won't do it again daddy.

Dad: I love you.

Me: I love you too.

He kissed my forehead and he left. Okay! I didn't expect that from him but I was looking forward to finding help so that I can deal with this. I fell asleep within my thoughts. The following morning I was woken up by Uyabongeka. I didn't want to wake up but I had to. I took a quick shower. I did all the necessities then I went downstairs. Their father was on the lounge. I went to greet him.

Me: Sawubona.

Themba: Hey Alondwe. How are you?

Me: I am fine. And you?

Themba: I am fine. Let's get going. Your father said you'll meet him at the hospital.

I nodded. I held Uyabongeka's hand and we went to her daddy's car. He drove us to the hospital. We arrived and we were shown mom's room. I was so nervous. When we get there, she was with dad and the Doctor. She smiled when she saw us.

Mom: You came?

Us: Yes.

Themba: How are you feeling?

Mom: I am feeling better, just that I don't remember what happened. My memory is just blur.

Doc: You'll be fine. It will come back.

Mom: I hope so. You're leaving?

Uyathandwa: Yes mom. Please get well.

Mom: I will be fine. Just promise me that you'll study, help your sister and be good kids okay?

Them: Yes mom.

Mom: I love you.

Them: We love you too.

They hugged her. Their father hugged her too.

Themba: Please get well soon.

Mom: I promise. I will.

He nodded and they left. Dad walked them out. I stood up too.

Mom: I know what happened.

I just froze. I thought, she forgot but clearly she lied.

Me: Uhm – I –

Mom: What were you thinking Alondwe?

Me: It's not like that.

Mom: It's like what?

Me: I didn't take the video.

Mom: Clearly you liked it because it was on your phone. How can you keep it if you didn't like it? You're sexual active now Alondwe? And you make videos. You were even telling the boy how much you want him. My daughter? My little girl? What happened to you?

I stood up and I ran out of the hospital. I bumped into a young lady.

Her: Girl watch where you going!

I couldn't respond because her smell was so horrible. I looked for a near by bin and I threw up. After that I took a cab back home. I arrived at home. I locked myself up and cried. It was painful because my mom thought I was a little bitch!

3rd Person Narrator.

Nobuhle panicked, she didn't know what to do. Who to turn to. She was so scared and all she could think about was Rajiv. She changed her clothes and wore all black. She took her hand bag and she went to her brother's room. She looked for his pocket knife until she found it. She then took a taxi. She took another taxi and the last one that led her to Sandile's house. She didn't even think of any plan on how she was going to fight Sandile, all she could think about was Rajiv. When she arrived, she was buzzed in. Sandile was on the lounge sipping whiskey. Nobuhle didn't sit down.

Sandile: You think you're clever neh?

Nobuhle: Sandile, we can talk about this.

Sandile: Talk? You want us to talk now? You made me sign a contract but you knew you were going to fool me and bring my girlfriend!

Nobuhle: What? Your girlfriend? I didn't know know that she was your girlfriend.

Sandile: Then how did you find her?

Nobuhle: She's a call girl. That's how I found her!

Sandile: What?

He was surprised to hear that. He looked at Nobuhle and it made sense that he did not know anything about his girlfriend job.

Nobuhle: Sandile I am really sorry but I didn't mean to betray you. I just couldn't do it.

Sandile: The funny thing is I was falling in love with you. Well I wasn't going to sleep with you. Maybe Prudence will fill you in.

Nobuhle looked at him blankly. She didn't know what was going to happen. Sandile stood up and grabbed her by her hair. Nobuhle screamed.

Sandile: I might as well force you to do it!

She cried as he walked with her to the guest room where Prudence was. He threw her inside.

Sandile: Change into a very nice lingerie and come to my bedroom. Prudence will give you the lingerie.

He closed the door behind him and he went to his bedroom. Where he kept Rajiv tied up in a chair. He sat down on his bed.

Sandile: Tonight. I will make you see live porn. I hope you will enjoy.

Rajiv tried to scream but he couldn't because Sandile had covered his mouth.

On the guestroom, the girls were trying by all means to hide Prudence's tattoo. Prudence felt guilty, so she couldn't let Nobuhle go and give herself up to Sandile.

Prudence: I am really sorry. I didn't know that you were sending me to my boyfriend. I thought –

Nobuhle: Just shut up.

They covered her tattoo with a lot of make up. It was just a butterfly tattoo. They then placed a see through tape so that the make up won't vanish. She then wore a red and black lingerie. Nobuhle tied up her weave the same way that she came in looking. They had the same weaves on their head. They hugged each other. She sprayed her with her cologne.

Nobuhle: Goodluck.

Prudence: Thank you.

She then acted like a very nervous person and knocked on almost every door calling out Sandile's name in fear. Though she knew his room. She had to make it look real. Sandile came out of his room and went to her. He smiled. He was drunk so he was sure that it was Nobuhle. She made her turn and the tattoo was not there. He smiled. He walked inside the bedroom with her. Rajiv was shocked to see his girlfriend. Prudence started crying and walking towards Rajiv.

Prudence: Please let him go

Sandile: I will be a fool if I do!

He threw her on top of his bed and he sat on top of her. Sandile ripped off her lingerie.

Prudence tried by all means to fight him off but she couldn't. She tried to punch him, though she didn't want to do it but she had to buy Sandile's trust.

Sandile: Indian boy this is to show you that don't keep your girl for the future. Use her while she's still in your life.

He laughed and started roughly kissing Prudence's body.

Sandile: You don't even deserve foreplay bitch!

He tied her hands up because she was fighting him off. He took off his pants and he tried to insert himself but Prudence was too tight. She screamed.

Sandile: (groaning) Fuck! Girl! You're amazing.

She kept on screaming until he was inside by the time that he was giving it to her hard. She was crying. Fake tears because she was hell enjoying him. Rajiv closed his eyes and let his tears free. He cried so much, it was so painful to him witnessing all that action. Sandile enjoyed himself in every way that he wanted. He almost blew her mask off. That's where Prudence kicked her balls and he fell on the floor. She quickly step off the bed and untied Rajiv. She held him and they went to the door. Prudence took out the key, and she locked him up inside. She went to the guestroom with Rajiv. Nobuhle jumped off the bed and hugged him tightly.

Prudence: You don't have much time. Please leave now before he calls his thugs. Please.

Nobuhle: Thank you. But what about you?

Prudence: Don't worry about me. I have to stay behind.

Nobuhle removed the tape from Rajiv's mouth and they took their things. They left the house immediately. Rajiv couldn't even talk he was so shocked. They didn't wait for the cab near Sandile's house. The cab arrived. It drove them straight to Rajiv's apartment. Back in the house Prudence changed her clothes and she went to Sandile. After she cleaned her tattoo.

She unlocked the bedroom. She found Sandile on the floor. She ran up to him.

Prudence: Bbe. I am so sorry. Nobuhle ran away!

Sandile: I don't care. One thing I got was her vagina. I fucked the shit out of her. The best part about it is that her boyfriend was watching.

He laughed the evil laugh.

Sandile: Tsk! Let go of me. Stay in the guest room. I want to rest. I will deal with you later.

Prudence: But –

He slapped her hard.

Sandile: I said go!!

Prudence got a fright. She quickly stood up and ran out of the room. She left Sandile who was feeling almighty!!!!

Thandeka Ndunakazi .....

Maybe I was being harsh on my daughter but I didn't understand. How on earth would she take a sex video. Samkelo came back.

Sam: And then where's Alondwe?

Me: She left. Please help me. I want her back.

Sam: We have to talk about her Thandeka. She told me that you saw her wrists?

Me: Clearly she didn't tell you the rest of the story.

Sam: What do you mean?

Me: It's seems like she is hiding something from us.

Sam: I know. I think we must find professional help for her.

Me: Before you go there. Please bring her back to me here before you even go back to work.

Sam: Okay. I will go just now. I love you okay.

Me: I love you too.

He kissed me and he left. Just then Muzi walked inside my room. I got a fright. He brought flowers and a fruit basket with him.

Me: (whispering) Are you stalking me?

Muzi: No. But I was worried about you. I couldn't stay away while my agent was in the hospital.

Me: Stop calling me that.

Muzi: It's okay. You'll get used to it. I think you must start preparing something. The arrangements with your boss because you won't be working for him anymore.

Me: You can't even ask how I am doing.

Muzi: Eish. I am sorry.

Me: Do I really have to work with you full time.

Muzi: Yes. It's important Thandeka. I know you don't understand now but you'll be able to understand after our trip to America.

Me: At the moment my daughter needs me. She's going through something Muzi. I can't just up and leave.

Muzi: You'll make a plan. I did show mercy and allow you to stay because of your birthday. But August we are leaving and nothing will change that. And just so you know. Your dad is looking for my mother.

Someone cleared their throats. It was Alondwe.

Me: Come in.

Muzi: This must be your daughter?

Me: Yes. Alondwe this is Muzi my colleague. Muzi my daughter Alondwe.

Muzi: Nice to meet you Alondwe.

Alondwe: Nice to meet you too.

Muzi: I will see you at work then Mrs Ndunakazi.

Me: Thank you Muzi.  
I faked a smile. He smiled and left.  
Alondwe: Those are beautiful flowers.  
Me: Yeah they are beautiful. Let's go.  
Alondwe: Go!?  
Me: Yes.  
I stepped off my bed. I held her hand and we went to the Doctor. We knocked on her office and she told us to come in. She stood up.  
Doc: Mrs Ndunakazi. You should be in bed.  
Me: Really Doctor. I am fine. Don't worry. I need your help.  
Doc: Okay. Please sit.  
Me: Can you make a pregnancy test for my daughter.  
Alondwe: Mom? What?  
Doc: Okay. No problem. Please take this cup and give me your urine sample.  
Alondwe looked at me. I showed her the cup using my eyes. She took it. She stood up. And went to the door.  
Doc: Just do it here nana. I don't mind.  
She turned back, she urinated and she gave the cup to the Doctor. The Doctor did the tests. And we waited.  
Doc: It's negative, or should I say it's unclear. Let me do a scan for her.  
I nodded. The Doctor went to machine with her. She did the scan.  
Doc: There it is mem. She's three weeks pregnant.  
I just kept quiet and looked at Alondwe. She started crying.  
Alondwe: But I was on my periods. (Crying)  
Doc: It differs. The menstrual cycle is not the same dear. That's why you might have experienced symptoms this early.  
Alondwe: I didn't have any symptoms.  
Me: How can you know symptoms while you're only 16yrs Alondwe. You're not supposed to be having sex man!  
Alondwe: I am sorry mom.  
Me: Just go home.  
Doc: There are other options.  
Me: Don't even suggest it Doctor. If you abort, you might as well abort yourself! Tsk!  
I stood up and left. I went back to my bed and cried. She was only 16yrs old. In fact not yet 16. She was going to be 16 on the 1st of September. I was so disappointed in her. I didn't expect all this. After talking to her that much. After I even convinced her father to stop beating her. Maybe I should've let him beat her. I was so disappointed. There was a knock. I didn't respond. Alondwe walked inside my room. She sat down.  
Alondwe: I am sorry mama. But I didn't plan on having sex.  
Me: Who's the father of this child?  
Alondwe: mama. I am –  
Me: What? You fooled us. You lied to us Alondwe. You went to that ball because you wanted to sleep with a boy? Who's that boy?  
Alondwe: No mom he –  
Me: Did you just say no? Huh? I am so disappointed in you Alondwe.  
Alondwe: I didn't know mom. I wasn't myself.  
Me: I said go home! Man go! Tsk!  
She stood quickly and she left. I was left behind. I was so clueless. How was I going to tell Samkelo that his baby girl is pregnant???

//////////

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

I cried so much after my mom told me to leave. I was ready to open up to her. I was going to tell the whole truth but she chased me away. I took a cab to North Beach. I sat on the sand on the quiet spot. I just cried. I held my tummy.

Me: I hate you so much and I hate your father. You'll ruin my life and my dreams. But I can't kill you because mom will hate me even more. I just wish you can disappear into thin air.

Stupid fetus.

I was so angry. I stood up and I took a cab to Sphe's house. I wanted to talk to him. Within a few minutes I was there. I buzzed the gate. A lady answered.

Her: Hello.

Me: Hi mem. Can I talk to Sphephelo.

Her: Who are you?

Me: I am his friend. The one he went to the dance with.

Her: Oh. Alondwe. Come in.

Me: No mem. I am in a hurry.

Her: I will call him.

Me: Thanks.

I waited outside. He came out of the house running. He was laughing as his daughter was running after him.

Sphe: Hamba Okuhle.

Okuhle: A.a Papa.

The lady came out and picked her up. She cried for her daddy. Sphe kissed her cheek. It was so cute but I had nothing but anger though I noticed that it was cute. They went back inside. Sphephelo came to me. I walked away from his house. He followed me. I looked at him. He looked at me.

Sphe: What?

I gave in all my power and I slapped him. He held his cheek.

Sphe: Are you mad?

Me: You ruined my life Sphephelo. I hate you!

Sphe: I just hate your father and you were the only way I could get to him.

Me: Guess what you failed?

Sphe: The school will open soon and clearly your parents will be called in about the video. I just wish I can be there to see the look on his eyes when he finds out that his daughter is a porn star.

Me: I thought you were sorry.

Sphe: I was. But you have the guts to show up in my house and slap me.

Me: I am pregnant damn it!

He laughed sarcastically. I looked at him.

Sphe: You were on your periods. You can't be pregnant.

I reached out for a scan picture and I gave it to him. He looked at it then he looked at me.

Sphe: But how?

Me: I suppose you were not so clever after all.

Sphe: I don't know want this baby. Abort it.

Me: I can't my mom will hate me.

Sphe: You want to trap me with a child. Forget it. I don't want it. It will complicate my life. My foster mom will disown me. She made it clear that if I can have another child. She will send me back to a children's home. Please Alondwe. I can't lose her too. Just say the child couldn't make it because you were stressed.

Me: You're unbelievable yazi.

Sphe: I am in this position because of your father. I don't need you nor that child. Please

leave me alone! I played my part and my part says I don't want the child abort it. I have to go.

He left me puzzled. I just didn't know what to do. I was so hurt. I was so hungry. I went to the near by mall and I sat down on the restaurant, I ordered and ate. I went to buy goodies and I hid them in my bag. I then went home. I arrived at home. My brothers were home. They both ran up to me. I smiled and hugged them.

Alupheli: Yoyondwe! Uphatheyeni. (Alondwe what did you bring for us)

Me: Really you didn't even ask how am I?

Alondwe: Sorry. Yoyondwe. Letha ubhakha. (Sorry. Bring your backpack)

I opened my backpack. I had no choice but to give them my goodies. Disadvantages of being a big sister.

Them: Syabonga.

Alupheli held my hand and we went to sit down on the couch. We ate, just the three of us. They were telling me about their holidays. Mom was also back home. She called me to her room. I went to her.

Mom: Close the door behind you.

I did just that, then I sat down.

Mom: Who's the father of the baby?

I looked down. I had to do the right thing. Yes I didn't deserve what Sphe did to me but the good girl in me couldn't let him loose his foster home. The least I could do was to fix my father's mistakes. Even though it meant I had to lie.

Me: (crying) I loved him mama. He was so in love with me. I didn't care that he was Nigerian or what.

Mom: What happened baby? (She held my hand)

Me: Him and his family were killed during the xenophobia attack. Three weeks back. Just the very same day of the dance. His friend told me that. It was Him, his mom and his sister. I lost him. I just couldn't deal with it. It is so painful. It's hurt mama. I know I am young but I miss him everyday. I wish he can come back but he's gone forever.

I just cried. I looked at her, she was crying too. She held me closer to her. She brushed my back softly. I cried.

Mom: Shh! It will be alright baby. He'll be looking over you and your baby. At least he won't be running from people. He's in a better place. You have me. I will take care of you two. I won't turn my back on you. I know how painful it is to be vulnerable and pregnant while you're still young.

Alondwe: Dad will kill me.

Mom: I will talk to him. Tomorrow you'll go and meet up with your psychologist. She will help you deal with stress.

Alondwe: I am sorry mama for everything. The video, the pregnancy. The video was a set up. We didn't know about it.

Mom: You've cried enough now. Go and sleep okay? I love you.

Me: I love you too mama. Thank you.

She kissed my forehead. I stood up and went to sleep in my room. I was so sad because I told her lies but I had to because they were going to make everything worst. All I wanted was peace. Though I had dad to deal with... ..

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

Everything was a mess. I didn't know what to do. Alondwe was pregnant. I had to leave. I sat down and thought about what I was going to tell my husband, nothing came in mind.

Absolutely nothing came in my mind. I took my phone and called Muzi. He picked up.

Muzi: Mrs Ndunakazi.

Me: Muzi, this won't work. I have to tell Samkelo. At least I know that he'll be on my side. Your organisation is not corrupt at all. Maybe I will also enjoy working with you but at least I have to tell my husband. I know he'll support me.

Muzi: No that will blow your cover.

Me: How am I supposed to up and leave. What will I tell him?

Muzi: Tell him you're going on a business trip.

Me: I've been there before. I have lied. My daughter needs me. I can go but I have to tell my husband.

Muzi: I say no. If you know what's best for our organisation. You won't tell him.

Me: Okay. Fine I won't tell him.

Muzi: Thank you.

I hung up the call. I sighed. But something in was looking forward to work with muzi. I always wanted a job that was going to challenge my imagination and I was finally getting it. I stood up and took off my top.

Sam: You won't tell me what?

I turned back. I got the biggest fright of my life.

Me: Yoh! You scared me.

Sam: I am listening.

Me: I wasn't talking about you.

Sam: Do you have another husband?

Me: No.

Sam: Clearly you were talking about Samkelo Ndunakazi. So save us from fighting tell me. I looked at him. I thought about all the lies I have ever told him. And how they back fire in the end. It wouldn't hurt to do good. I sat down. He sat down next to me.

Me: I met Muzi Zulu.

Sam: He is?

Me: Maud's son. He (I told him every single detail)

Do you know how I felt after telling the truth? I felt so relieved. I felt like I have been freed from the darkness. I felt like God is smiling upon me.

Sam: That's crap! You won't do it.

Me: I have agreed.

Sam: You agreed without telling me?

Me: I wasn't supposed to tell you.

Sam: You were going to do it. You were going to do it without telling me! Huh?

Me: Mnyeni wami. I was planning on telling you. That's why I spoke to Muzi about it. He didn't agree but still I took courage to tell you. Ngiyakucela Nophiko. Don't ruin this I want to do it. I want to protect my country. Promise me you won't confront Muzi.

Sam: Huh? Imihlola yami le.

Me: He's not alone in this Samkelo. If you do something to him. His team will come for us. They will come for our family. But if I am on their side. They will protect us. Look I love you. But Muzi has every illegal things I have done in the name of protecting my loved ones. I don't want to go to prison for life. I still want to be a wife to you, a mother to our children, a sister to Andile and Christian, a daughter to Dad and his wife, a daughter in-law to my in-laws and a friend to Thobelani. Please understand this. Support me.

Sam: You won't be killing people?

Me: No I won't be killing people. We will be working on secret missions that will bring down every illegal plans of those people in high positions. For example: Gangsters and so on. Please support me.

Sam: So no one should know about this?

Me: Absolutely no one baby.

Sam: What will you do about your job?

Me: I will quit. If I have your support this will work. And it will be a huge success.

Sam: I will support you on one condition.

Me: Okay.

Sam: Call that Muzi. I want to see him tonight.

Me: But –

Sam: I am hungry. Please make something that I will eat.

I nodded and wore my shirt. I took my my phone and went downstairs. I texted Muzi and he agreed to come later. Alupheli and Mesuli came and help me cook. I was ordering them around. Samkelo came downstairs. I gave him his food.

Sam: Where's my daughter?

Me: She's sleeping.

Sam: Okay. Kuhle give me salt.

He took the salt and passed it over to his dad.

Sam: Let's go and watch TV. Leave your mom. Angazi nenzani emakhishini.

Me: Really? Samkelo.

They laughed at me.

Kuhle: Ey sorry mom.

Me: Vele ubungafuni.

He laughed and followed his dad.

Alupheli: Don't cry mom. You want me to stay with you.

Sam: (shouting) Alupheli soxabana! Woza la.

He laughed and ran out. Alondwe came downstairs.

Alondwe: You haven't tell him yet?

Me: No.

Alondwe: Please don't tell him yet.

Me: But we'll have to tell him eventually.

Alondwe: I know but not today.

Me: Okay.

We cooked together. I was telling him about how her brothers ditched me. We were laughing and having a good time. I could see that she was starting to loosen up. I wanted her not to feel stressed. We finished up cooking and we set up the table. They came to us and little man prayed for us. We started eating.

Alupheli: Umkhulu yena nimthusile nge WU.

We all laughed at that.

Me: Thando? Usabisa abantu abadala.

Alupheli: Hawu maDhlomo bengidlala.

I smiled. Ngachazeka totally.

Alondwe: Who told you that mom is MaDhlomo?

Alupheli: Ubaba hlezi ethi "MaDhlomo lambile bo!"... Mom will say "Ndunakazi ngiyeza"

We all laughed.

Sam: Awushaphaphi. (Imitating Alupheli's voice)

Alupheli: Dad!?

Sam: I am sorry ke.

We had our dinner. Alupheli was talking non stop. After dinner Alondwe washed the dishes and I went to shower. I got a call from my kids. They were checking up on me. I told them I was out of the hospital. They were happy to hear that. After that I lotioned and wore my pyjamas. Alondwe was already bathing her brother so I went to my room.

Later, the kids were asleep. Muzi came to our house. We sat down with him.

Me: My husband called you here.

Muzi: Okay.

Sam: I want you to know that what happened to your mother was not by any chance our fault. We didn't want her to die but she died. Well the court won't believe that so I want you not. I mean not harm my wife.

Muzi: You told him?

Sam: How do you think this was going to work if I didn't know. I share a life with her. She wasn't going to work with you without me finding out. I was going to find out.

Muzi: I don't trust you.

Sam: I love my wife. I know she's a genius in everything that she puts her heart in. And her heart is in this organisation. I could see it in her eyes that she's loving it already but she's trying to fight it off.

Me: Samkelo? I don't love it.

Sam: You're my wife Thandeka. I know you, you love something that challenges you. So long you won't kill her. She can work with you. I know she'll enjoy working with your team. (I smiled. My husband though!)

Muzi: You know sometimes when a man loves his wife or girlfriend this much. People turn to judge and say that the man is a women's puppet. That's because people have this mentality that men are dogs, cheaters, heart breakers, they are incapable of loving. When a man loves truly, they turn to question that love. They always say it's too good to be true. But they are wrong. This how love suppose to be. I wish I can also find a woman that I can look in eyes like you look at your wife my man. I love good things and what you have is really good. Thank you for supporting her and supporting my vision to make this country a better place. And trust me, I won't let anything happen to her. I was scared that you won't support us.

Sam: If she didn't like it. I wasn't going to.

They laughed. Muzi stood up.

Muzi: The world needs more men like you.

Sam: And it definitely needs men like you. Who has a vision of doing good things for the country.

Muzi: I am doing all this in honour of my father.

Sam: I am sure he's proud of you.

Muzi: (smiling) I am begging you to keep this between you two.

Sam: We are one. So you can surely trust us.

Me: Please don't tell the rest of the team because it will raise conflict.

Muzi: It's okay. I won't.

We handshake and he left. I sighed.

Sam: That wasn't too hard.

Me: Yeah. Thank you my love. (I kissed him)

Sam: Babe?

Me: Huh?

Sam: Is it that obvious that I love you too much?

I laughed really hard. I held his hand and I led him to our room.

Sam: Don't laugh.

Me: If you can't resist this then it's obvious.

I kissed him. I walked with him to my bed. I was dragging him to me, while we were stripping each other naked. I wanted him to take control of my every muscle. I laid on my back, covering my body. He went under the blankets and separated my legs. He kneeled down in between them and he pulled my panties down. He shove his tongue inside my vagina creating sensation that made me feel like I was on cloud infinite. I moaned "Mmm" he carried on starting with slow sensation and then continued with more harder licks. My heart started beating fast and my breathing escalated. He put his hands under my ass lifting my body up,

supporting my weight. He carried on with his tongue and my moans became louder. He made my hair at the back of my neck stand up that gave me the courage to push his head deeper. I moaned louder. He stopped and he came up to me and took off my comfort bra. He kissed me and positioned himself in between my legs. He kissed me harder. The kiss made my body to start all over, as he made his way inside me. My toes curled up and my heart beat faster. I dug my nails at the back of his skin as he started moving forward and backward. He changed and moved in circular motion making me loose control completely. I reached my climax and soon after me he withdrew. He wiped me clean and laid on his back next to me. He pulled me closer to him making my head rest on his sweaty chest. He kissed my forehead.

Me: That means it's that obvious bbe.

Sam: Damn! Shit!

I laughed and rested my hand on his chest. I whispered, "I love you beyond measure". He kissed my forehead and respond with a whisper saying "I love you infinitely "

I smiled and closed my eyes....

3rd Person Narrator

The time came for Philisiwe, (Nobuhle's sister) to tell her mother the truth about her fiance. Philani's family was coming for lobola negotiations the following day. Her mom was drinking coffee sitting on the couch.

Phili: Mom I have to tell you something about my in-laws.

Mrs Mthembu: Okay. Sit down. Where are they from?

Phili: They live here eMlazi.

Mrs Mthembu: Hawu. Zungu right?

Phili: Yes. Uhm.... I will be getting married to Philani mama.

Mrs Mthembu: Philani? The pastor's kid?

Phili: Yes mom.

Mrs Mthembu: Philisiwe! All along ubujola no Philani right under our noses?

Phili: Mama. Philani and I dated since High School. He didn't choose to be the Pastor. The elders chose him and I don't understand why? Because he never went to Bible school.

Her mother was furious, she just slapped Philisiwe. Philisiwe cried. All Mrs Mthembu could see was a disgrace that the children have created. For both families.

Mrs Mthembu: You were not even introduced in front of the congregation. What shame is MaZulu(Pastor's wife) doing? Huh? Umithi?

Philisiwe couldn't answer that question. She just looked down and played with her fingers.

Mrs Mthembu: I asked you a question. Are you pregnant?

Phili: I am sorry mom. I am really sorry.

Mrs Mthembu: Hawu! Hawu! Kodwa Nkosi yami. Cha! Call that Philani and tell them not to come here. I will not support this. So now they will make you marry him just because you're pregnant. Does he even want to marry you?

Phili: I can't stop them mama.

Mrs Mthembu: Okay. Let them come.

She clicked her tongue and went to her room. She wasn't going to support this. She knew exactly what she was going to do. On the other hand Philisiwe couldn't stop crying. She just locked herself up in her room and cried herself to sleep.....

---

After Nobuhle and Rajiv had escaped, they went to Rajiv's apartment. Luckily for them Nadine wasn't around. Rajiv was still in shock. Though Sandile didn't hurt him that much besides a few punches. He was frightened about what he thought he saw. They arrived in his apartment and they went to his room.

Nobuhle: Bbe I am so sorry that you were dragged along in this situation. I am really sorry. I

didn't mean for you to get hurt.

Rajiv: Let me go and shower.

Nobuhle: Can we please talk about this first?

Rajiv: Like I said I have to shower!

Nobuhle didn't say anything. She looked at him as he walked out of the room. Her phone rang while she was busy thinking. Her mom was calling. She answered.

Mrs Mthembu: Are you coming back home or you will sleep out again. Ubani lo oninike imvume yokwenzisa okwabafazi. Nisahlala emzini wami?

Nobuhle: Mom? What's wrong? I am working, so what must I do? (She lied)

Mrs Mthembu: Don't test me Nobuhle! Do you hear me? You want to fall pregnant too? Huh?

Nobuhle: What? No!

Mrs Mthembu: Come back home man! Tsk!

She dropped the call, Nobuhle sighed. She stood up and fixed herself.

Rajiv came back after a few minutes.

Nobuhle: Rajiv please let's talk about this.

Rajiv: Marry me Precious.

Nobuhle: What?

Rajiv: Yes. After what happened. I don't want anything to happen to you. I don't know if you'll be safe while going back home. I want you to be my wife so that I can look after you. So that I can take care of you.

Nobuhle: You're studying Rajiv.

Rajiv: I am doing my in service training. And I just wrote exams of two subjects that I failed last semester. Next year I will be a permanent employee after graduation.

Nobuhle: I am scared.

Rajiv went to her. He held her hands.

Rajiv: I may not be rich but my love for you is rich. I want nothing else then to make you my wife. I want to wake up next you every morning and hold close to me every night. You're my life. I can't picture my life without you. So please will you do me the honour of being my wife?

Nobuhle smiled widely. She was nervous but she wanted nothing more than to spend the rest of her life with Rajiv.

Nobuhle: This scares me but there's nothing that can make me happier than to be your wife.

Rajiv smiled and kissed her deeply. They broke the kiss after a while.

Rajiv: Thank you. I love you.

Nobuhle: I love you too. I am really sorry –

Rajiv: It wasn't your fault bbe. You didn't ask for any of that to happen. I am just glad that he didn't hurt you. So don't worry okay?

Nobuhle: I thought you were going to leave. I thought he was going to kill you. I was so scared Rajiv. I felt so helpless.

She cried. Rajiv held her closer to him. He wiped her tears.

Rajiv: You're safe now. Don't worry.

Nobuhle: Thank you. I have to go home. Mom called.

Rajiv: Okay. I will drive you there.

Nobuhle: No. They attacked you the time you were driving back. I don't want that to happen again.

Rajiv: I know but nothing will happen. Let's go. I want to make sure that you're safe.

Nobuhle nodded. Rajiv finished up and they left. Nadine was back.

Nadine: Are you leaving?

Nobuhle: Yes. I have to go home.

Nadine: Can I ride along. I just want to see your township.

Nobuhle: If your brother is cool with it. I don't mind.

Nadine: Brother?

Rajiv: Okay come.

Nadine smiled and followed them. She wanted to sit together with Nobuhle at the back. She was really trying to get along with them. She realised that Nobuhle was telling the truth. She didn't want to hate her brother for something that her father did before she was even born. Her and Nobuhle were talking until they arrived eMlazi.

Nobuhle: You guys have a wonderful night. I will see you.

Nadine: Thanks you too.

Rajiv: I love you.

Nobuhle: I love you too.

They all stepped out of the car. Nobuhle hugged them both and she left...

Alondwe Ndunakazi. . .

The day finally came for me to go back to school. I was so nervous about going back to school. I just wish I could stay at home and never go back to that school. In the morning we were having breakfast. Mom hasn't told my dad about my pregnancy. I was eating cereals while others were eating full breakfast.

Dad: But MaDhlomo. There's no egg here.

Alupheli: Yes mom where's the egg?

Kuhle: I was scared to ask too.

Dad and my brothers loved eggs. They usually complaint when there's no egg. Mom looked at me. I looked down.

Mom: I will make it quickly.

She stood up and went to make eggs for them. After a few minutes she came back and gave them eggs. She looked at me. I didn't know why was she looking at me until I felt a horrible smell coming from the egg. I quickly stood up and ran to the bathroom. I threw up a lot. I even cried because there's nothing that scares me like throwing out. It's like intestines will eventually come out. Mom came to me.

Mom: Are you alright baby?

I stood up and rinsed my mouth. I just cried. Mom hugged me very tight.

Me: I don't want it mama. I don't want this baby. I can't do this.

Mom: Hey. You have me baby okay? Don't worry and please don't do anything stupid okay?

Me: My life will be a mess.

Mom: No it won't, just study and forget about the rest of the problems you have okay?

I nodded. She kissed my forehead and went back to the dining table. I went to the kitchen. I eavesdropped their conversation.

Mom: I have to tell you something Ndunakazi.

Dad: Okay. Before that Is Alondwe alright?

Mom: Yes she's fine.

Dad: What is it that you want to tell me?

Mom: Alondwe is pregnant.

There was total silence after mom had said that to him. All I wanted was to see his face but I couldn't.

Mom: Samkelo?

Dad: What did I say to you?

Mom: About what?

Dad: The day you stopped me from beating her. I told you that if she ever gets pregnant or sick don't even try to tell me.

Mom: She's our daughter Samkelo. We have to support her.

Dad: I didn't raise her to open her legs for boys while she's this young. Don't tell me to support her. She's 16yrs old. She should be studying but no! She sleeps with boys.

Mom: Samkelo calm down. You –

Dad: Don't tell me to calm down! This is all your fault. Tsk!

Dad left immediately after that. I just stood there clueless about what to do. Should I leave his house or what? I was so heartbroken. I just sat down and cried.

Mom: You heard all that?

Me: Yes. It's not your fault mama.

She nodded, avoiding her tears from falling. She sighed deeply.

Mom: Take your books. I will drive you to school. Call your brothers. They are in their rooms.

Me: Okay.

I went upstairs and I took my backpack. I called my brothers and we went to mom's car. She drove us to school. I was debating with myself about a lot of things. Mom dropped my brothers first.

Me: What if I get suspended because of the video?

Mom: It's been three weeks since the video was shared. If the teachers have it. They will call me. Just go now. I have to go. I forgot to tell you yesterday that I am going to see dad today. I will come back at night maybe.

Me: Thank you. Please send my love.

Mom: Okay.

She gave me pocket money. I took it and went straight to my class. I was nervous because mom was leaving, meaning I was going to spend the rest of the evening with my dad. I wasn't so sure about that. When I arrived in my class, they were giving me nasty stares. I was so embarrassed and ashamed of myself. A certain girl came to me.

Girl: Wow! Alondwe you're fire girl. Tell me who's that guy, who was munching you like that?

Me: Please leave me alone.

Girl: I just wanted to know. Maybe I can get some tips from you.

The rest of the class laughed. I just stared at her. She smiled and walked away. Our class teacher came to mark the register and she called me. I stood up and I went to her.

Mrs Martins: Give this to your mom.

Me: Okay.

Mrs Martins: What were you thinking?

Me: I wasn't myself mam. I am really sorry.

Mrs Martins: Let's just hope the Principal will take that.

She left. I ran to the bathroom and I locked myself up. I tried to breathe in and out without crying. I wanted all this to be over. I was tired. On my way back to my class, the siren for the first period rang. I bumped to Zenande. I just felt so wired looking at her made me feel otherwise. She smiled but I didn't.

Me: Why are you smiling? There's nothing to smile to.

Zenande: What's wrong with you?

Me: Leave me alone. Agh!

I went to my class and took my backpack. I went to the first class. The teacher began. I slept during the period. I didn't even hear a thing that he was teaching. After that period, we went to two more where quarter of my classmates fell asleep. I didn't sleep on those periods.

During break time I went to buy my lunch. I didn't want to see Zenande. I just didn't like her anymore. I don't know why but I didn't. I went to our usual spot and she was not there. I sat alone, and I ate my lunch. A girl came to sit with me.

Girl: Hi Alondwe.

Me: Hey how are you?

Girl: I am fine and you?

Me: I am good.

Girl: My name is Andiswa.

Me: Okay. You know mine.

Andiswa: I wanted to ask you something.

Me: Shoot.

Andiswa: What is it that you like eating the most these days.

Me: Why are you asking?

Andiswa: I saw your video and I know how it feels to be humiliated like that.

Me: Ain't you doing grade 8?

Andiswa: I am but my friend was also a victim at her school. She's doing grade 10.

Me: I am sorry to hear that.

Andiswa: Thanks. So?

Me: I like fritos and a big bom lollipop.

Andiswa: Okay. I will be right back.

I looked at her, she was so little and beautiful. One can tell that she was doing junior year. she stood up and walked away. She disappeared in between a crowd of boys. I just sat there alone. People who passed me by would look at me and laugh, making nasty comments about me. I just didn't care, all I cared about was my dad. I took my phone and tried to call him, he didn't answer my phone calls. I just cried, I stopped when Andiswa was back.

Andiswa: Hey don't cry.

Me: You don't understand. My dad hates me. I just wish I can undo everything. I don't want to be pregnant.

Andiswa; I am so sorry. But I hope this will make you feel better.

She was carrying a big pocket of fritos and two big bom lollipops.

Me: Who told you. I love those?

Andiswa: You did.

Me: Okay? Why are you being nice to me?

Andiswa: Is it a crime?

Me: I don't know okay!

Andiswa: Just take these and eat. You'll be fine.

Me: Thank you.

I took them and started eating.

Andiswa: I have to go back to my friends. I will see you tomorrow okay?

Me: Okay.

She left. I continued eating. I saw three boys eating together. I stood up and I went to them.

They looked at me strangely. I liked them just by looking at them.

Me: I don't bite. I just want to make friends with all of you.

Guy1: Are you for real?

Me: What? Is it a crime. Or you don't want skeem with me because of the sex video?

Guy2: No it's cool. I don't see a problem. Right gents?

Others: Yes.

Me: Thanks. My name is Alondwe Ndunakazi. Doing grade 11.

Guy1: I am Thulani Hlatshwayo. We are all doing grade 11.

Guy2: I am Lungelo Gumede.

Guy3: I Bheki Myeza.

Me: Nice to know you. I hope we will be great friends.

Them: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Me: Just so you know. I am pregnant. I just wanted to clear that up so that you won't just see a bump. Or if you don't want to hang out with me because I am pregnant.

Bheki: Being pregnant is not a disease.

Other: Yeah.

Me: Thank you. How about a fist bump for our friendship.

Thulani: I prefer a hug.

Lungelo: I prefer both.

We laughed and did both. We continued eating and talking, just getting to know each other. They were so cool and I enjoyed being with them. The bell rang and we had to go to our classes. We were not on the same class but there were a few subjects that we took together. After school I went to the gate and I waited for my dad's car but it didn't show up. I was scared because I was all alone. Most kids had left. I didn't have money so that I can take a taxi. I couldn't call mom because she was in Johannesburg. I had no choice but walk home. The streets were quiet, that give me time to hear myself think and sing until I made it home safe...

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

I landed in Johannesburg. I took a cab to the mall. I bought groceries and I took another one straight to my father's house. I was quite nervous, I just didn't want to face my father. I didn't want to be in the same room with him. I had to do it because my husband advised me that it's the right thing to do. I arrived at the house and they buzzed me in. I walked inside. Evelyn came up to hug me tightly. I hugged her back.

Me: Morning mama.

Evelyn: Morning baby how are you?

Me: I am doing fine mom, and you?

Evelyn: I am fine. I am happy to see you. I thought you have abandoned us.

Me: I won't do that but I can't say what my father did was nice at all.

Evelyn: He was too blinded by love.

Me: Just like he's looking for her again? Why? Because she wants to forgive her. Start afresh why?

Evelyn: How do you know she's looking for her?

Me: I know. Where is he? (I didn't want to answer any further questions)

Evelyn: He's having breakfast.

Me: Christian is at school?

Evelyn: Yes.

Me: Okay.

We went to the dinning area. Dad was eating. I went to him, he smiled when he saw me. I smiled back. He stood up and hugged me. We sat down afterwards.

Dad: You came?

Me: Yes.

Dad: Thank you. I don't have much to do anymore. I have retired as a Doctor.

Me: You're getting old baba. That's a good thing to hear. You must rest now.

Dad: I don't like staying at home.

Me: What do you want to do?

Dad: Work. Your mom forced me to retire.

Me: That's because you've reached your retirement age dad. That's not wrong at all.

Dad: You and your brother should take care of me now.

Me: We will. Specially him because he's here all the time. I am not always here.

Dad: Why don't you move to Johannesburg.

Me: No dad. I can't. Remember that I am a Ndunakazi. I do what Samkelo says.

Dad: That doesn't change, the fact that you're my daughter.

Me: I know. So how are you feeling?

Dad: I am feeling good. I was really shocked, I almost died.

Me: I am sorry.

Dad: I loved your mother and I just couldn't believe that the woman that I love killed her.

Me: But dad you know that her motives was the money. It was not love.

Dad: I am so sorry.

Me: It's Okay.

Evelyn came downstairs dressed up. She was going to work. She kissed my father's forehead.

Evelyn: I love you.

Dad: I love you too.

Evelyn: I will see you later Trinity.

Me: Okay.

She kissed my cheek. I giggled. She smiled and left.

Me: Let's go out now that she's gone.

Dad: Sounds like a plan.

I smiled. We went to his car. I was driving. We drove to the mall and a few places that he wanted us to visit. I didn't know Johannesburg so I was just going with the flow. It was so nice to spend time with my dad and forget about my 99 problems. In the evening I drove him back home because he was tired. I spent time with my little brother. I then drove to my brother's house, I passed by the mall for a few groceries and snacks for the kids. Shemah buzzed me in. I hugged her. The kids came to me running, shouting "Aunty" I hugged them. I gave them, the snacks I bought for them. Shemah took the rest of the groceries.

Shemah: Thank you.

Me: My pleasure.

Kids: Thank you aunty.

Me: Okay babies. Where's daddy?

Andile: I am here.

I smiled and ran up to him. I hugged the life out of him. He laughed.

Andile: You want to kill me?

Me: Mxm uyaphapha!

We laughed and went to sit down. We catch up about a lot of things that have been going on, we gossiped, laughed and had a lot of fun with my brother.

Andile: You look beautiful.

Me: Beauty is our thing. (We laughed) Thank you bhuti. You look lovely too. She's treating you well. I can see.

Andile: Yeah. Who wouldn't?

We laughed. Then there was silence.

Me: Uhm. Alondwe is pregnant.

He looked at me without a single word. I looked down. I sighed.

Andile: Tell me you're joking.

Me: I am not kidding. I was also shocked too. I even landed in the hospital.

Andile: Samkelo told me but he didn't say that, it's because Samkeliswa is pregnant.

Me: He did not know that time.

I didn't want to tell him about the video. That was between me and my daughter.

Andile: Thandeka? She's 16yrs old for goodness sake.

Me: I know but it happened. There's nothing I can do. I am so heartbroken Andile. And Samkelo is putting the blame on me.

Andile: I am so sorry sisi.

He hugged me because I was crying. I was really disappointed that my daughter was

pregnant. I didn't expect it all. I thought she was going to behave and be able to resist temptation but she failed me.

Me: It's okay. I will be fine, though things will be awkward in my house but I hope he will come around.

Andile: He will. Don't worry.

Me: Ey. I will sleep here tonight. I still have a room right?

Andile: Yes. But do you think it's a good idea to leave Samkeliswa alone with Samkelo?

Me: I don't know. Can I be selfish and spend time with my brother? I will go home in the morning. I will call Alondwe to check up on her.

Andile: Okay.

Me: So how about we play 30 seconds. Let's call everyone.

Andile: Yeah that sounds great!

I smiled and we called them.....

>>>>>>>>>

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

I arrived at home. My brothers were home with mam'uNancy. I walked inside the house. They came up to me.

Kuhle: Why didn't dad pick you up?

Me: I don't know. Why didn't you ask him?

Kuhle: I reminded him but he didn't go to your school.

Me: It's Okay. I am here now.

Alupheli: Okay. You know what to do.

I gave them my lollipops.

Kuhle: Mom will shout at us.

Alupheli: Mom is not here.

Me: Alupheli is right. Just don't chew the lollipop okay?

Them: Okay sisi.

I went to greet mam'uNancy then I went to my room. I took my books and started studying. It was one good thing I could do with my life. I studied til late. I went downstairs because I was hungry. Dad and my brothers were going out.

Alupheli: Yoyondwe we're going out. Come!

Me: No. I am studying. You can go.

Alupheli: Okay.

He ran up to me and he pouted. I kissed him. They left. I didn't say anything to dad. If he was cutting me out because I am pregnant. It's cool. At least I have my mom. She'll never turn her back on me. I went to make something to eat for myself. My phone rang while I was eating. I answered. It was mom.

Me: Mama.

Mom: How are you baby?

Me: I am fine mom and you?

Mom: I am fine. How is your father treating you?

Me: He didn't fetch me to school today mom.

Mom: What? What did you do?

Me: I had to walk home. I used all the cash you gave me so I had no money.

Mom: Where is he now? That is total nonsense!

Me: They went out.

Mom: And they left you behind?

Me: Yes.

Mom: I am sorry. I will come back in the morning. But now go to my room. The drawer on my bedside. There's a box with cash there. Take money for the cab and pocket money for

tomorrow.

Me: Okay thanks. I got a letter at school. I was told to give it to you. You're needed but not tomorrow.

Mom: Mmm. Maybe they will suspend you.

Me: No. Mom. I will be left behind.

Mom: Don't worry. We will work something out baby. Okay?

Me: Yes mom. Thanks.

Mom: Okay. I have to go. Goodnight. I will see you tomorrow. I love you.

Me: Goodnight. I love you too.

She hung up the call. I finished up eating then I went to her room. I took enough cash then I went back to my studies. I studied until I was tired. I showered and I went to sleep. I woke up when Alupheli was trying to climb my bed.

Alupheli: Please funqula me!

I laughed and picked him up. He sat on his butts. He gave me a spur takeaway.

Alupheli: I ordered this for you. I asked dad to pay for it and he paid.

Me: Arh. You're so sweet. Thank you bhuti.

I opened the takeaway and ate. He ended up eating with me. After eating, we both fell asleep. In the morning I woke up and bathed Alupheli since mom was not around. I dressed him up and he went downstairs. I then went to prepare myself for school. After I finished, I took my bag and my money. I went downstairs. I made myself cereals and I ate them by the counter. Dad walked in with dishes.

Me: Morning dad.

Dad: Morning.

He didn't even look at me. He left. I heard him shouting, telling my brothers that he's leaving them. Alupheli and Mesuli walked in running. Mesuli kissed my cheek.

Kuhle: Sis we are leaving you. Hurry up.

Me: I will catch a cab. Go.

Kuhle: Bye.

Me: Bye.

I had to step off the chair so that I can kiss Alupheli. I kissed him.

Alupheli: Bye Yoyondwe.

Me: Bye. Love you.

Them: (running out) Love you too.

They left. I smiled. I finished up and I called the cab. I went to wash the dishes. I walked out when the cab had arrived. It drove me straight to school. I paid and I walked inside the school. Andiswa was standing by the gate with a big white teddy bear. I smiled.

Andiswa: Hey mommy.

Me: Hey. Is it Valentine's day?

Andiswa: No! Hello it's July. This is a well known Mr cuddles.

Me: He's cute.

Andiswa: When you are feeling lonely, sad or angry just cuddle him. He'll make you feel better. I bought him for you and the little one.

Me: Thank you.

A tear dropped. I was so happy. What she did was so cute. I took Mr cuddles. She opened her bag. She gave me fritos and two big bom lollipops.

Andiswa: For today.

Me: Thanks.

Andiswa: If you need anything for lunch tell me. I am your angel I will take care of you for the whole nine months.

Me: Mmm. Thanks love.

I hugged her. She kissed my cheek and left. I didn't want to question her generosity. Maybe I deserve a little love from her. I smiled and I went to my class. My day began.....

3rd person narrator

The Saturday morning for Philisiwe's (Nobuhle's big sister) lobola negotiations came. Their mother's friends were there to help cook for the in-laws. Even Nandipha was there, remember the nurse that Sakhile pretended to be when he drugged Sandile? Yes! Her. Philisiwe was so nervous about the whole thing because she didn't know what her mother was going to say to her in-laws. Nobuhle walked inside the room while her sister was dressing up. Nobuhle had made peace with her sister's wedding, specially that Rajiv had proposed to her. Rajiv had given her a beautiful engagement ring but she didn't wear it because she was scared to tell her parents.

Nobuhle: "Are you alright sisi"

Phili: "No. I am not. Mom knows about Philani and she doesn't support the whole thing. She wants to stop the negotiations "

Nobuhle: "What? That's wrong! Do you want me to talk to her?"

Phili: "No. I don't want to bother you. I will be fine. I know that it will pass "

Nobuhle nodded and hugged her sister. They dressed up together. And they waited.

The time finally came for the in-laws to come. They waited at the gate singing praises of the family clan/name.

Uncle1: Qhudeni, Mvelase owavele Nyandeni. Mvelase kaGuda. Ngoza ka Mkhubukeli ka Gazi nina base Mlalankunzi. Mnisi wemvula!

They went on and on until they were given attention which they paid for coming inside the yard. They went inside the house. All the necessary payments were made after that, they have stated the reason for their arrival. They described the bride they came for. Philisiwe and her sister were called in. The pastor's wife was also part of the negotiations. That didn't matter to them because they didn't follow all protocols of the tradition. They recognised Philisiwe and pointed her.

Mr Mthembu: "My daughter, this people have come to ask for your hand in marriage. Do you know them?"

Phili: "Yes dad I know them."

They were told to go. That's where Philisiwe's mom chose to ruin the whole thing.

Mrs Mthembu: No! My daughter will not marry your son MaZulu!

Others: Hawu!!

Mr Mthembu: Nkosikazi kwenzenjani manje? (My dear, what's wrong now?)

Mrs Mthembu: Umithi uPhilisiwe! Uzama ukufihlela ibandla lelo hlazo lo mfazi! Ngeke ngiyivume leyonto. (My daughter is pregnant and they are trying to hide that)

Pastor's wife: What do you suggest we do MaNgcobo? They did sin and we're trying to do the right thing.

Mrs Mthembu: That is not the right thing. And you know. They must confess in front of the congregation that's how everything is done. We do not hide sin with marriage. I will not allow that. I will not!

Pastor's wife: You talk about sin? Your best friend Nandipha is busy sleeping with your husband right under your nose. That child of hers is your husband's child but you're telling me about sin!

Others: Hhaybo! Makhosikazi!

Mrs Mthembu was beyond shocked, she didn't expect to hear such things about her friend and her husband.

Nandipha: Mngani wami. That's –

Mrs Mthembu: Is it true?

Nandipha: I am sorry. (She started crying.)

Mrs Mthembu: Why are you crying witch answer me!

Nandipha: I am sorry!

Mrs Mthembu: Leave my house now! Leave!

Nandipha quickly stood up and left.

Mrs Mthembu: Nonke phumani kwami! (All of you leave my house)

Men: Hhaybo! Mfazi!

She quickly went to the back of the door and took a weapon. They all stood up and ran out of the house. She went back inside her house. Her husband couldn't look at her in the eye. Mrs Mthembu was so disappointed.

Mr Mthembu: Nkosikazi!?

She went to her and room. She locked herself up and cried....

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

That day at school was just beautiful. I couldn't keep my eyes off Mr cuddles. He was so cute. Andiswa was really my angel. During lunch break I took my bag and teddy. I went to my guys. On the way to the guys, I bumped into someone. Mr Cuddles fell on the ground.

Me: Jeez! Look where you going.

Sphe: (picking the teddy up) I am sorry.

Me: Oh. It's you.

I took my teddy bear from him and I attempted to walk away. He grabbed my hand softly.

Me: Leave me alone Sphephelo.

Sphe: Uhm... Are you and the baby alright?

Me: What baby?

Sphe: Our child.

Me: The one you told me to abort? Oh I don't know maybe the sun and rains are being harsh on her, down the drain. How do you think she's doing right now?

Sphe: I am sorry Alondwe I didn't mean to make you pregnant.

Me: Oh. You meant to do what? Hurt my father? By using me? I bet his heart is bleeding where he is. I bet he really wants to kill himself right just like your sister?

His face changed. His jaw tightened.

Me: What? You can't handle that? Or you thought I was going to kill myself too over a stupid video? Well guess what dear. I ain't stupid like your sister.

He slapped me across my face. I held my face. I got even more angrier.

Sphe: You know nothing about my sister. And don't talk like that about her.

Me: No you're wrong. I know everything about her. She was fucking stupid!

Sphe: Samkeliswa I am warning you!

Me: You played your game Sphe and you won. But don't think you'll hurt my dad for the things he did on his youth. He's not that man anymore. Hate will not do you any good.

You're holding over revenge for a dead girl? Who didn't care about you. If she cared enough as a big sister she wasn't going to kill herself. I love my brothers, I rather think of other ways of dealing with pain then to kill myself and leave them alone. So face the truth, your sister left you with a stupid burden. The fact that she killed herself and left you. That means she didn't give a fuck about you. Revenge my sister my foot! While she left you all alone. Tsk!! I walked away from him, leaving him with tears. I wasn't going to be nice to him. Because the truth says his sister was selfish. It may be too much pressure to deal with but think about that cute little brother you'll leave behind if you die. What will he think of you? You didn't love her? I am my mother's daughter! No matter how tough the situation is Thandeka's blood will never take the easy way out. I've seen her cry, seen her sick, seen her broken, seen her smile just to hide pain, but I have never seen her give up! Never! That's my mother! And I

will do her proud so that she can know that I see her efforts and they keep me going. So no matter what you're facing in life, think about that one tiny thing that can make you stay before you take an easy way out, because life is hard but that doesn't mean we should run away from it. Yes I am 16yrs old and I learnt from the best. That's why nothing will bring me down!...

---

Thandeka Ndunakazi...

I landed in Durban and I opted to go straight to Alondwe's school. I wasn't going to go there the following day. Muzi and I had arrangements to go and look for the warehouse, we were going to buy. I arrived at the school and I went straight to the office. I explained my situation to the principal and she allowed the meeting to take over. They went to call Alondwe. She walked in at the office and saw me. She smiled.

Alondwe: Mama.

Me: Hey baby.

I hugged and kissed her forehead. We sat down and listened to the Principal.

Principal: What your daughter did mam, is very unacceptable.

Me: I know and I have spoken to her about that. It was a mistake.

Alondwe: I didn't know about the video Principal. I am really sorry.

Principal: We would appreciate it if you go home for a while.

Me: What do you mean, are you suspending her for something she doesn't know that was going on. She didn't know that the video was there.

Her teacher: Seems like you're defending your daughter mam.

Me: That's because you're being unfair!

Principal: Miss Ndunakazi you'll only come back on the 1st of August.

Me: What? Today is the 9th of July. You're being unfair!

Principal: That's my final decision!

She signed up the papers and gave them to me. I took them. I stood up.

Me: Baby go get your bags. We're leaving.

Her teacher: The school hours are not over yet.

Me: It doesn't matter. You're suspending her anyway.

Principal: If you're going with her. She must not come back in my school.

Me: Then she won't!

Alondwe: Mom!?

Principal: Fine go.

Her teacher: We can't loose her. She's one of the best learners and we need her.

Principal: Fine. Go with her. 1st of August she must be here and report to me.

Me: I am taking her elsewhere. We pay a lot of money for the school fees but you can't even follow up on what really happened that night. You can't even ask if she's affected or offer her school counselling. All that is important is suspension. You need someone to teach you how to work with young people. Tsk. Let's go Owami!

I held her hand and we left. I bought her lunch and I drove to my workplace with her. She was helping me out with a few things. I didn't want her to stay alone so I was going to come with her to work everyday.

Alondwe: I don't want to change my school.

Me: We'll talk about that at home not now.

She nodded and I told her to focus on her books while I draft my resignation letter. Later we had to drive back home. We arrived at home in the evening. My husband and kids were already home. I walked inside the house. Samkelo and the boys were on the lounge playing games. The boys stood up when they saw me. They ran up to me. I hugged Mesuli first and then I hugged Alupheli. I picked him up. He was happy that I picked him up. I went to the

couch with him. Alondwe went upstairs.

Me: Evening Ndunakazi.

Sam: Evening. Your daughter can't even see me?

Me: Oh so that's how it goes now? She's mine alone?

Sam: You foster everything she does.

Me: You know what I am not gonna fight with you, special not about our daughter.

I stood up and took my bags.

Me: Come on Thando. Let's go, help mommy undress.

He jumped off the couch and followed me....

---

Themba Smith....

Ever since my dad died. I couldn't let his guys starve so I had to take his position and guide his gang. It was a tough job but I had to help these men keep providing for their families. I was in my office having a meeting with my IT guy. Dad had his operations very clean and quiet.

Me: So who's the target.

IT guy: There's a big company at UMhlanga in Durban. Their accountant is Samkelo Matthew Ndunakazi.

Me: Let me see.

He gave me his records. It was Thandeka's husband.

Me: Okay. Carry on.

IT guy: This company has had fraudulent activities for past few years before this guy joined the company. But as soon as he was hired. He has seen every trick that can be possible fraud and he's good at auditing too. Now we just have to find a way to get our hands to that money. It's a lot of money since this guy has been loyal to this company even if we can steal it. The shareholders will barely see that it's gone. But we must make sure that the Accountant doesn't see this trick.

Me: Mm mmm. So what's the plan?

IT: Your father and I had a plan but we had to abort immediately when he found out the name of the Accountant. I don't know if he knew him.

Me: Yes, he did. He's my ex wife's husband. And I won't be sweet like my dad. I want that money and this guy over here will take a fall for it.

IT guy: I don't understand.

Me: We'll frame the Accountant....

I smiled and looked at him. He looked at me like I was mad....

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

After Alupheli had helped me undress, we both went downstairs. He went back to his father and I went to the kitchen. Alondwe was making something to eat for herself.

Me: Why didn't you greet your father?

Alondwe: I did, maybe y'all didn't hear me.

Me: No Alondwe you didn't.

Alondwe: Hawu mama I did.

Me: Just because he's mad at you and he's showing it that doesn't mean you shouldn't respect him. He's still your father. And he deserves your respect all the time. Syezwana? She didn't say anything. She looked down at her food.

Me: Alondwe man! Ndithetha nawe!

Alondwe: Yes mom I understand.

Me: Good. Why don't you want to change your school?

Alondwe: I have new friends and I don't want to leave them.

Me: And Zenande?

Alondwe: (she looked disgusted) I don't know mom. I don't like her anymore. Her presence annoys me.

Me: Jesus! Umntanabantu waze wavelelwa! Unyanyiswa yena manje?

Alondwe: What does that suppose to mean?

Me: There are people or things you'll like and hate because of the pregnancy. When I was pregnant with you, I was really fond of my father and I wanted to follow him everywhere. The time I went to varsity. I used to cry a lot and call him almost everyday.

Alondwe laughed at that.

Alondwe: Yoh! That was hectic mama.

Me: Yoh! Wena! You were a trouble child. I was always in trouble because of you.

Alondwe: (laughing) Ah. I am sorry shame. But I don't want to change my school.

Me: It's okay Nana. You won't change it. How is that partner of yours doing, who? Uhm.. Sphephelo?

Alondwe: Oh. Sphe. He's fine but it's been a while since I last saw him. They are busy with their school work.

Me: Okay.

There was a buzz on the gate. Alupheli and Kuhle ran to the phone to attend it. After a few minutes, I could hear my father in-law shouting from the lounge. He was shouting Alondwe's name.

Father in-law: Alondwe! Where is she Samkelo?

Alondwe looked at me with fear.

Alondwe: Mama?

Me: Come here baby.

My father in-law walked in with a sjambok in my kitchen. Alondwe stood in my back. She started crying.

Father in-law: Makoti, don't make this hard. I want my granddaughter.

Me: But baba, you can't beat her. Not while she's in this condition.

Father in-law: Samkelo was right! Uyayivuna le ngane. Ingakho nje imithi. Imikhuba yakho yonke le. Ngizoniqondisa nobabili.

He didn't waste he whipped us both but I was the one who was getting all the pain of being beaten up because I was trying to protect Alondwe and the baby.

Father in-law: I won't stop until you let me beat my granddaughter.

Me: No baba. I won't let you beat my daughter.

Samkelo came back from upstairs, he just stood there and looked at us. He didn't even try to stop his father. Ndunakazi didn't stop beating us or should I say me. My body was painful and I was now crying. I saw Alondwe moving aside and handing herself over to her grandfather. As he was about to beat her. I stood in between them and he hit me right from my cheek not leaving my chest.

Me: Go to your room wena.

I held the sjambok and Alondwe ran away.

Ndunakazi: This is how you want her to turn out like you?

Me: What does that suppose to mean?

Ndunakazi: You had two kids from different men before you were even 21yrs old.

Me: But that doesn't mean you must beat her.

Ndunakazi: Uyabona lo mfazi wakho wena Samkelo. Ngizosuke ngi! Uyeyisa man!

He beat me up again but for a short period of time. My husband was standing there watching. He stopped.

Ndunakazi: Go upstairs and help Alondwe pack her clothes. She's leaving with me tomorrow morning.

Me: My daughter is going nowhere.

Samkelo: I am the one who told my father to come and fetch her so that she'll live with them.

Me: Oh, you made that decision alone? You didn't even tell me Samkelo but I am your wife. You're giving my daughter away just like that?

Samkelo: My dad will raise her better.

Me: How? Tell me how? By beating her up everyday while she's pregnant.

Samkelo: Kids are always beaten up while they are pregnant and nothing happens to them. Just because your father didn't beat you up when you fell pregnant that doesn't mean they shouldn't.

I felt a huge rush of anger. I tried to slap him but he held my hand.

Sam: What are you trying to do Thandeka? Huh? You want to fight me now!? Don't even try syezwana?

I didn't answer him. I yanked my hand out of his hold.

Me: I am leaving with my daughter ke. You can stay in your house because clearly you're chasing her out.

Sam: Awuyi ndawo wena. Unganginyanyisi Mina Thandeka. (You're going nowhere) You're my wife and if I say you're going nowhere you'll do what I say no questions asked.

I clicked my tongue and went upstairs.

I went to the guestroom. I didn't have my phone in my pocket. I used the landline to call my brother. He picked up immediately.

Me: Hello Bhuti.

Andile: Hey sisi unjani?

Me: I am not alright. I have a situation at hand.

Andile: What is it Joy?

Me: My father in-law (I told him everything)

Andile: You mean he literally beat you up?

Me: Yes. I need your help.

Andile: I am listening.

Me: Please take my daughter Andile and live with her. I can't let her stay with her grandparents. I know what I am asking is huge but I am desperate but if you can't I will understand. I will try something else. I am really clueless about this. I just don't know what to do ( I started crying) I feel so helpless and Samkelo is not helping me out. He just doesn't care –

Andile: Hey hey, don't cry sisi Samkelo is still angry. He will come around eventually. Don't worry about him. Alondwe can stay with me. I don't think my wife can have a problem with that. I will have to go and talk to some of my friends so that she can get a school here.

Me: Thank you so much bhuti. I will go and ask for a transfer from her school.

Andile: Okay. We will talk tomorrow neh?

Me: Okay.

Andile: Send my regards to my kids there and tell Alondwe that everything will be alright.

Me: Thank you bhuti. I just wish you were my husband. (We laughed)

Andile: I wish you were my wife too. (We laughed)

Me: Beside the fact that uyeyisa.

Andile: At least sinokweyisa okufanayo.

Me: We learnt from the best.

Andile: Yeah. Dad is worst and now special that he has retired. He's always calling me so that he can complain.

Me: Yoh! I feel for you.

Andile: It's alright, go and nurse your body.

Me: (laughing) Okay I love you.

Andile: I love you too Nanesh ka Samkelo.

Me: Mxm loyo.

Andile: But he loves you Thandeka. What's happening with your daughter doesn't change that.

Me: But Andile he didn't even try to stand up for me to his dad.

Andile: He's angry. Understand that.

Me: Mxm. You're always on his side vele ngathi wakudlisa. (He laughed)

Andile: Okay I am sorry neh.

Me: Okay let me go.

Andile: Bye.

I hung up and I went to Alondwe's room. I was in pain. My whole body was aching. I knocked on the door. I told her it's me. She opened up. She was holding a cute white teddy bear.

Me: Who bought this for you?

Alondwe: My friend Andiswa.

Me: That's nice then. Baby look. Please pack your clothes.

Alondwe: Why?

Me: You're going to live with your uncle Andile.

Alondwe: Dad is chasing me out?

Me: No but they wanted you to live with your grandparents. I can't allow that. He'll beat you up while you're pregnant.

Alondwe: Maybe he must. I don't want this baby.

Me: Don't say that! There are lot of women who wants babies out there but they can't have them.

Alondwe: I am sorry.

Me: Start packing.

Alondwe: Will I be able to say goodbye to my friends?

Me: Yes. We will go to your school tomorrow and you'll have another psychologist in Johannesburg okay?

Alondwe: Yes mom. I am sorry that grandpa beat you because of me.

Me: It's okay Nana. Don't stress about me.

Alondwe: You and dad won't get divorced right? I don't want you to leave him mama. I looked at her for a long time.

Me: No baby I won't divorce your father. I am just stuck with him here.

She smiled faintly and nodded. I hugged her and I went back downstairs to cook...

Alondwe Ndunakazi...

I couldn't believe that I was really leaving my home, the house where I grew up in. Where I created memories. It was hard, I thought about telling the truth but it was going make things worse between mom and dad. It was going to be like pouring oil to the burning fire. I cried so much that night. Though uncle Andile was also a great but strict uncle it wasn't going to be the same without my family. My mom, my dad and my brothers. I hated the day I met Sphe! The day I fell in love with him. I hated it so much. I packed my clothes and I left the others because I had no space left. I only had three suitcases in my room. I packed the rest of my other things like accessories and other stuff in a sport bag. I finished and sat down. I looked around my room and it just pained my heart deeply that I was leaving. I took Mr cuddles and cuddled him up in my bed. After a few minutes there was a knock on the door. I didn't respond.

Alupheli: Yoyondwe wena! Uyakubiza umama.

Me: Ngiyeza.

I stood up and I went to the door. Alupheli was still standing by my door. He opened his arms for me.

Me: You're three years old but you want me to pick you up?

He smiled and nodded. I picked him up and we went downstairs....

---

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

While I was cooking, I prepared a snack for my father in-law. I didn't know if he was going to take it or what. But I took it to him. He was on the lounge with Samkelo and the boys. I served him. He thanked me.

Me: Anigezile njalo nina nobabili.

Alupheli: Uzonigeza mina uYoyondwe.

Me: Oh. Wena?

Kuhle: I will bath with him.

Me: Okay.

I left. I went to continue with cooking. After cooking I went upstairs to shower. The water was warm nicely. I finished up and I moisturised my body. I also used moov for the pain. My cheek had a red mark of the sjambok. I sighed. I wore my pyjamas, my robe and slippers. I went to prepare the guestroom for my father in-law. I changed the bedding and I went downstairs to prepare the dinner table. I called Alupheli and Mesuli. They came to me.

Me: Thando go and call your sister. Mesuli go and call your father and grandfather.

Them: Yes mom.

They left. Everyone came to the dinner table. We settled down. Father in-law prayed. We started eating in silence.

Alupheli: Mom please feed me.

Me: Come.

Father in-law: Ayi! You're old enough to feed yourself. Don't run to your mom. Sit down and feed yourself.

He looked at me. He wanted to cry.

Sam: He won't eat that food baba. Uzokuchitha konke. Go to your mom boy.

Alupheli stepped off the chair. He came and stood next to me.

Me: Owami, put him on my lap.

She stood up and did that.

Kuhle: Wazi Izindaba nje wena. Awukwazi ngisho ukuzigeza.

Sam: Scelokuhle!

Kuhle: Iqiniso baba.

Father in-law: Uqinisile impela wena Mesuli.

Alupheli: Mamami?

Me: Thando lwami?

Alupheli: Bacinisile?

Me: Cha boy.

He laughed at Mesuli. Alondwe was awfully quiet. She finished up first. She went to the kitchen with her dish and she came back.

Alondwe: Usugezile wena?

Alupheli shook his head "No"

Alondwe: Uze uma usuqe ukudla yezwa?

Alupheli: Yebo.

Me: Yebo bani?

Alupheli: Yebo shishi Yoyondwe.

Kuhle: Alondwe!

Alondwe: Awukahle nawe wawusho njengaye.

She went upstairs after that. Alupheli and Mesuli went upstairs after eating. I collected the dishes.

Father in-law: Can I have a cup of tea Makoti.

Me: Yebo.

I went to make tea for him and I served him. I washed the dishes after that. I cleaned up and I went to my room. I texted Samkelo about the room that his father was going to use. My phone rang. I took it. Uyathandwa was calling. I answered.

Me: Hello boy.

Uyathandwa: Hey mom how are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Uyathandwa: I am fine. I called to remind you about the trip.

Me: Okay. You want how much?

Uyathandwa: R 1 000

Me: Really Uyathandwa! That much for a trip?

Uyathandwa: Things are expensive mom. And I need new kicks.

Me: I bought them when you were here for June holidays, what kicks are you talking about now?

Uyathandwa: Awu. Please mom. Please.

Me: When do you need it?

Uyathandwa: We're leaving Thursday.

Me: Okay. I will deposit the money tomorrow.

Uyathandwa: On my account mom, not on Dad's account and please don't tell him that I asked for cash to you for this trip.

Me: Why?

Uyathandwa: He said I must not ask for money to you. He'll take care of everything.

Me: But you asked me money.

Uyathandwa: Because you're my mom.

Me: Ayi. Missy is asleep?

Uyathandwa: Yes.

Me: Okay. Goodnight then baby.

Uyathandwa: Thanks mom. Don't forget I will remind you.

Me: I won't forget.

Uyathandwa: Okay. Night. I love you.

Me: I love you too.

He hung up the call. Alupheli walked inside my room with his blanket. His father was following him.

Me: Ha.a Thando, go and sleep with your sister.

Alupheli: (he started crying) Why mom?

Me: I don't want to sleep with you.

Samkelo picked him up and he buckled him inside my bed covers.

Me: Ilala kabi le ngane izobe ingikhahlela ubusuku bonke ngoba umzimba wami ubuhlungu nje. (My body is painful. We can't sleep with him)

Sam: You shouldn't have taken the fall for Alondwe but you did so that doesn't mean Alupheli must not sleep here if he wants to.

I looked at him for quite some time. I didn't say anything at all. He undressed and went to the bathroom. I took my phone and stood up.

Alupheli: Where are you going mama?

Me: I will come back. I want to make a phonecall Baby. Just sleep.

He nodded. I kissed his forehead and I left. I went to check on Mesuli. He wasn't on his room. I called his name. He came out of the guestroom.

Me: You're sleeping with your grandfather?

Kuhle: Yes mom. Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight boy.

I went Alondwe's room. She was moisturising her body.

Me: Can I spend the night with you?

Alondwe: Yes, It's my last night here. So I will be happy to spend it with you.

Me: I am sorry Nana.

Alondwe: It's not your fault mom, It's -.

Me: What?

Alondwe: Agh nothing.

She dressed up. She joined me, we conversed til late..

---

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

In the morning, we did the usual routine. We went to the dining table for breakfast. We prayed and ate.

Mkhulu: Are you ready to go Alondwe?

I looked at mom. She didn't say anything.

Me: No I am not.

Dad: What do you mean?

Me: I am not going with granddad.

Dad: Who said you have an option.

Me: Mom gave me an option.

Dad looked at mom. Mom didn't say anything at all. She was just feeding her little boy and pretended like nothing was happening.

Dad: Thandeka!?

Mom: Yeah?

Dad: What options is Samkeliswa talking about?

Mom: Oh. She'll live with my brother.

Dad and grandpa: What?

Grandpa: She's a Ndunakazi not a Dhlomo.

Mom: Do you want to live with your grandparents Owami?

Me: No I-

Dad: She's not 18yrs yet. We make decisions for her.

Mom: It's okay. She prefers my brother so she'll stay there. In fact she wasn't supposed to leave this house but because you can't stand her sight she'll go but she's staying with my brother. Her surname doesn't mean anything. I am also a Ndunakazi and I made that decision for my daughter.

They didn't say anything at all. Grandpa clicked his tongue. We finished up. I washed the dishes. Mom went to dress up. I went to help Alupheli. Grandpa left with dad. We then drove to their school. We went to my school afterwards. Mom went to the principal while I went to look for Andiswa. I asked for to her teacher. She came to me outside. We hugged each other.

Me: Hey I don't have much time left. I am leaving KZN. I am going to stay in Johannesburg now with my uncle.

Andiswa: What? Who will look after you there?

Me: I will make new friends don't worry.

Andiswa: No Alondwe. I will miss you.

Me: I will visit okay don't worry. Go back to class I will call you.

She nodded shyly. We hugged each other and she left. I was so sad. I even shed a tear. I went to mom and they have given her the transfer. I couldn't go to my guys. After listening to the principal's lecture. We headed to mom's car. I saw Andiswa with Sphe, outside Sphe's class.

She saw me and she quickly ran towards me.

Andiswa: Hello mam.

Mom: Hello dear.

Andiswa gave me a lollipop and fritos as usual.

Me: You know Sphe?

Andiswa: Who?

Me: That guy you were with?

Andiswa: No. I was passing a message. I will miss you goodbye.

Me: Bye.

Andiswa: You'll find another guardian angel, just don't forget to tell me your new school and your new address.

I smiled.

Me: Okay dear. Bye.

We hugged once more and she left. Mom and I drove to her workplace. We worked the whole day and mom had hired a lady to drive me to Johannesburg. I cried a lot when I had to leave mom at her workplace. We said our goodbyes and the lady drove me home. I was leaving. We arrived and we went to my room for my bags. I took other things because I thought I was going to fly but I wasn't. Mam Nancy was out. I couldn't say goodbye. My brothers were not back yet, I couldn't say goodbye. On my way out I bumped into my dad. He looked like he was in a hurry. He went inside and came back with a file.

Dad: Why are you here?

Me: I am leaving your house. You know dad. I always thought I don't want to tell you the truth because I don't want you to get hurt and feel bad over something that happened in the past.

Dad: I don't have time for nonsense Alondwe.

Me: I am pregnant because of you. Whoever that guy was, he had an agenda with you for something you did to his sister. He drugged me, had sex with me, made a sex tape, he leaked it on the internet and everyone saw that. It's too bad for me I fell pregnant. Unfortunately his sister killed herself and his parents died on a car accident trying to save their daughter. All this guy wanted was revenge for his sister for what you did to her. So he did what you did to his sister to me. I didn't want to add oil on the fire between you and mom but I don't like the way you treated me. I didn't tell mom this because I know that she'll go back to the hospital. I didn't want to tell you too because I didn't want to hurt you. So please don't tell my mom this. I don't think she can take it in. She's the only parent I have left since I am dead to you. I don't want to lose her too. She's everything to me. Bye dad.

I left him there, his face was blank. I stepped inside the car and the driver drove off..

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

I felt a huge relief after telling my dad the truth though I was worried about mom. I knew that dad is not that good at hiding things away from my mom. But I just told myself that he won't because he knows that mom can't handle shock her body is really weak. It was a long drive to Johannesburg but we finally arrived in my uncle's house. I was nervous about it but I had no other place to go to. The lady help me take out my suitcases. And other bags. I buzzed the gate. My aunt answered.

Aunt: Hello.

Me: It's Alondwe aunty.

Aunt: Okay come in.

The lady helped me with the bags. My uncle and his wife came out of the house. My cousins too. My aunt hugged me. Then I hugged my uncle and my cousins.

Uncle: Don't cry Samkeliswa.

Me: I am sorry malume.

Uncle: It's okay. It's not your fault. Your father told me what you told him.

Me: He didn't tell mom right?

Uncle: Not yet but you know that we have to tell her right?

Me: She's not well enough.

Uncle: Nothing will happen to her.

Me: No please don't.

Uncle: Don't cry.

He hugged me and brushed my back. I calmed down and we went inside the house. My uncle tipped the lady and she left. My aunt showed me to my room. I thanked her and unpacked my clothes. I sat down in my bed. I took out my phone and I had missed calls from Andiswa. I called her back. She answered.

Andiswa: Hello sisi.

Me: Hey darling how are you?

Andiswa: I am alright and you?

Me: I am fine baby. I saw your missed calls.

Andiswa: Yeah I wanted to check if you are alright? And if you did arrive safe.

Me: Yes I am fine and I arrived safely.

Andiswa: Don't forget to send me your address please.

Me: I won't forget Nana.

Andiswa: Okay bye.

Me: Thanks. Bye.

I hung up and I called mom. She answered immediately.

Mom: I am trying to call you and your phone number is busy.

Me: I was talking to my friend.

Mom: The first person you thought of calling is your friend. She's the one who sent you to Johannesburg?

Me: No mom. I am sorry.

Mom: Ungangicasuli wena.

Me: I am sorry.

Mom: How did you go?

Me: I arrived safely. Thanks.

Mom: You must behave like a child then, remember Andile is not Samkelo and Shemah is not me. Respect them.

Me: Mom you're making it sound like I don't respect you.

Mom: Don't put words in my mouth Alondwe.

Me: I am sorry.

Mom: If you need anything call me or tell your aunt. You can only ask Andile directly if you need something urgently.

Me: Yes mom.

Mom: I will deposit cash in your account every month, for your pocket money, transport if you're going to see your Doctor. Shemah will take you to the Doctor after school tomorrow.

Me: Yebo.

Mom: Please don't disappoint me, study very hard like you did when you were here. Don't let the hormones get to you okay?

Me: Yes mom.

Mom: Okay. I will call regularly and you can call me anytime okay?

Me: Yes I will. Even at midnight.

Mom: (she laughed) I will miss you Nana and please don't forget that we love you. I know maybe you'll doubt that but we love you. Everyone from the family loves you. That didn't

stop just because you're pregnant. They are just disappointed that's all.

Me: Yebo.

Mom: And we don't expect you to repeat the same mistake in future.

Me: I promise I won't mama. Thanks. I love you and thank you for the support just wish I can be a better mother like you.

Mom: You'll be a better mom in your own way. You just have to accept that it came to you earlier than you expected.

Me: I didn't even expect it mom. Having kids was not in my future plans. I just wanted to be a Doctor and travel the world but now it won't because I will have a baby.

Mom: A baby is not a curse. That can still happen. You have to tell yourself that you can do it. Okay?

Me: Yes Mrs Ndunakazi.

Mom: (she giggled) Okay. Goodnight. Let me call my brother ke.

Me: Goodnight. How are my little men there?

Mom: Alupheli was crying because you didn't even say goodbye. He was like "Ubani ushezothengela iloluphophu. Hihhi Yoyondwe wami Samkelo. Niyamfuna" (who'll buy lollipops for me. I want my Alondwe Samkelo)

I laughed really hard.

Mom: Mesuli was really angry. He didn't even say a word.

Me: Shame. What did dad say when Alupheli called him by his name?

Mom: He didn't say anything. He's awfully quiet. I don't know what's wrong with him but he's not alright.

Me: Shame. Okay mama bye.

Mom: Bye Nana.

I hung up and I went to the kitchen. Aunt Shemah was cooking, I helped her. Nonduduzo came and help too.

Shemah: Thanks to you Alondwe. My daughter came to the kitchen today.

Nondu: Mom?

We laughed. Uncle Andile came inside the kitchen.

Me: Malume can I have the address of my new school.

Uncle: Okay. Let me type it down for you.

I gave him my phone. He typed it.

Uncle: We will go and enrol you tomorrow morning. You'll wear your casual clothes then after school you'll go with your aunt to buy school uniform.

Me: Okay thanks.

He nodded and kissed his wife. He took his car keys and left with Luzuko. His son. After cooking we had dinner without uncle and cousin. I went to my room. I texted Andiswa my new address and the new school address. She replied with "Perfect! Goodnight" I replied back and I went to shower. I went straight to bed afterwards.

In the morning we woke up and did the morning routine. We had breakfast. I wasn't comfortable with eating like I was at home. I ate the breakfast that was dished out for me. After breakfast, I went to my room. I wore white jeans, black vest and a navy hoody with navy boots. I packed a few books though I did not know what to pack but I did pack. Uncle Andile was shouting for my name outside. I looked for coins and I didn't have any coins. I only had a R200 note. I didn't take it. "Maybe uncle Andile will give me cash" I thought to myself. I ran out of the house and went to the car.

Uncle: Angizwani ke nje nomuntu owenza kancane. Sekumele ngibe late manje ngilinde wena. (I don't like someone who takes their time to get ready. Now I should wait for you.)

Me: I am sorry.

He clicked his tongue. I didn't say anything. He drove off. We arrived at a beautiful school.

We walked inside the gates. There was a cute yellow bone guy standing by the entrance. He was tall. He looked at me and smiled. I looked away. Uncle Andile looked at me.

Uncle: Do you know that boy?

Me: No.

He didn't say anything afterwards. We went to the Principal's office after going through the administrators. I met the Principal and he gave me the timetable and other things I needed. And the paper that has the school dress code. And the code of conduct. He welcomed me and walked out with us. He looked around outside his office.

Principal: Nkululeko Zulu

Nkulu: Sir?

Principal: Come here.

It was that guy I saw by the gate. He ran towards us.

Principal: Take Miss Ndunakazi and show her to her class.

Nkulu: Yes Sir.

I gave him my timetable. My uncle thanked the Principal. The Principal went back to his office.

Uncle: Have a nice day then.

Me: Thanks you too.

He nodded and left. I was so scared to ask for money to him. I didn't bring any cash with me. I thought he was going to give me some but he didn't. Clearly I was going to starve that day. I sighed.

Nkulu: Are you still with me? We have to go to your class.

Me: (I snapped off) I am sorry let's go.

Nkulu: So you're Alondwe Ndunakazi?

Me: Yes.

Nkulu: I am Nkululeko Zulu. But you can call me Nonku.

Me: Oh are you gay?

Nkulu: Oh Gosh! Is it that not showing?

Me: Uhm... It does. I suppose.

Nkulu: Yes I am gay dear. I was so excited when Andiswa told me that I will be your guardian angel.

Me: Wait? You know Andiswa?

Nkulu: Yes I do. She's my childhood friend. But we had to separate. She went to Durban and I came here.

Me: Oh. So she told you to look after me? That's why she was so desperate to get my new address.

Nkulu: Yes.

Me: Oh that's so sweet.

Nkulu: Sweet is our middle name honey.

I giggled softly. We arrived in my class.

Nkulu: Since we're not going to the same class. I will come to you during lunch time.

Me: Can you please buy me food today. I will pay you back tomorrow.

Nkulu: No need to pay dear. I will give you anything you want. That's Andy's orders.

Me: Mmm okay that's sweet. I will see you lunch time.

Nkulu: Okay bae. Welcome to our school.

Me: Thank you.

We hugged each. He left. I went inside the classroom. I was so blown away by Andiswa. I really meant something to her and I wasn't going to ask any questions. I was just going to appreciate her love and support. And be happy.

---

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

I couldn't concentrate at work. Everything that Alondwe said to me was eating me up. I was so ashamed of myself. Ashamed of my capabilities as a parent to her. I was so focused on the fact that I wanted her to do better than us that I even forgot to tell her the glimpse of my past so that she can be aware. I didn't know what I was going to say to my wife. How was she going to take it. Specially after what happened with my father. I was really disappointed and angry at her and my daughter. I felt that Thandeka had spoiled Alondwe way too much. I didn't even try to ask her what went wrong that she became pregnant at such an early age. Everything wasn't in place. Thandeka was giving me a cold shoulder and my daughter was gone. She was pregnant because of my past. I was so hurt by those news. I was deeply hurt. If there was a way that I could change everything. I would have taken that way but there wasn't a way.

After work I went home. I was really down and disappointed but mostly I was angry at myself. The only person I was able to talk to was Andile and he listened to me. Andile is a very supportive brother in-law any man could ask for. I tried calling Alondwe several times but she didn't answer my calls. At night I was in bed with my wife. The kids were not sleeping with us. Thandeka was sleeping facing the other side.

Me: MaDhlomo?

Thandeka: Yeah?

Me: How is Alondwe?

Thandeka: Why don't you call her and ask her.

Me: I tried but she's not taking any of my calls.

Thandeka: Oh. I am sorry to hear that. You'll ask her when she's ready to talk to you.

Me: Can I call her using your phone?

Thandeka: I don't have airtime. Maybe tomorrow.

Me: Okay..... Uhm... Can you please bring her back home.

Thandeka: Excuse me?

Me: I said please bring my daughter home.

Thandeka: Ayi. Sorry ke I won't do that. So now you'll say jump and I have to ask how high? That's unfair. Alondwe is not coming back home.

Me: She's my daughter Thandeka. If I want her back she must come back.

Thandeka: Why because it suits you now? Kwahle bo. Alondwe won't come back. You're the one who chased her away. So please Samkelo.... And I want to sleep now.

I didn't say anything further. I just kept tossing and turning. I couldn't help but think about the pain that my little girl went through because of my past.....

3rd Person Narrator

Mrs Mthembu was so hurt to hear that her best friend was having an affair with her husband. And that they had a child together. The lies she told her were "I don't know who's the father of the child" It was so painful but she had to rise again and not to let this bring her down. She came out of her room. Her daughters came close her. They hugged her.

Them: "Sorry mama. We heard everything."

Mrs Mthembu: "It's okay. Everything will be alright. Sakhile must not know about this otherwise he'll do wonders again"

Them: "Okay mama"

Mrs Mthembu: "Wena. Philisiwe you have to do the right thing my child. You know I don't like nonsense. So please"

Phili:"I will talk to Philani"

Mrs Mthembu: "Thank you. We won't cook tonight. We will just eat that food. For now I have to go and see the Pastor"

They nodded and Mrs Mthembu left. Nobuhle's phone rang inside her room. She ran to attend it. It was an unsaved number. She answered.

Nobuhle: "Nobuhle Mthembu speaking hello?"

Nadine: "Hey it's your sister in-law. My brother told me that you guys are getting married! "

Nobuhle: "Yes. I am so excited"

Nadine: "Congratulations. You deserve each other and Raj really deserves a girl like you. Who really loves him. I am so happy for you two."

Me: "Thank you Nadine. That means a lot"

Nadine: "I called regarding your engagement ceremony. In Hindu we do things differently and we can be really honoured if the wedding can be done in our own tradition. Because you'll be part of our family. "

Nobuhle: "I don't have a problem at all. I will be honoured too."

Nadine: "My brother told me that he wants to marry you before his graduation next year so please discuss the date with him, so that me and you can plan the wedding of the century."

They both laughed. Nadine was really happy about the wedding. She felt so good about it. She really liked Nobuhle because Nobuhle had proven herself to be a good woman to her and that is someone she can look up to.

Nobuhle: "I will talk to your brother my sister and get back to you okay?"

Nadine: "Thank you sister. Have a good evening"

Nobuhle: "Thanks you too dear"

Philisiwe was looking at her sister as she was smiling widely.

Phili: "Okay. What's happening? "

Nobuhle: "That was my sister in-law. We were just chatting about good things."

Nobuhle didn't want to tell her sister yet since her negotiations didn't go well.

Phili: "So now. You're bffs?"

Nobuhle: "Seems like it"

They laughed..

---

On the hand, Pillay family. Rajiv was informing his family about their engagement. His stepmother Claudine, and his aunt Theresa were not pleased at all. They were not happy. His father was really happy.

Claudine: You won't get married while your older brother isn't married.

Mr Pillay: You can't take those decisions for him. You don't even know if Gary wants to get married.

Claudine: We can organise a wife for him.

Mr Pillay: But we said we won't organise wives for our children.

Claudine: There's nothing wrong with that.

Theresa: And remember brother that you and Claudine were an arranged couple but look, you ended up loving each other.

Claudine: And the children knows that sometimes marriages are arranged.

Rajiv: But you don't even know if Gary wants to get married.

Claudine: Shut up boy! We're not talking to you.

Rajiv: I am sorry.

Claudine: I was thinking that girl Tashrika Hiralal. She can make a good wife.

Mr Pillay: They are friends Claudine.

Claudine: That's good. My son won't marry a stranger. Theresa we must organise this wedding. I need an Indian daughter in-law not just a typical black girl.

That hurt Rajiv a lot.

Theresa: Yes and you brother you have to talk to Gary. That's if you want your precious son to get married.

Mr Pillay: There's nothing wrong if Rajiv gets married first.

Claudine: I won't allow that! And you know it.

Claudine and Theresa stood up. They went to talk about a way to approach the Hiralal family. They were both so excited about this wedding arrangements. The only thing they didn't know about Gary is that he was not ready for marriage but he was going to agree anyway because that's how they do things.

As days went by Mr Pillay spoke to Gary about the wedding. Gary was furious but his mother did some emotional blackmail and Gary agreed to marry Tashrika. Everyone was preparing for Gary and Tashrika's wedding ceremony.

---

On the other hand. The Pastor was really angry that his wife tried to hide the wrong that his son had committed. He forced them to confess in front of the congregation. They had no choice but to do it. On a Sunday. The Pastor called them.

Pastor: As you know that we are against sin and we're trying by all means to live a sin free life by purifying ourselves everyday. The Bible say "Vumani izono komunye nomunye"

Congregation: Amen.

Pastor: I would like to call my son Philani and Philisiwe.

They both stood up and went to stand in front of the congregation. Philani spoke first.

Philani: Eh Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

Philani: I am standing here in front of you as to confess the sin I have committed with this lady.

The congregation started making noise as women were making small conversations. The Pastor told them to shut up and they did.

Philani: Philisiwe and I have been seeing each since High School. We didn't stop. We started sleeping together on our first year of varsity. When I was made Youth Pastor. I didn't stop seeing her as a result she's pregnant. We've committed a sin and siyavuma. Syaxolisa.

Congregation: Hhaybo! Imikhuba!

Philisiwe: What Philani had said is true. I have committed sin and I had sex with Philani before marriage. Ngalokho nyaxolisa.

After that they went to sit down. The Pastor stood up.

Pastor: My son has really disappointed me. Thus it's the church's regulations that Philani will no longer perform his duties as a Youth Pastor and they should stop seeing each other. Until my son intends to marry her.

Congregation: Amen!

The service went on. Philisiwe couldn't stay any longer. She had other plans. She took her things and left. Philani looked at her as she was walking out. She was crying all the way from church to her mother's house. She arrived in the house. She packed her things on her suitcases. She took the money she had saved for her trip to Cape Town. She was done with her studies as the semester had ended. She was going to tell her parents that she got a Job at Cape Town since the surgery that she was doing her training in was in Durban they wanted her to work in Cape Town. She really loves her job. but she was angry at her mom for forcing her to expose herself like that. Clearly everyone in the township was going to call her names for sleeping with the Pastor while they don't know the whole story. She couldn't live with that embarrassment and the fact that she couldn't see Philani again was painful because she knew that Philani wasn't ready to get married so that means he was going to take forever to marry her. She decided to save herself from pain and leave KZN immediately. She didn't even leave a note. She took a taxi to west street. From West Street she took a cab that drove her straight to the airport. She then took a plane straight to Cape Town and left everything behind....

### 3rd Person Narrator

Nkululeko a.k.a Nonku left the last period. Two minutes before lunch. He went to a cosy corner and took out his phone. He texted both Andiswa and Sphe on their WhatsApp group to log in on Skype. They met each other on a child and youth care centre years ago. They were close to each other, until they were all separated when they got foster parents. That's the connection between them. Nkululeko waited for a few minutes. They both texted him back, saying they are still connecting the laptop to the school Wi-Fi.

(Nkulu)>{texting} I suppose your foster parents are poor. Now you'll make me wait. Why don't you have your modems with you. What if this Wi-Fi connection is poor. I have a special girl and a baby to look after! Please guys.

(Andiswa)>{texting back} Stop being dramatic girl. We have modems but we want Wi-Fi. And you know our parents are loaded. Otherwise we wouldn't be in private schools if they weren't loaded.

(Nkulu)>{texting back} OMG! I mean oh my gosh. Did you just call me girl? You don't know how happy I am right now. Geez mtanandini! You know how to make me happy.

(Sphe)>{texting} Awume kancane mjita. We're waiting for you to Skype us.

Nkululeko wasted no time. He Skype Sphe. Using video call. They connect. They could see each other. Andiswa was with Sphe on their school and Nkululeko was alone.

Nkulu: Hey bitches! (He was so excited to see their faces)

Sphe: Did you just call me a bitch?

Nkulu: Yes! Just like you called me mjita.

Andiswa laughed. She was reminded of old times when Sphe and Nkululeko would always fight.

Andiswa: Guys please chili. How is our sister in-law?

Sphe: Really? Sister in-law?

Nkulu: Come on we can see that you love this girl. You wouldn't be doing everything that you're doing if you don't love her.

Sphe: I love my child not her.

Andiswa: Stop fooling yourself Sphephelo.

Sphe: Okay. I don't think we're here to talk about my love for her.

Nkulu: But before we continue just admit that you love her!?

Sphe: Please guys.

Nkulu & Andiswa: Just admit!!

Sphe: Okay fine. I am in love with her. Are you happy now?

Nkulu: (screaming) Yes! Yes! You must tell her dude. She has to know.

Sphe: She wants nothing to do with me and I don't blame her. Do you think I would be asking for you guys to do all the trouble and take care of her if she needs me?

Nkulu: Shame! But wabozana nawe. How can you play revenge card on such a beautiful girl?

Sphe: My sister was also beautiful.

Nkulu: Too bad you're not in love with your sister but you're in love with a girl that hurt and humiliated.

Andiswa: Nonkululeko!

Nkulu: Okay I am sorry! (He mumbled) But it's the truth. (Then he smiled widely)

Sphe: It's cool Brah. So tell me how is she doing?

Nkulu: For now I can say she's doing well but you can see that she's sad. But she's trying. She's so beautiful. I can quit being gay for her.

Andiswa laughed really hard, while Sphe got irritated.

Sphe: Don't even think about that! And protect her from boys there.

Nkulu: What? Come on the girl needs a fuck or two. What are you talking about now.

Sphe: Nkululeko don't even think about that man. Owami was a virgin when I found her. She

knows nothing about sex so please don't expose her to bad things. She's still pure.

Nkulu: I suppose I will have to cancel that blind date I wanted to setup.

Sphe: Nkulu! Andiswa are you sure he's the only person we know in that school?

Andiswa: (laughing) Of course. I am sure. Sorry neh Sphe. He will behave.

Nkulu: Relax I won't let you down big brother.

Sphe: Thanks. At least you still remember that I am older than you.

Nkulu: How can I forget about that if you act old. (Andiswa and Nkulu laughed)

Sphe: That's enough. Thanks then for helping me out both of you.

Them: You would've done the same for us.

Nkulu: Shit! Look at the time. I have to go. I promised mama bear that I will buy lunch for her. She forget her cash at home.

Sphe: Don't call her like that.

Nkulu: Have you forgotten that we used to call you bear. So you're Papa bear, she's mama bear and the baby is baby bear.

Andiswa laughed.

Sphe: Wangiyala u-Alondwe waya eGoli. Jesu! Please go now and feed my baby and his or her mother.

Nkulu: We need another her.

Sphe: Just go Brah.

Nkulu: Okay peace my fam.

Them: Peace!

They logged off. Nkululeko stood up and looked for Alondwe...

---

Alondwe Ndunakazi...

At lunch time. I was so clueless, I didn't know what to do. I was really hungry. Nkululeko had promised to buy lunch for me but he was nowhere to be found. I asked around for him but they didn't know where he was. I ended up going back to my class because school kids were looking at me just because I wasn't wearing uniform. I started crying. I just didn't want this baby. It was making me feel wired. And I hated it. Nkululeko came inside my class running. He came to me.

Nkulu: I am so sorry mama bear. I was talking to Aunt bear and da- uhm. I lost track of time.

Me: Who's aunty bear?

Nkulu: It's Andiswa and I am sister bear to the little baby bear.

I laughed and wiped my tears.

Me: Out of everything. Why choose bear?

Nkulu: You'll understand one day. Let's go and buy you food. Andiswa can kill me if she can see you crying.

I smiled and stood up. He gave me a face wiper. Talk about a real girl! I took it and wiped my face. We went to buy food. He paid for everything that I wanted. We went to sit down on the food hall.

Nkulu: So when are you giving birth?

Me: It's early for those questions.

Nkulu: Come on I want to know.

Me: March. I don't know when.

Nkulu: That's nice. At least next year on our matric dance you won't have a big belly.

Me: Yeah. But leaving school with a belly and coming back with it again. It's really annoying.

Nkulu: You'll be fine mama bear. So long you won't be a real bear and be chubby. Because I will runaway.

I laughed.

Me: I will tell Andiswa eh!

We laughed.

Nkulu: That one can skin me alive.

We laughed and continued eating. My phone rang. I took it out. Dad was calling. I didn't answer. He called again.

Nkulu: Just answer it.

Me: No.

Nkulu: Do you know how much I could kill to have my dad calling me. But he's dead. He can't call me underground.

That was sad. I sighed and answered.

Me: Daddy?

Dad: Hey Princess How are you?

Me: I am alright daddy. And you?

Dad: I am not really okay. I need to see you. Did you go to school?

Me: Yes. I did go to school.

Dad: I am in Johannesburg. Send me the address of your school. I will fetch you after school.

Me: Aunt Shemah will do that daddy.

Dad: I am going to her house right now. I just need to see you. I will be the one going to buy new uniform for you and take you to the Doctor like she's supposed to do.

Me: Okay I will send the address.

Dad: Thanks.

I hung up the call. I sent the address to him.

Nkulu: Why are you mad at him?

Me: He chased me out of his house that's why I am here now. I live with my uncle, his wife and kids.

Nkulu: I am sorry to hear that.

Me: It's cool. I will be fine.

He nodded and smiled. We finished and lunch time was over. We stood up.

Nkulu: Andiswa told me not to forget these.

He gave me my favourites. I smiled and took it.

Me: Thank you for everything.

Nkulu: It's my pleasure mama bear.

I smiled. We hugged each other and we went our separate ways. I went to my classes. The day proceeded....

---

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

I didn't know what was wrong with my husband but something was wrong with him. He was miles away and that bothered me. Though I was still mad at him. I didn't like to see him like that. He's my husband after all and I love him. But Alondwe was bothering him too. I was so sad. He told me he was going to Johannesburg to see her. A part of me was happy that he was going to see her but I was also worried. I was working in my office when my dad called me. I answered.

Me: Dad?

Dad: How could you not tell me that my first grandchild is pregnant Thandeka!

Me: I am sorry.

Dad: You're sorry? Uyikhulise kanjani le ngane Thandeka? Huh? Alondwe is too young to be a mother!

Me: I tried my best baba.

Dad: Where's your husband. I tried calling him but I can't reach him. I want to talk to him.

Me: He's coming that way. He'll be in Andile's house in a few hours.

Dad: Naze nangiphoxa. Tsk!

He hung up the call. I sighed. Everyone was blaming me! Like I am a dirty person!

---

Themba Smith.

I was working during the day and I received a call from my IT guy. He was in Durban trying to get the job done. I answered.

Me: My man.

Him: Sure boss. The job is done.

Me: Really? That one million is on the account now?

Him: Yes and it will point out to the Accountant as you wanted it.

Me: Thank you my man. You did well.

Him: Sure boss.

I hung up the call and I smiled to myself. Finally I managed to make Samkelo's seat hot!

Alondwe Ndunakazi

After school, I waited for my dad with Nonku a.k.a Nkululeko outside the school premises.

Nkulu: Yoh! Chomi I wish you live with me. When will baby bear start showing?

Me: I don't know.

Nkulu: You're not excited about the baby. I don't see the excitement in your face whenever I talk about the baby.

Me: That's because I don't want this baby.

Nkululeko didn't anything. All I saw on his face was disappointment. I had to explain. He was a sensitive person I could see that about him.

Me: I mean. Uhm, you won't understand. This baby will remind how I was played and fooled by the guy that I love the most. So I am not really excited about having the baby. And besides having a child was not on my plans not even in future plans.

Nkulu: I am sorry to hear that dear but maybe you should talk to the father. You may never know maybe he regrets his actions.

Me: He doesn't and I want nothing to do with him. At least here I won't see him. And do you know the funny part about all this?

Nkulu: What?

Me: Yes I hate him for what he did to me but I still love the motherfucker! I love him really bad but whenever I see him. I make sure that he doesn't see my weakness. I can't let him see that I am weak.

Nkulu: You're strong mtanandini! (He smiled) I think you guys will get back together.

Me: Don't even think about it. I will never trust him. And please can we stop talking about him. Please.

Nkulu: Okay. His name? And surname?

Me: Sphephelo Khumalo.

Nkulu: (he smiled) I bet he's cute. I will have him for myself.

Me: Really now!?! And break the girl code.

Nkulu: Come on. You'll never know your soulmate so there's no girl code chomi. Yoh! Look at that cream approaching us.

I laughed. And looked that side. It was my dad.

Me: But that's the truth there's no girl code. That's my father.

Nkulu: Yoh! Can I have him. Just for mornings baby.

Me: Chini! Thandeka can kill you. (We laughed)

Dad: Alondwe? Who is this?

Me: I am fine dad. It's nice to see you too.

Dad: I am still your father njalo.

Nkulu: Don't worry Sir I am not her boyfriend. I don't do girls. I do fine guys like you.  
I laughed. Dad looked at him. His eyebrows rose up. That time Nkululeko had the best smile ever.

Dad: He's your friend?

Me: Yes.

Nkulu: Your daughter is in good hands with me Sir. I won't let anyone hurt her. Specially boys. Though I like them but I won't like them for her.

Dad: Let's go Alondwe.

I could see that dad was really irritated. A white Ferrari parked across the road.

Nkulu: Chomi that's my bae. I have to go. Bye.

Me: Bye.

He kissed my cheek and he tapped my dad's shoulder.

Nkulu: It was nice seeing you grandfather bear.

I laughed, Nkulu ran off. His boyfriend was really cute and by one look you could tell that he was loaded.

Me: Can we go dad?

Dad: That's the friend you managed to make.

Me: For a first day I can say I got a good friend.

Dad: I don't like him.

Me: I will tell mom that he likes you relax. You have a secret admirer.

Dad: Sizoxabana Alondwe?

Me: Okay I am kidding.

I raised my hands up. He took my bag and held my hand. He walked up to the car. He opened the door for me. I stepped inside. He closed it. He got in and drove off. He was playing music. The drive to the mall was quiet.

Dad: Where do you want to eat?

Me: Uhm. Nandos! No! Steers? No!/? Spur. Yeah spur.

Dad: Okay.

We started by buying my uniform and the additional stationery items. Dad bought a few winter clothes for me. I asked for them actually.

Me: Uhm. Daddy?

Dad: Yeah.

Me: I need a new pair of boots.

Dad: Where can we get them?

Me: There is a shoe shop where I saw them.

Dad: How much?

Me: R500.

Dad: I thought girls are cheap.

I smiled. We went to buy them.

Then we drove to spur. As soon as we arrive. We ordered. Dad looked at me. I looked at my drink. We were waiting for our order.

Dad: Uhm. Do you know the guy who impregnated you?

Me: No I don't know him.

I couldn't tell him that I know him. I had two reasons, I didn't want him to do anything that was going to harm Sphe. I know it's crazy but I was still in love with him. Feelings don't just vanish overnight. Secondly I didn't want Sphe to be part of my child's life. I just didn't want him near us.

Dad: You can't even describe him?

Me: No. He wasn't the guy who goes to school with us. I don't know him and things were still a little blur when he told me all those things about why he did what he did.

Dad: What else did he do?

Me: He made a sex tape.

Dad: A what? And you didn't tell us!?

Me: Mom knew about it.

Dad: But she didn't tell me?

Me: You were angry.

He clicked his tongue. Our order arrived. I didn't waste time. I started eating right away.

Dad: I am really sorry Nana. If I knew that I was going to find your mom one day and she'll change my life around. I wasn't going to do all those bad things I did. All I knew was that I wasn't going to love any other girl like I loved my first girlfriend but Thandeka came around and changed my life for better. I didn't plan on having a child but our carelessness made us parents at 19yrs but it was better for us because we had no one to blame but ourselves. I can't imagine how you feel, because this happened because of me. I couldn't even eat. It was hard to concentrate because I was always thinking that I have protected you enough. I was scared that this might happen but I thought maybe God will have mercy on me, because I did ask for forgiveness. I didn't know that someone died because of me. I am really sorry baby.

I wiped my tears.

Me: I don't want this baby daddy. Mom told me not to abort but I don't want the baby.

Dad: Don't even think about it Alondwe. I know that it will be a painful reminder but once you see the baby you'll love him or her. Your mom and I will raise the baby. You'll have your life that you wanted.

Me: I will travel the world? I will be a Doctor?

Dad: Yes. You'll have that. Just don't kill the child Okay? Thandeka didn't kill you even after your grandfather had chased her out of his house and cut her off his life. That didn't stop her from loving you. She loved you and protected you. So don't kill the child okay?

Me: Yes daddy.

Dad: Good.

We finished up, he paid and we drove back home. My grandfather was home. Dad and I walked inside the house. We greeted them. I went to put my things in my room. From my room, I could hear grandpa shouting at my dad.

Grandpa: "So you thought it's okay to just give my son your burdens!?"

That broke my heart, hearing him say I was a burden. It was very hard.

Dad:"No. It's not like that"

Grandpa: "You failed to raise your daughter the right way. She followed her mother's footsteps and now she's pregnant. Give her a year she'll be pregnant again. Another baby from another man. Then you'll give her to my son again!?"

Dad: "I am sorry but I will take her. We didn't mean to give you our problems. And Baba I don't appreciate you calling my daughter a burden."

Aunt Shemah: "Where will you take her? She must stay here"

Uncle Andile: "The school won't give you another transfer"

Dad:"Don't worry about her. I will take her."

Grandpa: "Just take her and leave. Angizwani nombhedo Mina. Senizoyilahla kuAndile le ngane ngoba niyazi ngeke anqabe. Uzovuma ngisho engathandi. Ningangicasuli nje. Mthathe nihambe!" (I don't like nonsense, you'll give Andile your daughter because you know that he'll never say no! Don't make me angry. Take her and leave.)

I just closed the door and cried.

I packed my clothes again. Dad walked in. I wiped my tears.

Dad: You heard all that?

Me: Yes.

Dad: I am sorry. I am really sorry.

I nodded. He hugged me tightly. I just wept inside his arms. Aunt Shemah walked in.

Aunt Shemah: I am sorry Samkelo.

Dad: It's Okay.

Dad helped me pack my clothes. I felt it in my blood that uncle Andile didn't want me in his house. He wasn't that free with everything and he didn't even give me money nor ask if I have it. I just didn't understand what I did to him. At least he knew the whole truth but still he didn't try to convince granddad that I should stay with him. We finished. Dad walked out. He had a few phonecalls to make. He came back late. I was even getting sleepy.

Me: Where will I go dad?

Dad: Okay. I got you a flat at Sandton.

Me: I will stay alone?

Dad: No you won't stay alone. Your aunt Melokuhle will move in with you tomorrow. I spoke to her. She will leave that place, she was living in and you will stay with her.

Me: Okay dad. Thanks. You haven't tell mom?

Dad: I will tell her in person because uzophatheka kabi. If I could I was going to take you back home but we can't get another transfer. And we paid a lot of money for your fees in your new school and your old school.

Me: I understand dad.

Dad: Okay. Let's go. The car is here.

I took my things. I went to the window.

Dad: What are you doing?

Me: I don't want to come back in here. I want to walk out once and never come back.

Dad: Don't be like that Alondwe.

Me: I knew that uncle Andile didn't want me here. Grandpa wouldn't have spoken like that if he didn't tell him anything like "I had no choice but to agree"

Dad: Andile wouldn't have done that.

Me: But dad he didn't even give me pocket money. Nor ask if I had money. Yesterday he left with his son and they came back when we were asleep.

Dad: You're reading into this too much. Let's go. I will come back for the other bags.

I nodded. I could see that he was disappointed but he did not want to show it. I walked out with two suitcases.

Nondu: You're leaving sisi?

Me: Yes.

Nondu: Why?

Me: Because this is not my home.

Dad: Alondwe?

Grandpa: Iyeyisa. Ifuze umama wayo. (She's rude like her mom)

Me: But it's the truth. Bye Nonduduzo. Bye aunty and uncle.

Aunty Shemah: Bye.

Uncle Andile didn't say anything. I walked out of the house. Dad packed up my bags.

Dad: I will not tolerate disrespect Owami. Ngisengakushaya nje manje uma ubheda. What you said to Nonduduzo was unacceptable.

Me: I am sorry.

He clicked his tongue and went back for the other bags.

We then drove to Sandton. We arrived and dad walked in there first. We waited for him for about an hour, I was hungry and tired. I was so annoyed. He came back finally.

Dad: Everything is sorted. Let's go.

I yawned and took the bags. He gave me the look.

Dad: Don't tell me you're hungry.

I smiled and he shook his head. We walked inside the building. The apartment was really

beautiful.

Me: But dad this place looks expensive.

Dad: You'll use it until you finish varsity. You'll do your Degree at Wits right?

Me: Yes.

Dad: Okay. We'll sell the apartment that your mom wrote in your name and buy this one.

Me: Okay.

We took everything. The apartment wasn't fully furnished. It had two bedrooms, kitchen, lounge and bathroom. I picked the bedroom and packed my things on the wardrobe. The type of wardrobes that are on the wall.

Me: We will sleep on the floor?

Dad: I didn't know that the apartment was so empty. We will go to the hotel and tomorrow your aunt and I will buy furniture while you're at school.

Me: Okay.

I finished up packing and we left. We Went to the hotel. He booked us in. He went to buy food. He came back, we ate and I went to shower while he was speaking to Alupheli and Mesuli. I finished and changed inside the bathroom. I went to bed. There was one bed. Dad went to shower. I did my homework. He came wearing his pyjamas. He joined me. I asked him to help me with accounting and he did. We finished and I put my bags aside. We slept.

Me: Did you speak to mom?

Dad: No. She didn't speak to me. I think she gave your brothers the phone. And went to our room because I asked to speak with her and they went upstairs. She took the phone but she didn't say anything at all. She dropped the call.

Me: You must apologise daddy she will forgive you.

Dad: She will forgive me when her body heals.

Me: I am sorry daddy. But she loves you.

Dad: I know Nana and I love her too. I love all of you.

Me: We love you too daddy. Goodnight.

Dad: Goodnight.

We switched off the lights and we drifted off to sleep.....

3rd Person Narrator....

After church the Mthembu family went to get a taxi. Philani went to Nobuhle.

Philani: "Can we talk Nobuhle?"

Nobuhle: "Okay."

They stepped aside. Mrs Mthembu looked at them and then back at the road.

Philani: "Please tell Philisiwe to call me. I was trying to call her just now but her phone is on voicemail "

Nobuhle: "Okay I will tell her but why don't just get married?"

Philani: "I will marry her but not now. I am not ready yet. I just want to have everything of my own before we get married. I really love your sister and I wish she can never doubt that "

Nobuhle: "I know she doesn't"

Philani: "Thank you"

Nobuhle: "My pleasure "

He nodded and left. Nobuhle went back to her parents. Her mother looked at her.

Mrs Mthembu: "What did he say?"

Mr Mthembu: "Nkosikazi please leave the children alone"

Mrs Mthembu didn't say anything. The taxi arrived and they all left. Nobuhle's phone rang. She took it out. She answered.

Nobuhle: "Sister?"

Nadine: "Hey Precious how are you? "

Nobuhle: "I am fine and you?"

Nadine: "I am fine. I called to tell you that, after work tomorrow please come to our apartment. I want to give you the invitation to Gary's engagement ceremony and wedding ceremony"

Nobuhle: "Wow! Gary is getting married?"

Nadine: "Yes. Everyone is really happy. My brothers are getting married"

Nobuhle: "I am sure most of them are happy for Gary"

Nadine: "Hey don't worry you have me and daddy on your backs. Who knows maybe the rest of the family from India will also love you"

Nobuhle: "They will fly down from India?"

Nadine: "Yes. For Gary and Rajiv's wedding"

Nobuhle: "That means the wedding will happen sooner than expected"

Nadine: "Yes. That's why you must come here so that we can talk. All the arrangements must be done"

Nobuhle: "You know in our tradition there's something called Lobola negotiations. The bride price paid to the family of the bride?"

Nadine: "Don't worry my brother and I know about that. We did our research concerning Zulu weddings process"

Nobuhle: "Oh. Okay wedding planner"

They laughed.

Nadine: "I will see you tomorrow. We have to get you an Indian outfit for Gary's wedding"

Nobuhle: "I can't wait to see how will I look on that outfit"

They laughed again. Nobuhle and her family stepped off the taxi.

Nadine: "You will look lovely. I have to go now"

Nobuhle: "Okay. Send my love to Rajiv. Tell him he shouldn't work this hard."

Nadine: "I will let him know though he's working for his wife"

They laughed and hung up the call. Her mother really wanted to know what she was talking about but she decided not ask. They arrived at home and Nobuhle went to Philisiwe's room. She knocked but there was no response. She then invited herself in. She looked around and the room was empty. She went to her sister's wardrobe and her clothes were gone. She ran to her parents room. She knocked and they told her to come in. She did

Nobuhle: "Mama, Philisiwe is gone!"

Mrs Mthembu: "What do you mean. She's gone?"

Nobuhle: "Her clothes are not in her room. Almost everything that she owns is not in her room"

The parents both ran to their daughter's room and like Nobuhle had said, everything was gone.

Mr Mthembu: "This is all your fault." he said pointing his wife.

Mrs Mthembu: "My fault? So I was wrong when I was trying to show my daughter the right way of doing things?"

Mr Mthembu: "You shouldn't have chosen a way for her. It's her life and her decisions"

Mrs Mthembu: "Just like you're having an affair with my friend?"

Mr Mthembu: "This is not about me. It's about our daughter who has left because of the things you made her do -"

Nobuhle couldn't stay any longer. She took her phone and walked out. She left her parents. She called Philani. Philani answered immediately.

Nobuhle: (she was crying) "Philisiwe is gone"

Philani: "Woah! Woah! What do you mean she's gone?"

Nobuhle: "She took everything that belongs to her and left. We don't know where she went"

Philani: "Tell me you're joking please"

Nobuhle: “I am not joking. My sister didn’t want to do all this. All she wanted was to marry you so that you will raise your child together. I bet she couldn’t stand the humiliation so she left.”

Philani: “What about me Hle? What about our relationship? ”

Nobuhle: “You heard your father Philani. He said you will not see each other”

Philani: “And my child? My child will grow up without me? How is that by any chance fair? She should’ve told me. We were going to leave together at least.”

Nobuhle: “Maybe she’ll come back. Let’s give her time please”

Philani: “Thanks for letting me know ”

They hung up the call. Philani was really disappointed. He felt like he had let Philisiwe and their child down.

---

On the other hand. After long hours on the plane Philisiwe finally made it to Cape Town. She took her paper with directions and she looked for a cab. She find the cab and it took her straight to the flat that she was going to be renting. Her boss had tried to make things easier for her by finding an apartment for her near by the surgery. She got off and she paid. She then called the girl who she was going to live with. The girl went downstairs and they went through all procedures together. Then they went to their room.

Girl: “My name is Cikizwa Mda. I am a student at University of Cape Town. I am doing Dental Technology.”

Phili: “I am Philisiwe Mthembu. I am done with my diploma. I am here to work.”

Cikizwa: “I hope, we will be best roommates? ”

Phili: “I hope so too.”

Cikizwa: “I was on my way out by the way. I have to meet my boyfriend. I will see you later or tomorrow ”

Phili: “Okay bye”

Cikizwa left to meet up with her boyfriend. Not just any boyfriend but “The married” man. Philisiwe settled down and she destroyed her old sim card. She put on the new one. She sighed.

“I hope we will have a great stay here my baby. Everything will be alright. Mommy couldn’t face all that stress alone. You won’t understand now but some day you will.”

She brushed her tummy and slept.

---

On the other side Nkululeko, Nonku was talking to Sphephelo.

Sphe: “So have you opened the account?”

Nkulu: “Yes. I have opened the account for baby bear. Will you manage to save money for baby bear and little Princess?”

Sphe: “My mother is saving up money for my daughter, since she doesn’t know about my unborn child. I have to do that myself. I will save up the money that she gives me. So you’ll use the account to look after Alondwe. Please know everything that she needs. She must get it. I will deposit the money tomorrow then, it will be every month after.”

Nkulu:(sniffing) “Oh God I am crying”

Sphe: “Why now?”

Nkulu: “The fact that you can’t be part of your child is painful but still you’re trying by all means to take care of them. That’s so sweet. I wish I had a man like you ”

Sphe: “Really? Nkululeko you’re crying? ”

Nkulu: “I just got too emotional”

Sphe: “My foster mother told me that I must never run away from responsibility. That’s what makes a man a man. I don’t know for you women. What makes you women? ”

Nkulu:(he laughed) “Beauty. I think.”

Sphe: "You're trying to tell me that you're beautiful?"

Nkulu: "Hhaybo! You don't see that?"

Sphe:" Mxm. I don't look guys in that way"

Nkulu: "As if I am a guy. I saw her father today. Damn that man is fire! I can leave all my men for him."

Sphe:" Tsk! Sies! You're talking crap now. Goodnight!"

Nkulu:(laughing) "Goodnight. Alondwe told me about you. She even told me that she still loves you but she can't be with you"

Sphe: "You're lying!?"

Nkulu: "I am serious. I could see the sadness on her face when she told me that. You really hurt her Sphephelo"

Sphe:"Only if I knew that I was going to fall for her I was going to let go of revenge. I love her Brah and sometimes I miss her. Just seeing her smile. Anger took all that away from me"

Nkulu: "I am sorry. Maybe there is a chance for you two?"

Sphe:"Eish I don't know. At least I know that she still loves me like I do. Maybe one day"

Nkulu: "Yeah. Maybe one day. Goodnight bhuti"

Sphe:"Night child. Thanks hey"

Nkulu: "My pleasure"

They hung up the call. Sphephelo felt some comfort after being told that Alondwe loves him. Maybe there's still hope for them

Alondwe Ndunakazi...

In the morning I woke up while dad was still sleeping, I went to shower, I brushed my teeth and moisturised my body. I wore my brand new uniform. I looked so beautiful in it. I smiled. I combed my hair and tied it up into a knot. I applied lipstick and I walked out of the bathroom. I woke daddy up. He was dead sleeping. I laughed because he did not want to wake up. I shook my head thinking that mom has to wake him up everyday.

Dad: You look beautiful. (He yawned)

I smiled. There's nothing that makes me happy like hearing my father tell me that I look beautiful.

Me: Thank you my King.

I bowed a little. Daddy laughed and went to shower. He told me to order breakfast and I did that. After a some time. Breakfast was in our door. I paid using dad's money. The breakfast was put on the table. I didn't waste time. I ate my food and dad joined me afterwards.

Dad: After buying furniture I will go back home.

Me: I won't see you dad? After school?

Dad: I have to go back to work Princess.

Me: This is unfair. I will be all alone here.

Dad: Alondwe stop acting like a baby now. Your aunt will be here with you.

I nodded and continued eating.

Dad: I was thinking to buy your mom a bike for her birthday.

Me: But dad do you remember that mom caused an accident and you said you won't buy the bike for her ever again.

Dad: I know but it's been years since the accident happened and I know that she wish she can own it again. I could see the way she still looks at my bike.

Me: But the motorbike is not a romantic present.

Dad: What do you know about romance?

I laughed and he shook his head.

Me: I was just saying.

Dad: What will you buy for her?

Me: I will give her love.

Dad laughed and shook his head. We finished up and the cab drove me to school. Dad was with us. He passed by the mall and bought me lunch snack. We stepped out of the car. Dad gave me my bag and cash.

Dad: I will deposit money for you so that you can come back home for your mother's birthday.

Me: Yes! Thank you! There will be food right?

Dad: No.

I pulled a sad face. He smiled and opened his arms for me. We hugged each other.

Dad: I love you Princess.

Me: I love you too daddy.

He kissed my forehead.

Me: Please buy beautiful things for me daddy. Not a furniture for old people.

Dad: Haa! Alondwe you were supposed to skip school and choose what you want.

Me: You should've have told me daddy.

Dad: Sorry. I have to go now. Take care of yourself and stay out of trouble.

Me: Thank you. I will and you too take care of yourself, mom and my brothers.

Dad: I will.

I nodded, smiled and stepped aside. He stepped inside the car and the driver drove off. I waved my hand at the car and dad waved back. I suppose he was looking at me on the review mirror. I walked inside the school premises. The Principal called me. He was standing by the gate, checking out learners.

Principal: Should I call your father and tell him that sugar daddies bring you to school?

Me: What sugar daddies Principal?

Principal: That man. In this school we don't tolerate nonsense. He's the father of the child? How can you sleep with such an old man?

Me: But that was my daddy.

Principal: You're lying. Young lady!

I took out my phone and showed him our family pictures. He was rather surprised or disappointed.

Principal: Oh. But I thought –

Me: That guy was my uncle. And that was my father. He does not live in Johannesburg. He lives in Durban with mom and my siblings.

Principal: Oh. Okay. You may go to your class.

I nodded and I went to my class.

The day began. I didn't see Nkululeko in the morning. During the physical science class I couldn't understand what the teacher was teaching. He wasn't making any sense. I kept on asking questions but still. I didn't understand. During break time, I went to the toilet. I did my deed and I washed my hands. I walked out. A tall guy who was dark in skin tone came to me.

Guy: Hey.

Me: Hi.

Guy: My name is Thapelo. I saw you in physical science class.

Me: Oh I didn't see you.

He laughed. I didn't.

Thapelo: I saw you asked a lot of questions during the lesson. Are you struggling with physics?

Me: (I laughed) What do you want dude?

Thapelo: I was just trying to help.

Me: If I need your help I was going to ask for it and asking questions doesn't mean I am struggling. I was asking because the teacher wasn't making sense with what he was teaching

but none of you saw you that and yet you're here to tell me that you want to help me? Please dude I don't need your help. Tsk!

I went to look for Nkululeko. I saw him going to my class. I followed him.

Me: Hey.

Nkulu: Mama bear where were you? I thought you were absent.

Me: I went to the toilet and this guy called Thapelo came to me and he was just irritating me.

Nkulu: He's dark?

Me: Yes. Do you know him?

Nkulu: Jeez! Yes. I have a huge crush on him.

Me: What? But you have a bae Nonku.

Nkulu: Come on. A crush is crush. What did he want?

Me: What did he want? Huh? He (I told him everything, even what I said to him)

Nkulu: Mama bear. You were rude to him. Thapelo is a very nice guy. He helps learners who are struggling with their subjects. He's the top achiever in our school.

Me: Oh. I didn't know. I guess I owe him an apology.

Nkulu: A big one.

I nodded. We went to buy lunch. We ate and we shared the snack that dad bought for me.

Me: Give me my lollipop.

He laughed. He took out the whole packet. I laughed.

Nkulu: I figured I should buy the whole packet. We will buy Fritos after school.

Me: Thank you. At least. I will always have my things.

Nkulu: So where's your dad?

Me: He left. I don't live with my uncle anymore. I will take you to my place today.

Nkulu: What happened?

Me: I think he didn't want me in his house.

Nkulu: He's a jerk.

We laughed. Soon break time was over, so we went back to our classes. It was time for Life sciences. I went to sit next to Thapelo.

Me: Uhm. Hey about earlier, I am sorry. I was rude. I didn't mean to snap at you.

Thapelo didn't say anything.

Me: Thapelo?

Thapelo: What?

Me: Did you hear what I said?

Thapelo: Yes I did. Should I give you a medal for your apology?

The others laughed. He was loud so everyone heard him.

Me: Uhm. No.

He didn't say anything. I felt so embarrassed. The others stopped laughing when the teacher walked in.

Teacher: Put everything aside and be ready for the test.

I was so surprised to hear that. I raised my hand. Thapelo mumbled "here we go again" I looked at him and I put my hand down.

Teacher: I think I saw a hand up.

Girl: The new comer here had her hand up.

The class laughed.

Teacher: Oh. Miss Ndunakazi right?

Me: Yes. Uhm. I just didn't know we were writing a test.

The class laughed. I really didn't know what was funny but they laughed anyway.

Thapelo: Ain't you a genius? Surely you will pass this test. Can we write please.

I didn't say anything. The teacher didn't say anything too. She gave us the papers. I took the paper and luckily it was things that I have done. I wrote the test just fine and I submitted my

paper. After school, Nkululeko and I went to the mall. My mood was off because of what had happened during life science class..

---

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

I had resigned from my job. I went in to take all my personal things and I left what belonged to the company. They have done a small farewell party for me.

My boss: We will miss you so much Mrs Ndunakazi. It's been years since you've been part of our team and I can't believe you're leaving. I wish you all the best where you're going.

Thanks for the wonderful time and your service.

The others clapped hands. I smiled.

Me: I also want to say Thank you for being my second family. I had a great time and I will miss you all.

They clapped hands. We had refreshments and after that I had to go back home. I arrived at home. My kids were already home.

Me: Who brought you home?

Alupheli: It's daddy.

Me: Where's he?

Kuhle: He's upstairs.

I nodded and I went upstairs. I walked inside the room. He was changing his clothes.

Me: Hi.

Sam: Hey. How are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Sam: I am fine. Can you sit down so that we can talk.

Me: Talk about what?

Sam: Alondwe.

Me: Awu. You want to talk now?

Sam: Thandeka I know you're mad at me but please just sit down.

I nodded and sat down. He sat next to me. He gave me his tie. I helped him wear it.

Sam: Your father kicked Alondwe out of your brother's house.

Me: What?

Sam: He said we can't just throw our burdens to your brother.

Me: What did Andile say?

Sam: He didn't say anything.

Me: He was supposed to tell me if he didn't want my daughter in his house. Not to fool me and pretend like he wants to help. He's just something else yazi. Surely he said something to dad that made him say Alondwe must leave.

I was breathing really high. I was angry. I could feel my heart beating really slowly.

Sam: Hey calm down! Please Thandeka.

He made me lie down on my back and he brushed my head looking deeply in my eyes.

Looking at his eyes made my heart feel at ease. I even forgot that I was angry at him. He kissed my lips and wiped my tears that I didn't realise I had.

Sam: Everything will be alright. I found a flat for her. Melokuhle will live with her and she'll be fine. The baby will come here once she gives birth. There is something else I wanted to tell you but for now please rest. I will come back with dinner. I will go with the boys to work because I am going to check the financial report for this month. Then I will come back.

Me: Okay. Thank you for doing that for her.

Sam: She's our daughter.

I nodded. He took off my shoes and my pants and the rest of my clothes. He looked at my body and he swallowed hard. He probably felt bad when he saw all the marks I had in my body. He tucked me inside my bed.

Sam: I am sorry –

Me: Go to work.

Sam: I love you. Get some rest I will come back.

I nodded. He kissed my forehead and left.

I woke up my room was dark. I quickly turned on the bedside lamp. Samkelo was sitting on the edge of my bed. I went close to him.

Me: Why are you sitting in the darkness?

Sam: I was just thinking.

Me: Is everything alright?

Sam: I lost my job.

Me: What? How? I don't understand Samkelo?

He held my hand. He held me closer to him.

Sam: Stop worrying yourself Thandeka.

Me: Don't tell me that. You lost your job? How?

Sam: Apparently the junior accountant discovered a missing amount of a million rand and it points out that I took the money. They fired me. There will be an investigation that will be conducted. If I am found guilty. I will lose my qualifications.

Me: There must be a mistake Samkelo.

Sam: Don't cry, everything will be alright.

Me: How? Why do we always suffer?

Sam: I am sorry bbe.

He held me in my arms. It was time that I leave for America so that the first thing I could do was going to be finding who did this to my husband because stealing money from the company was the last thing he would have done!

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

Three days passed. I was living with my aunt and it was really nice to live with her. Dad and her had bought a really nice furniture. My room was just beautiful. It was a Sunday and I was with Nkululeko at the mall after church. My aunt had went to visit her boyfriend she was going to come back Monday. Nkululeko was going to sleepover. He had gay parents. I knew them and they were really lovely. They were married. Nkululeko was just a best friend I could ever ask for.

Nkulu: Don't you think we should order some dinner or you'll cook?

Me: My cooking is not really good. You'll cook.

Nkulu: What? Huh? Men don't cook.

Me: (I laughed) So you're a man now?

He looked at me in a strange way and we both laughed.

Nkulu: Come on. I was just kidding. Let's go buy a few snacks.

I nodded and we went to buy junk food. While we were picking things up someone called my name. I turned back and it was my cousin Nonduduzo. I smiled and hugged her.

Me: Are you alone here?

Nondu: I am with my dad, mom and my brother.

Me: That's nice. Nonkululeko this is my cousin Nonduzo Dhlomo.

Nkulu: The one whom her father kicked you out chomi?

Me: Nkululeko please behave.

Nkulu: Mama bear I was just asking.

Me: Yes.

Nondu: Why is he calling you mama bear?

Nkulu: That's none of your business child, go back to your parents.

I looked at him. He gave me the look. Uncle Andile, his wife and son came.

Aunt Shemah: Hey guys.

Us: Hey.

Aunt Shemah: Are you alright Alondwe?

Me: Yes. Thanks. Bye bye Nondu.

Nondu: Bye sisi.

Uncle Andile: I thought you said you don't know this boy that day he looked at you.

Nkululeko and I looked at each other. We frowned at each other.

Uncle Andile: You're here for boys? Does your mom know that you're busy with boys here. Does this boy know that you're pregnant?

I didn't say anything.

Uncle Andile: I am talking to you Alondwe.

Nkulu: Let's go dear. You don't have to answer him.

He held my hand and we walked away from him and his family. We continued taking what we needed.

Nkulu: Your uncle is cute, I mean like he looks yummy but No! he's full of crap.

I laughed. We took a few other things and we went to the till. We were behind them.

Me: Who's paying?

Nkulu: You're paying.

Me: Really? I don't have money.

Nkulu: You won't play that card haa! Unjani kanti.

Me: Okay I will pay.

I took my card and paid. We packed our things and we went to get a cab. It took us straight to my place. We watched movies and ate our junk. Nkululeko received a call. He answered.

Nkulu: Aunt bear.

I smiled and looked at him.

Me: Put her on speaker.

Nkululeko did that.

Me: Hey Andiswa.

She screamed and she ended up laughing.

Andiswa: Hey how is baby bear?

Me: Really? You don't even ask me first.

Andiswa: Come on, the little one should come first.

Me: He or she is alright.

Nkulu: You called me not mama bear. (We laughed)

Andiswa: Come on I was just checking up on you.

Nkulu: That's nice. Where is big brother?

Andiswa: He's here.

Nkulu: Why is he silent?

Andiswa: Fuck you! You know he can't talk.

They both laughed. I shook my head.

Andiswa: We will call you later neh?

Nkulu: Okay.

Andiswa: Bye mama bear.

Me: Bye my dear.

They hung up. Nkululeko held my hand.

Nkulu: We're going out. Bae is taking us out but only if we promise him to study afterwards.

Me: Sure thing.

He forced me to go and change. Saying "baby bear will get cold" I had to go and change. His bae came. It was a different guy. He took us out to a very fancy restaurant in Sandton. We had fun. It was so lovely. Afterwards he took us to my place. His name was Patrick.

Patrick: I hope you'll study like promised.

Us: We will.

Patrick: Pinky swear?

Us: Pinky swear. Goodnight.

Patrick: Goodnight.

Nkululeko kissed him and we went inside.

Me: I am tired dude. I won't study.

Nkulu: Ubesbhedela lo. Let's go and sleep.

We laughed and went to sleep. Midnight his boyfriend called, checking if we are studying.

He shouted at him saying we should study. He asked to speak to me.

Me: Hello.

Pat: I trusted you guys to do the right thing.

Me: But we were tired.

Pat: Just an hour or two wasn't going to hurt Alondwe. Nonku has a test Wednesday. He told me that himself.

Me: We will study.

Pat: Good.

He hung up.

Me: Talk about a daddy. Let's study.

Nkulu: Seriously?

Me: Yes!

We reluctantly went to take our bags. I did physical science and I had two homework that I didn't do. I did that and by 2am we slept. In the morning we woke up late. We just went to shower together. It wasn't a big deal. We wore our uniforms, grabbed an apple. We took a cab to school. I fixed my hair along the way. I arrived late for my first class. It was life sciences. I apologised to the teacher. I went to sit next to Thapelo. The teacher was writing something on the board.

Thapelo: Do you always have to sit next to me. Why did you leave that seat?

The girls who were behind us and others who were close to us laughed.

Other girl: I am sure she wants you.

Thapelo: Well I don't want her. She's a brat. A spoilt rotten brat.

Me: You don't know anything about me.

Thapelo: Your actions speak volumes. You don't appreciate people. I tried to be nice to you. You acted like a brat.

They laughed. I packed up my bags. I was crying. I don't know why but I felt like crying.

Thapelo: Look she's crying. Mama's little girl.

Me: I am sorry.

I went to sit to the other empty seat. A guy smiled at me and he gave me a tissue. I wiped my tears.

Me: Thank you.

Guy: You're welcome. Don't mind him. I think he likes you.

Me: Why would you say that?

Guy: He's my friend and you're the first girl he ever treated like this nor tolerate. Others just bow down to him but you challenge him.

Me: That's madness.

Guy: I know. By the way I am Mpendulo. Alondwe right?

Me: Yes.

He smiled and nodded. The teacher didn't take notice of what was going on. The lesson went on. I looked at Thapelo, and our eyes met. I quickly look away. At the end of the lesson, we were given our papers back.

Teacher: Our highest on the test is Alondwe Ndunakazi with a 98%  
Yoh! I didn't expect that. The class clapped hands. I went to take my script and Thapelo was number 2 with 95%. He looked at me on his way back to his chair. I gave him a mocking face. Mpendulo laughed.

Mpendulo: You're crazy girl. You're starting competition with him.

Me: I am not scared of him.

Mpendulo: He didn't study for that test and yet he got 95%. I studied hard but I will 59%

Me: What? You're lying.

Mpendulo: I am telling you.

Me: Do you want me to help you?

Mpendulo: Thapelo says I am not an easy student to teach.

Me: I am not him. (He smiled) So what do you say?

Mpendulo: I would love to get your help. Thanks.

I smiled. I took his number. We went to other classes. Then it was break time. I packed my bags. Nkululeko was on the door already. He knew my timetable and all the classes I went to before lunchtime. Thapelo and I reached the door together.

Thapelo: What was that face you did?

Me: What face?

Thapelo: That ugly face you pulled earlier? I wasn't ready for that test but wait for the next one. I will show you.

Me: I didn't even know about the test and yet I got 98% so you don't give me panic attack.  
Angingeni nakancane kuJuly.

I smiled and left him. Nkululeko held my hand and we went to buy lunch...

---

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

My husband was really stressed about his work. I didn't like seeing him like that. Even the boys could see that something was wrong with him. I was having breakfast with the boys.

Kuhle: Mom why is daddy not having breakfast with us?

Me: He's sleeping boy. He's not going to work.

Alupheli: He's in sick leaving. (I laughed)

Me: No. He's on a normal leave baby not a sick leave.

They nodded. We finished up and I drove them to school. We weren't going to tell them all that their father lost his job. On my way back home I called Muzi. He answered.

Me: Hey how are you?

Muzi: I am good and you?

Me: I am trying. Please book the ticket for me. Wednesday I am ready to leave.

Muzi: Really? And your birthday?

Me: That will have to wait. My husband (I told him the whole story)

Muzi: What?

Me: Yes so I really need to go.

Muzi: I will book it right away. .

Me: Thank you. I will keep in touch.

Muzi: Okay.

I hung up and I continued with my drive. Samkelo was not home when I come back. I cleaned up and I went to pack my clothes afterwards.

Sam: Are you going somewhere?

He walked in.

Me: Uhm. Yes. I spoke to Muzi and I am leaving Wednesday.

Sam: Excuse me!? Angzwanga?

Me: I have to go. So that I can come back and haunt down the person who did this to you.

Sam: So now you'll fight my battles for me?

Me: We're married Samkelo. It's not just your battle. It's ours and our kids.

Sam: Yes damnit! We're married but you told Muzi first that you're leaving without talking to me first.

Me: I was going to tell you Samkelo.

Sam: When!? After Muzi has approved huh? You'll go on the agreed date. Uyangizwa?

Me: I am leaving Wednesday Samkelo. I have to do this. August is too far.

Sam: Don't test my patience woman please! Please!

Me: Why can't you see that I am doing this for us?

Sam: You're going about it a wrong way.

Me: Mxm.

I closed my suitcase, I took my phone and I went to the door.

Sam: Where are you going I am still talking to you! Thandeka!

I opened the door and I went downstairs. I left him shouting my name.....

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

It was Monday Afternoon, I was sleeping when I heard a knock on the door, "who could that be?" I thought to myself. I went to attend the door. It was my aunt Melokuhle.

Me: What happened to your key? I was just dreaming about the starts. You disturbed me aunty.

Melo: (she laughed) I think I have my keys misplaced. I hope Samkelo didn't call and ask for me while I left his daughter alone.

Me: No he didn't call. I was going to cover up for you if he did.

Melo: You're the best. (She kissed my cheek) So how was your weekend with Nonku? We went to sit down on the couch.

Me: It was nice. But I have been studying. I got a lot of competition at school.

Melo: Who's this competition?

Me: Just a guy called Thapelo.

Melo: Is he cute?

Me: Really now? He's a boy aunty not a man.

Melo: (laughing) I didn't say I want him. Do you like him?

Me: What? No! And besides I am pregnant. I don't want to give my child a step daddy.

Melo: It's not like you've had a horrible stepfather.

Me: I know that. Enough about Thapelo. So tell me how was your weekend?

Melo: Mine was epic. I just wanna take shower and take nap. I will see you later baby.

Me: Mmm looks like you had fun. You're glowing.

She giggled and ran away. I smiled to myself. I stood up and I went to my room. I went back to sleep.

I woke up the following morning, it was 3am. I went to the kitchen. I made something to eat for myself. I sat down and ate. After eating I went to my room and I studied. I couldn't just sleep without studying anything. I didn't know how Thapelo was preparing himself. All I wanted was to defeat him. I studied til it was time for me to get ready for school. I went to shower and I made breakfast. Aunty and I had breakfast.

Me: So when are you going to buy a car?

Melo: I will soon and I will drive you to school and pick you up.

I smiled and continued eating. My phone rang. Nkululeko was calling. I answered.

Me: Nkulu baby?

Nkulu: I am outside the building, come and ride with me to school.

Me: Woah! Thank you.

I hung up the call. I took my bag and an apple.

Me: Bye aunty. Send my regards to uncle bae.

She laughed and I walked out. I saw a guy that drives a white Ferrari and Nkulu. They standing outside the car, leaning on it. But it was a different car. Nkululeko smiled when he saw me. He smiled and came towards me. He kissed my cheek. He took my bag.

Me: We're riding with Minister of finance today.

We laughed and hugged each other. We went to the car. I greeted the guy and he greeted back. Nkululeko made the chair slide and I stepped in at the back.

Me: What are you doing during break time today?

Nkulu: I will be with you of course. Unless you have other plans.

Me: I want to have a session with Mpendulo.

Nkulu: Mpendulo? Thapelo's friend?

Me: Yes. Apparently I have started a competition with Thapelo. I want to help his friend and show him what I am made of.

Nkulu: That's the spirit.

We laughed. We conversed til we arrived at school. We thanked his guy and we walked inside the school premises. We parted ways and we went to our classes. I sat next to Mpendulo.

Me: Prince.

Mpendulo: (he smiled) Princess, how are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Mpendulo: I am fine thanks. You look beautiful this morning.

Me: I thank you.

I bowed my head a little. We laughed afterwards.

Me: Let's quit the royal act. I am booking you during break time. We will do your least worst subject first.

Mpendulo: Why don't we start by the worst?

Me: You need to start by the subject that you do better in and you can see the worst afterwards because the worst will take all your time.

Mpendulo: We will start with Physical science then.

Me: Okay.

Mpendulo: Thapelo couldn't stop talking about you. And –

Me: Okay. Hold it right there. Our relationship is not about Thapelo but it's about studying only nothing more and nothing less. Don't tell me about what you speak with my competitor. We laughed.

Mpendulo: You're fire neh?

Me: I was born fire but my mom is something else.

Mpendulo: A dragon that releases fire.

We laughed.

Thapelo: (shouting) Alondwe and Mpendulo some of us are trying to concentrate. Please keep that little happy mode affair to yourselves.

The class laughed. I turned back as I was about to answer him, the teacher walked in. I saved my bitchy response to myself. But I gave him a mocking face. He shook her head. I concentrated on the teacher. The lesson began and other classes until it was break time.

Nkululeko brought me lunch and he went back to his class. I sat with Mpendulo. My phone rang. I took it. My mom was calling. I answered.

Me: My beautiful Queen.

Mom: My Princess how are you?

Me: I am fine mom and you?

Mom: I am fine too baby. How is my grandchild?

Me: Should I say him or her? (She laughed) The baby is fine mama.

Mom: How do you know?

Me: The baby is mine mom. I know. Did daddy tell you about my friend Nkulu?

Mom: No. Who's that?

Me: He's my friend. He has a crush on my daddy. Your husband. (We laughed)

Mom: You're lying.

Me: Serious. He's a cool friend mom. We went to church together on Sunday.

Mom: That's nice. I hope you told him to pray for redemption.

Me: (we laughed) I prayed for him. He will get it.

Mom: That's nice. Phela my husband is a no go zone. (We laughed)

Me: I made sure that he knows that.

Mom: (laughing) Okay my Princess. That's good. I am leaving baby.

Me: Leaving? Where are you going?

Mom: I am going to America for four weeks. I will come back.

Me: When are you leaving and why?

Mom: It's something related to my job. I am going away for a training. I am leaving tomorrow.

Me: Tomorrow? What about your birthday mom. Daddy had something special planned for you.

Mom: This is more important than my birthday baby. He will give me that something when I come back home.

Me: Okay. I miss you though.

Mom: I miss you too my Princess. Please take care of yourself and the baby.

Me: I will mom. Travel safe and take care of yourself for us and daddy. We love you.

Mom: I love you too baby. Bye.

Me: Bye.

I hung up and Mpendulo was looking at me.

Me: It's rude to eavesdrop people's conversations.

Mpendulo: I am sorry. You have a child?

Me: Yes.

Mpendulo: How old is your child?

Me: He or she is inside me.

Mpendulo: You're pregnant?

Me: Yes. Can we go back to studying.

Mpendulo: Wow! I can't believe this.

Me: What?

Mpendulo: I didn't think you are pregnant. Even Thapelo didn't think about it.

Me: Why would you think that?

Mpendulo: I told you he likes you.

Me: Tell him he must stop liking me because I am pregnant. Let's study please.

He nodded and we studied paper one. Thapelo came to us. He stood by Thapelo's side. I continued doing what I was doing.

Thapelo: So you're planning on winning me over by using my friend Alondwe?

Me: Excuse me?

Mpendulo: Thapelo dude.

Thapelo: What? I am telling the truth.

Me: I can study on my own and win.

Thapelo: I am not talking about that kind of winning over.

Me: (laughing) Oh please get over yourself Thapelo. I don't want you.

Thapelo: I don't want you Alondwe. But you do want me bad.

Me: I didn't say you want me Thapelo.

Thapelo: Your actions says you do Alondwe.

Me: My dear Lord. I am pregnant for goodness sake so why would I want you?

He was surprised to hear that. He looked at my tummy but it didn't show yet. He looked back at my eyes.

Thapelo: I don't care about your pregnancy.

Mpendulo: Dude watch it you're about to confess.

Thapelo: Confess what?

Mpendulo: (he laughed) You said it's her who wants you but now you're telling her that you don't care about her pregnancy seems like you're the one who likes her or should I say in love. Look at you right now.

Thapelo: What? Argh! Let me leave you.

He looked at me and then he left. Mpendulo and I looked at each other. We laughed.

Mpendulo: I hope you saw that.

Me: My ex was just like that when he first approached me.

I smiled and looked down. A tear escaped from my eye. I wiped it immediately.

Remembering how nervous Sphe used to be around me and how chicky he used to be always trying to provoke me.

Mpendulo: Is he dead?

Me: Uhm... No. He's alive. But we broke up.

Mpendulo: He's the father of your child?

I nodded and wiped my tears as they came out. I laughed with them coming out.

Me: I think it's hormones maybe.

Mpendulo: No. You're hurting Alondwe.

Me: I am over it. I am not hurting.

I took a tissue and I wiped my tears.

Mpendulo: I am sorry.

Me: Argh! Don't be silly. You don't have to apologize. Let's continue please.

He nodded and we continued studying. I didn't realise that I was still not over him that much.

Maybe I should have gone through the whole therapy process but how was it going to help me? It wasn't going to wash away that I am fool for still loving a guy who hurt me that deep.

Love him that much that I even protected him from my father. I was so stupid. But maybe time was going to heal all the wounds and wash away the love I have for him.....

---

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

My phone rang as I put it down after calling my daughter. I was outside my house on my pool chairs. I was laughing at that thing she told me about her friend. My daughter was too forward. I loved the fact that she was free to talk to me about anything. Andile was calling. I answered.

Me: Hello.

Andile: Hey how are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Andile: I am alright. I saw Alondwe at the mall yesterday walking with a boy.

Me: Oh.

Andile: That's all you can say? Or you're the one who promoted that?

Me: Andile you're not her guardian so please let her be. You didn't want her in your house so that you can watch her but now you have the balls to report that to me as if I asked you to watch her every moves.

Andile: How can you speak like that?

Me: You know what? I have bigger problems than what you're telling me. Maybe you should stop thinking the worst about my daughter. That boy is her friend and he's gay for all I know.

And if I wanted you to be her security guard I was going to ask you. So please leave my child alone. Let her live her life the way she wants to. You failed to tell me that you don't want her in your house but instead you ran to your daddy so please don't act like you care about her or me because you don't. Bye.

I hung up the call. He called again and I didn't answer the phone. I wasn't going to entertain him because what made angry the most is the fact that he didn't tell me. He told his father. I was going to understand but he didn't speak to me. I went inside my house, and I took my husband's car keys. I drove to my children's schools..

3rd Person Narrator....

Cikizwa, Philisiwe's roommate arrived at the hotel. She went straight to their regular room. Her boyfriend was already in the room. She opened the door and she was welcomed with a very good kiss. She held on to his neck and they walked to the bed. They both stripped each other naked. The infatuation was too much between them. They broke the kiss as they both lay down on the bed.

Themba:"I have longed for this moment"

He said kissing her neck, Cikizwa couldn't help but moan. Themba was really good at what he was doing. He went down on her knowing exactly that he will get the same satisfaction something that Kimberly fails to give him. Just a simple blow job. Cikizwa saw stars as Themba's tongue was working magic on her. She was pushing her harder until she came. They then changed positions and Cikizwa was on top of Themba. She kissed him from his abs til she found his d\*ck. She placed it on her mouth and she licked it. Themba groaned as Cikizwa sucked him while her other hand was rubbing his testes. Cikizwa was really a blow job master. She went on and on until Themba came. Cikizwa wiped him clean and they did the actual deed. Cikizwa was moaning on top of her voice. About two rounds they were both dead. They were breathing heavily.

Themba: "That was magical."

Cikizwa: "Yeah. Are you going back home? Or you'll sleep over?"

Themba: "Tonight I will sleep here. Don't worry about my wife."

Cikizwa: "And your daughters?"

Themba:"I am the one who put them in bed tonight so they won't complain "

Cikizwa: "That's so nice. So we will be at it all night hey!"

Themba:"You said it"

Cikizwa: "What if dad finds out about this?"

Themba:"He won't find out. Remember I am his boss. Don't worry"

He said kissing her cheek. She smiled. Cikizwa was the daughter of one of Themba's thugs.

Cikizwa: " Okay. Ready for another round?"

Themba:"You don't have to ask twice "

They continued satisfying each other's desires....

---

The following day. Philisiwe woke up. It was her first day at work. She was really nervous because she was going to meet the new staff and the new boss obviously. So she made sure that she won't be late. She wore a black pencil skirt. She felt comfortable, her baby was not that big yet. She wore a black vest and a black and red scotch coat. It was an elbow coat. She wore black stilettos and she brushed her weave and put on a red lipstick. She smiled because she looked really beautiful. She took a picture and she posted it on Facebook with caption "First day at work. ". She was just excited about her job but yet she was nervous. She logged off and took her bags. She left for work. At work she was welcomed with love and comfort. She shared an office with her core worker Anele. The day began for her and she was in a good mood all day until it was in the afternoon where she logged in on Facebook, she had an

inbox from Philani but she started with reading the comments on her post. People were insulting her for sleeping with the pastor.

Comment: "I am sure you went to varsity with our offering money because you were busy opening your legs for our pastor bitch!"

Comment: "You look beautiful"

Comment: "You're such a hoe!"

She couldn't continue reading. She deactivated her Facebook account without reading Philani's inbox. She cried herself to sleep.

---

On the other hand Mrs Mthembu was really stressed about her daughter and she was regretting forcing her to confess. Luckily Nobuhle saw the Facebook post before her sister deactivated her Facebook account. She was dressed up for work and she had put on her engagement ring because she was going to see Rajiv later. She couldn't afford forgetting to put it on because Rajiv didn't know what she hasn't tell her parents about their engagement. Nobuhle screamed when she saw the picture and she took her bags. She went to her mom. She gave her the phone.

Nobuhle: "Mom! Look! Look at my sister"

Mrs Mthembu looked at the picture and she smiled with tears streaming down her cheeks when she saw her daughter. She was really proud but yet heartbroken.

Mrs Mthembu: "But how?"

Nobuhle: "She told me months ago before the end of the semester that she got a job at Cape Town but I shouldn't tell you guys because it's a surprise. I think she went there"

Mrs Mthembu: "Did she tell you where this job is?"

Nobuhle: "No. But she said Cape Town. I will ask Philani the address of her old training place. I will go there and ask."

Mrs Mthembu: "Okay mntanami. Thank you"

Nobuhle smiled and took her phone. Her mother saw her ring and she held her hand.

Nobuhle's face changed. From excited to sour face. Her mom looked at her.

Mrs Mthembu: "What is this?"

Nobuhle: "I can explain mama"

Mrs Mthembu: "I am listening"

Nobuhle: "My boyfriend proposed. I was going to tell you but with the Philisiwe saga going on. I couldn't tell you. I am really sorry mama -"

She couldn't finish off her sentence. Her mother ululated. Nobuhle didn't expect that reaction from her mom. She couldn't help but blush.

Mrs Mthembu: "Congratulations mntanami"

Nobuhle: "You're not mad?"

Mrs Mthembu: "I will not stand in your way like I did with your sister"

Nobuhle smiled. She hugged her mother.

Nobuhle: "Thank you mom!"

Mrs Mthembu: "Ilo mfana wendiya owawumusho"

Nobuhle: "Yes"

Mrs Mthembu: "Okay. I am happy for you. Sesizodla ocurry abababayo haa"

They both laughed.

Nobuhle: "Let me leave mom"

Mrs Mthembu: "We will wait for the letter"

Nobuhle laughed and walked out. Her mother was really excited she wished she could share the news with her friend but she couldn't because their friendship was ruined. She went to her room and prayed. Thanking the Lord for keeping her children safe....

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

I came back from with my kid's school, they were really hyperactive special Alupheli. He was making noise and Mesuli was backing him up on a low tone. I looked at them and smiled.

Alupheli: Uncumela ntoni mama?(Why are you smiling mom?)

Me: I am smiling because you two are the most beautiful boys I have ever seen.

Kuhle: Hee beautiful? But you don't say a man is beautiful mom.

Me: (laughing) Okay. I am sorry Ndunakazi. You're the most handsome boys I have ever seen.

Alupheli: We are handsome? (He smiled) So we are handsome more than daddy?

Me: (laughing) Yes more than your father.

Kuhle: Haa we will laugh at him Alupheli. He's ugly.

Me: I didn't say he's ugly.

They laughed. I shook my head. We went inside the house. They were still singing. Their father was sitting on the lounge, he was busy on his laptop. They made their direction to him. They greeted him and sat down. He brushed their heads.

Me: Ha.a we're going upstairs to change your uniform. Mesuli.

Alupheli: But I am not wearing a uniform.

Sam: Mesuli go and change you will come back. You stay with me.

Mesuli nodded and went upstairs. Alupheli stuck out his tongue for me.

Me: Ngizokushaya wena. (I will beat you)

He laughed and conversed with his father. I went to my kitchen and I made something to eat for them. I served the three of them and I went back to start cooking. Not having Alondwe around was quite hard because she used to assist me with everything. After cooking I went to bath Alupheli.

Me: Mesuli go and bath now.

Kuhle: But mom –

Me: No buts. Samkelo will you help them with their homework afterwards.

Sam: I am busy here. I can't do that.

Me: Okay.

I went upstairs with the boys. While bathing Alupheli, I called Uyathandwa. And put him on speaker.

EJ: Mommy!

Me: Mommy my foot. You don't even call to tell me that how was your trip.

EJ: Eish I am sorry mama. I was going to call. I forgot.

Me: It's so nice being you hey. After you robbed me and you didn't call to say thank you.

EJ: Okay mom I am bad son.

Me: Argha! Give my daughter the phone.

EJ: Missy come, mom is on the phone.

I heard her screaming, I smiled. It has been too long since I last heard her beautiful voice.

Uyabongeka: My Trinity.

Me: (laughing) How are you baby?

Uyabongeka: I am fine mom. And you?

Me: I am fine, you sound happy.

Uyabongeka: Who wouldn't be happy when talking to their mother?

Me: Heeh! Bayakhula abantu. (People grow fast) You speak such great English.

Uyabongeka: Mom!? Even Alupheli can speak good English. That's why you pay a lot of money for our education.

Me: How do you know we pay a lot of money?

Uyabongeka: Daddy always say that when I get 5 out 20 on Maths.

Me: Hawu. The tutor doesn't help you?

Uyabongeka: What is a tutor?

Me: The teacher that teaches you at home or after hours. Your dad said he will hire her. We spoke about that.

Uyabongeka: I don't have a tutor mom. Maybe he forgot.

Me: Where is your father?

Uyabongeka: I don't know. I haven't seen him since last night.

Clearly Themba lied to me about the tutor or he forgot.

Me: What? Give your grandmother the phone.

Uyabongeka: I will take it to her. She's downstairs.

I heard her running. I took Alupheli out of the bathtub. I put him on his bed and wiped him. I put my phone beside me. While I moisturised my son.

Mrs Smith: Hello.

Me: Hello mama. How are you?

Mrs Smith: Hhaybo Thandeka? I am fine and you?

Me: I am alright mama. I am sorry to bother you but where is Themba?

Mrs Smith: I think you should ask his wife.

Me: Oh.

I heard shuffling sounds.

Kim: What do you want?

Me: Where is Themba?

Kim: He went on a business small vacation.

Me: Oh. Please tell him to call me. When he comes back. We need to talk about Uyabongeka.

Kim: Okay.

She dropped the call as if she was the one who called. I called again. Uyabongeka answered.

Uyabongeka: Yes.

Me: Goodnight baby. I love you and your brother okay?

Uyabongeka: We love you too mom. Goodnight.

Me: Please tell your father to call me when he comes back okay?

Uyabongeka: Okay mom. Please tell him that I want to live with you now. I have lived with him for a long time. It's time I live with you before I burst out of boredom here.

Me:(laughing) une drama sana! I will talk to him baby.

Uyabongeka: I wish I could leave right away because daddy is always busy. I don't feel safe when he's not here.

Me: I will talk to him. Next year you will live with me.

Uyabongeka: Yes! Thanks. Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight.

I hung up the call. I dressed Alupheli up and we went downstairs. I sat up the table and we prayed and had dinner.

After dinner, I washed the dishes. I went to the lounge. I wanted to speak with the boys.

Me: Boys.

Them: Mom.

Samkelo stood up and went upstairs.

Me: Uhm. Mom is leaving tomorrow.

There was total silence. I didn't expect that from them.

Me: Alupheli and Mesuli I am talking to you.

Mesuli: We heard you mom.

Me: So why are you acting like this?

Alupheli: (shouting) Because we don't want to cry. Daddy told us that you're going away for a long time! We don't want to cry!

He ran upstairs. His brother followed him. I blinked more than twice. I sighed and switched off the TV. I went to Mesuli's room. I knew they were both there. I knocked on the door. It was locked.

Me: Can I come in?

Kuhle: We're sleeping.

Me: You haven't done your homework.

Kuhle: I don't have a homework.

Me: You're lying.

They didn't say anything. I knocked again and they didn't open. I sighed.

Me: Goodnight. I love you.

Them: Goodnight.

Me: You don't love me?

They didn't say anything for a few minutes.

Them: We are angry.

Me: I am sorry my boys. I didn't mean to make you angry.

They didn't say anything. I left and I went to my room. Samkelo was on the bed already. I went to shower. I finished up and I moisturised my body. I went to bed as naked as I was.

Me: Ndunakazi can we talk.

Sam: Talk about what?

Me: About me leaving.

Sam: Go. Do as you please.

Me: Samkelo I am trying to help here.

Sam: I didn't say I need your help.

I didn't say anything. I light up the bedside lamp. I stood up. He looked at my nakedness. I went to switch off the lights and I went back to bed. He went back to his position.

Me: Can I at least get your attention tonight?

Sam: You want my penis?

I gasped a little. I felt a little goosebumps. It's been weeks since he last made love to me. At least I had the right to ask for it. I suppose.

Me: We can forget about the other things.

He didn't say anything. He didn't want to give me his attention. I was going to make him give me his attention. I stood up and I took a chair. I put it on the centre of our room. I went to stand in front of him because he wasn't facing my direction. He looked at me. I didn't shift my eyes away from him. I kneeled down and kissed him. He didn't kiss me back. I removed the blankets and I sent my hand on his penis. I held it and rubbed it. It became hard within a few seconds. He sat up straight quickly and he kissed me while I took off his pyjamas. I led him to the chair. While kissing me I made him sit on it. I sat on top of his lap. I was ready for him for I was wet as hell. His d\*ck was hard, up and ready. He positioned me for a seated wheelbarrow style. With my whole front body facing down. I placed my hands on the floor, he separated my legs and he started by using his fingers I moaned in pleasure. He finally inserted himself inside me, having a good Penetration. Though it was a little painful at the beginning but finally pleasure kicked in. And I was moaning uncontrollably as he was using both my legs to move my whole body in and out. We both came and I got off him. He grabbed my hand as I was on the floor breathing heavily. He kissed me while picking me up and directed us to our bed. He made me lie down in the middle of the bed while kissing me. He positioned himself for a cross buttocks style he inserted himself inside me lying across my pelvis, while supporting his weight on his elbows. As he started moving I could feel stimulation on the side of my vaginal walls. I was moaning his name on top of my voice giving him strength and energy to carry on. I don't know how many times I came because I was more than enjoying what he was doing to me. He finally came and he rested himself on

top of me. We were both breathing heavily. He kissed my forehead. We cuddled each other inside our bed covers.

Me: I am sorry.

Sam: No you're not sorry. So please don't.

Me: I love you Samkelo.

Sam: I know. And I love you too.

Me: Everything will be alright.

Sam: I hope so.

We kissed each other and we tried to sleep afterwards.

Sam: I didn't apologies for what my father did to you. I am sorry for everything.

Me: It's okay. Let's sleep now that is in the past.

Sam: Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight.

We then fell asleep. The following morning I woke up and did the whole routine. Samkelo was driving the kids to school. They were still angry at me. They cried when it was time for goodbye.

Me: I will come back. Don't cry.

Alupheli: You will come back after a long time.

Kuhle: Don't go mama.

I hugged them and I couldn't hold my tears back. I kissed their foreheads.

Me: I love you. Mama uNancy will sleep here until I come back. She will look after all of you. Be good boys Okay?

They nodded.

Them: We love you mom.

I smiled and kissed them. My husband held their hands. They left. I was left behind. I baked their favourite cakes and cooked the favourite meal leaving it on the bowls for them to eat at night. After all that, I cleaned and I went to get ready. My husband came back and joined me on the shower. We made love countless times. Then we finished up. We dressed up. I checked if I had missed calls from Themba. There were none. I tried to call him, his phone was on voicemail. I took my handbag and followed my husband. He drove me to the airport. We arrived and I joined the line. I looked at him.

Me: Really now?

Sam: What?

Me: You gonna cry too?

Sam: Mxm I won't cry.

Me: Then what's this?

I wiped his one tear. He laughed. I kissed him deeply. We broke the kiss. Our foreheads met.

Me: I love you..

Sam: I love you more..

We hugged each other and he left.. I looked at him until he disappeared....

Nobuhle Mthembu.....

I was so happy that my mom didn't stand in my way of happiness. All I wanted was to be happy with my future husband. As I was about to enter my workplace I saw Samkelo Ndunakazi. I gasped as I felt so ashamed of myself. When last did I spoke to his wife. I didn't even call her to tell her the feedback about the plan that she helped me with. Samkelo was entering the restaurant.

Sam: You're Nobuhle right?

Me: Yes. How are you Mr Ndunakazi?

Sam: I am fine and you?

Me: I am fine thanks.

Sam: It's been a while since I heard my wife talking about you. Is everything alright?

Me: Yes. It's just that I have been really busy. Where is she?

Sam: She left for America this morning. On a business trip.

Me: When will she be back?

Sam: After four weeks.

Me: Okay. I will contact her. I owe her a lot.

Sam: Okay. Let me go.

Me: Okay. Have a nice day.

Sam: Thanks you too.

He went to sit on the table and I went to check in. My day began. I couldn't stop thinking about my wedding and how things were going to be. I was just happy. I was really excited about it. After work I took a cab and I went to the medical centre where my sister was practising. I asked to speak to her boss and she didn't know about her new workplace. I wasn't really convinced that she didn't know but there was nothing I could do about it, I couldn't force to tell the truth. I then took a cab to Rajiv's place. Along the way I was thinking about my sister, yes what mom did to her was not alright but for her to disappear like that. I didn't expect that from her. The cab arrived. I paid and I went through. Nadine was home. We hugged each other. We sat down.

Nadine: How are you sister?

Me: I am fine and you?

Nadine: I am fine. Can we please get down to business.

I smiled. She took out a notebook and a pencil.

Me: Where's my future husband?

Nadine: He's at work. He'll come back later.

Me: I hope he won't work this hard when we're married.

We laughed.

Nadine: That's true because you also need time to make little Rajiv and little Precious. I want to be an aunt.

We laughed and she did the brainstorming. She put on the DVD player and we watched her mother's wedding. I didn't understand the ceremony so she explained everything for me. After watching the wedding, we went to cook. After cooking we both ate, I was worried about Rajiv. I kept on looking at the door.

Nadine: Don't worry, he will come back.

Me: But it's late now. I am worried about him.

Nadine: He's fine. Precious. Let me show you different Indian dresses and saris. You will choose one for Gary's wedding.

She took the portfolio with Indian dresses and the saris and they were really beautiful. I didn't even know which one to choose. Gary's wedding was on the end of August, so we had to choose. I chose the one with red and gold. It was really beautiful. Nadine chose pink and silver.

Nadine: But I would prefer these colours for your own wedding.

Me: Okay.

I chose the different colours, black and silver. It was really beautiful. Nadine explained the different types of wedding ceremony and she told me that the most preferred one was "Brahm Vivaah" she said it is considered the highest form of marriage where they join the bride and groom in matrimony with full consent and active participation of all family members and friends. The ceremony is meant to integrate the lives of the marrying couple across the two families and many generations, both horizontally and vertically. I was really looking forward to my wedding. We wrote down a few list of things and other things I was going to discuss with Rajiv first.

Me: Who is planning Gary's wedding.

Nadine: Mom hired a wedding planner. Rajiv and dad asked me to plan yours and work together with you so that you will know everything about the ceremony.

Me: Okay. Thanks.

Nadine: Dad, said you will help Rajiv write the letter to your father. On his behalf. The negotiations must take place before Gary's wedding because after his wedding you guys have a week before your wedding. The whole family from India agreed to stay only a week before your wedding.

Me: Okay. I really understand.

Nadine: We know that things are going on a very fast pace but I hope you understand and you will help make your parents understand.

Me: Don't worry. I will talk to my mom.

Nadine: Thank you.

She smiled, just then the door swung open. Rajiv walked in. I jumped off the couch and I went to hug him tightly.

Rajiv: Okay baby. I can't breath properly.

Me: I am sorry. I am just happy to see you.

Rajiv: I know. I am too. But I am tired.

I kissed his lips briefly.

Me: Go and shower. I will dish up for you.

Rajiv: Thank you.

He kissed my forehead and he went to greet his sister. He then went to shower.

Nadine: Let me go and sleep now. Tomorrow we will go to the designer okay?

Me: Okay. Goodnight.

Nadine: Goodnight.

I went to the bedroom with Rajiv's food. A landline called while I was taking off my clothes. I answered.

Me: Hello.

Phili: Hey Buhle it's me.

Me: Philisiwe? Sisi how are you?

Phili: I am trying man. I just miss you.

Me: I miss you too. But why did you leave us just like that?

Phili: I was angry. I just wanted time alone and I am alright where I am. At least no one will judge me here.

Me: I am sorry about the Facebook post. I saw how people responded to your post.

Phili: It's okay. I called to ask if did you apply for studying next year?

Me: Yes. I did apply.

Phili: Okay. I will deposit cash month end. And you will buy groceries for mom okay?

Me: Okay. You won't come back? Philani is worried about you. Mom and dad too.

Phili: I can't come back. Maybe I will but not anytime soon.

Me: Please give me your number.

Phili: I will call you when I want to talk for now please let me be. Goodnight.

Me: Phili –

She hung up on me. I sat down. At least I heard her voice and she was alright but I could hear that she wasn't herself.

Rajiv: Is everything alright?

Me: Yes. That was my sister.

Rajiv: Is she doing okay?

Me: She says so but she doesn't sound alright.

Rajiv: She'll be fine babe don't worry.

I smiled and nodded. I stood up and I went to shower. I called my mom and told her that Philisiwe called. She sounded relieved. Though she wasn't fully happy. After that Rajiv and I wrote the letter to my parents. He was going to post it himself. We then cuddled and spoke about our wedding until we both fell asleep.....

---

3rd Person Narrator.

After work the following day, Themba drove straight home. He couldn't stop thinking about Cikizwa. She was fire and he enjoyed every moment with her. Not that he didn't love his wife, he did but sometimes Kimberly held back from him. He got everything from Cikizwa. He arrived at home and his daughters were playing outside the house. They both ran to their father. He picked up his last born.

Themba: "Hey girls "

Them: "How are you daddy"

Themba: "I am good and you?"

Them: "We are fine "

Uyabongeka: "Mom called, she said please call her. She said something about the tutor daddy"

Themba: "Jesus! She will eat me alive. I forgot about the tutor baby. I am really sorry"

Uyabongeka: "I knew it! You forget everything daddy"

Themba: "I am sorry Princess "

Uyabongeka: "I am going to live with mom next year. I don't feel safe when you're not home daddy"

Themba: "I am sorry. It won't happen again "

Uyabongeka didn't say anything. She was just angry at her father. Themba greeted the rest of his family. His wife was angry at him and that was clear as daylight to him. He went upstairs. Kimberly followed him. He tried to call Thandeka first but her phone was on voicemail. He placed his phone aside.

Kimberly: "I suppose you will sleep with us tonight?"

Themba: "Don't start Kimberly"

Kimberly: "I don't understand what you're doing Ethan."

Themba: "You know. I am no longer doing my job only. I also have other gang staff to take care of. I can't just quit it"

Kimberly: "I am not saying quit it. But don't neglect us"

He went close to her and he kissed her.

Themba: "Let me take you out tonight. Just the two of us"

Kimberly smiled and nodded. They got ready for going out. They left the kids with their grandmother and they left. They went to the restaurant of the wife's choice. As they were entering the restaurant. Themba saw Cikizwa with a guy. They were walking really cosy. Themba took out his phone as they say down with his wife.

Themba: {texting Cikizwa}>> I see you're having fun with that boy.

He put his phone aside and looked at the menu. Even if they were at the beautiful restaurant still

Kimberly felt so alone. She felt like her husband is not with her which was true because Themba was thinking about Cikizwa. His phone vibrated.

Cikizwa: {response}>>> Yes I am. Just like you're having fun with wifey!

His jaw tightened as he read that. One of the things men hate is sharing a woman that they know her efforts and capabilities even though that woman is a side cheek. That how Themba felt when he saw Cikizwa. He thought of how is she with that guy.

Kimberly: "Are you alright Smith?"

Themba: "Yes baby I am fine. Let's order"

She nodded and said: "I have been thinking"

Themba: "Yes"

Kimberly: "I think I want to go to varsity and study something just to build a career for myself"

Themba: "What?"

Kimberly: "Yes. I am tired of being a house wife next year I want to study"

Themba: "We will talk about that some other time not now"

Kimberly nodded, she was really tired of being a stupid house wife she wanted to pursue a career and be independent. Themba didn't even take notice that he was neglecting his wife

Andile Dhlomo's POV...

Not that I didn't want to help my sister with her daughter. I did want to help her but I felt like

I have been doing that to her my whole life. My whole life I have helped Thandeka with every mess that she used to create and I did that because she was my little sister but I couldn't continue cleaning up after her. She had to take responsibility for her kids. I didn't want Alondwe in my house because my daughter was going to ask questions about how come is she pregnant while she's young. I didn't want Nonduduzo to be exposed to all that. Not that I don't care about my sister's daughter I do care but I was only trying to protect my own. But seeing that Thandeka and her family hates me after what happened that really broke my heart.....

---

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

The week went by smoothly, I was studying with Mpendulo. Apparently he wasn't a slow learner like Thapelo had said. He needed someone who was going to be patient with him. During the weekend he came to our flat and we studied the whole weekend but he wasn't sleeping over. I really enjoyed my new school, I had no stress that maybe I will bump into Sphephelo like in my old school. No one was talking in my back except for those girls who were busy spreading rumours about me wanting Thapelo. I didn't care because deep down I knew that I don't want him. At least they weren't gossiping about the sex video like in my old school. It was Thursday morning of the second week. It was my mom's birthday, 16th of July. In the morning I was woken up by my phone ringing. My books were still in my bed. I fell asleep while I was still studying. I had a physical science test that day. I took it and answered. It was my father.

Me: Daddy?

Dad: Are you still sleeping?

Me: I was about to wake up.

Dad: How are you?

Me: I am alright daddy and you?

Dad: I am good. I called your therapist.

Me: Uhm... Eh... Yeah..

Dad: Yes I am listening.

Me: I was going to go.

Dad: When?

Me: When I am free, daddy you don't understand the competition is high at school. I have to be on my A game.

Dad: That's not an excuse Alondwe. I can't pay for sessions that you don't attend. Money doesn't fall from trees syezwana (Do you hear me?)

Me: Yes daddy.

Dad: You will call that therapist and make an appointment. And go on regular basis syezwana?

Me: Yes daddy.

Dad: Awuzukwenza umathanda wakho ngoba ngingekho eduze kwakho. (You won't do as you please just because I am not there)

Me: Yebo.

Dad: Okay. Have a nice day and good luck with your test today.

Me: Thank you. Please buy airtime for me. I want to call mom later and say Happy birthday.

Dad: No. Skype her that's way too easy.

Me: Awu. When stinginess strikes.

Dad: Angizwanga? (Excuse me?)

Me: Bye daddy. I love you.

I hung up the call and got up. He called again. I took my phone.

Me: Dad? I will be late for school.

Dad: I am the one who called. I should be the one who hung up the call.

Me: (laughing) Okay baba.

Dad: Uyakuthanda ke ubaba wakho yezwa? (Your father loves you Okay?)

Me: Yebo baba.

He hung up the call afterwards. I rushed to the bathroom and I took a quick shower. I did the whole process. I packed my books. My aunt was already gone, so I grabbed an apple and I went to take a taxi straight to school.

The first period was physical science so we were writing on the first period. As I entered the school gates. I felt so nervous and my stomach turned. Uyasazi lesi sisu sovalo. Yeah that's what was happening. I walked inside my class and I went to my chair, next to Mpendulo like always. Thapelo was standing beside my chair talking to Mpendulo. Seeing Thapelo made me more nervous. As I was about to make it to the chair, I just stumbled and almost fell on the floor but luckily Thapelo held me before I landed on the floor. His other hand was on my neck and the other was on my waist. Our eyes locked, my heart was racing. For a few minutes without a word we looked at each other until Mpendulo said something.

Mpendulo: Okay guys you can stop now.

I cleared my throat and he assisted me stand. I fixed myself. I was about to say Thank you to him then, he interrupted me.

Thapelo: So you finally got that?

Me: Got what?

Thapelo: My arms holding you?

Me: Argh. Who said I wanted your arms to hold me?

Thapelo: You don't have to say it. As I have said before and I repeat actions speak louder than words.

Me: Mxm get over yourself.

Thapelo: Did I make you nervous?

Me: Thapelo can I seat down please.

Thapelo: So you won't say thank you. I have just saved you and the little one inside you.

Me: I was going to say thank you but then you acted like a dick.

Mpendulo laughed. I sat down. The teacher came in, Thapelo left and we took our things out. The test began. It wasn't that hard. We finished and we went to attend other classes.

Lunch time I went to Nkululeko. We hugged each other.

Nkulu: Thank God you're finally done with that test. I hardly saw you.

Me: I am sorry but I had to study hard.

Nkulu: Yes. We don't want Thapelo to win mama bear that will make baby bear sad.

Me: That's true.

We went to order lunch and we went to sit down on our spot.

Nkulu: So tell me you and Thapelo?

Me: What about us?

Nkulu: You mean you don't even feel a thing for him.

Me: No I don't. Why should I?

Nkulu: Because he has a thing for you.

I laughed. About five girls came to us. One of them stood out and faced me directly.

Girl: So you saw that Thapelo doesn't want you then you chose to go after his friend. My boyfriend.

Me: What are you talking about?

Girl: I am talking about –

Girl2: Mbali you don't have to explain, she knows exactly what are we talking about.

Mbali: What do you want with my man?

I didn't say anything at all. I just ate my food. I had no time for answering stupid questions.

She pushed my head up wanting me to face her. Nkululeko stood up immediately!  
Nkulu: Hheyi sfetshana ndini (I laughed) Leave Alondwe alone. She doesn't report to you. What she does with Mpendulo is none of your business.  
Mbali: Mpendulo indoda yami! (Mpendulo is my man)  
Nkululeko took her left hand and looked at it. He looked at me and showed me the left hand.  
Nkulu: Do you see the ring Owami?  
Me: No I don't. Maybe they did traditional wedding because she's sure claiming him like God gave her Mpendulo to be her husband.  
Nkulu: Stop being an insecure little bitch and love your boyfriend.  
Me: Trust him dear and more especially trust yourself because right now I don't know you and you don't know me but I can tell you one thing about yourself. You lack self-esteem. You have a very low self-esteem otherwise if you didn't have a low self-esteem you wouldn't be here.  
Nkulu: So please shaya ishwaphana sakho uhambe la. Don't ever come near her or you'll lose that Mpendulo to clever girls.  
Girl2: Asambe chomi. (Let's go my friend)  
Me: (Nigerian accent) Stupid girls! Mxxxxm  
They left. Nkululeko and I looked at each other and laughed. He sat down.  
Me: Woah! For a moment there I thought they were going to beat us.  
Nkulu: Yoh! Me too. I was just scaring her off. Ngiyigwala kabi. (I am coward)  
Me: That makes the two of us.  
We looked at each other and laughed.  
Nkulu: But then mama bear umlomo ishoba lokuziphungela. (We laughed)  
Me: You can say that again. Talking really helps.  
We continued talking and eating. The lunch hour was over so we went back to our classes. Soon it was after school. I was waiting for Nkululeko outside the gates. There were lot of kids waiting for their transport. A crowd of girls passed by. I heard one saying "as you can see. She's waiting for Thapelo. Attention seeking bitch" I didn't say anything. The others laughed. I saw Thapelo and Mpendulo walking towards my direction. They stood in front of me. I looked at those girls. They were looking at me. I looked back at Thapelo. I looked at his moving lips. He loves talking man!  
Thapelo: Did the paper crash your system or are you still thinking about my hands.  
Me: They might as well talk about something they see. Tsk!  
Thapelo: What are you-  
I immediately grabbed him by his collar because he was taller than me. I stood on my toes. I invited his face to my face and kissed him. He kissed me back holding my waist very tight. The boys blew up whistles. We didn't stop kissing each other. Our hearts and breaths were really high. I felt the tickling feelings. It was so good. We broke the kiss after some time. He looked at me and smiled for the first revealing his beautiful dimples. I didn't smile but I looked into his eyes and he kissed my lips softly and my forehead. I looked aside Nkululeko was next to us. I hugged Thapelo and kissed his cheek. I let go and took Nkululeko's hand. I left without saying a word to him. I looked back at him and he was still looking at me. I turned back and smiled a little.  
Nkulu: Bad bitch!  
Me: Tell me about it.  
I laughed. I looked at those girls. They were looking at me with disgusted looks. I winked at them. Nkululeko looked at me and we laughed.  
Nkulu: Ngigcwele ngawe mntanandini. (I love you girl)  
Me: Me too girly.

We laughed and took a taxi back home. My stomach was even sore from laughing, let alone the butterflies I had for kissing Thapelo....

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

I arrived at home and I went to bed. I wanted to sleep. I took off my uniform and wore my pyjamas and I cuddled Mr Cuddles. I fell asleep. I was woken up by my aunt.

Me: Aunty I am trying to sleep. Please.

Melo: Wake up and eat. It's 6'oclock now.

Me: Just 1hour.

Melo: We have to Skype your mom. Remember?

Me: Dad told you?

Melo: Yes. And besides I know that it's her birthday. She's my sister for goodness sake.

I pouted and I stood up reluctantly. I went to shower, I moisturised my body and I wore my clean pyjamas. I went to eat with my aunt. We ate and I washed the dishes afterwards. We went to the lounge with my laptop. My aunt called her and told her to log in. After a few minutes she appeared on the screen.

Mom: Hello babies.

Us: (singing) HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

Mom: (Smiling) Thank you. Where are my gifts?

Me: I give you my love as my gift. (We laughed)

Mom: I don't want that one.

Melo: What gift do you want?

Mom: Private jet.

Us: Woah!

Melo: You must tell your husband then.

Mom: (laughing) I want it from you guys.

Me: In 30yrs to come. (We laughed)

Mom: Thank you for birthday wishes. I have to go back to my training now.

Me: When are you coming back?

Mom: Two weeks left then I am coming back home baby.

Me: Okay. I will see you on the September break.

Mom: Okay. Nilalekahle. (Sleep well)

Us: Nawe. (You too)

Mom: Kids. It's not sleep time here.

Us: Oh konje.

We laughed. She shook her head. We logged off.

Me: She looked really exhausted.

Melo: Yes. I wonder how hard is she working.

Me: We forgot to tell her to take it slow.

Melo: I am sure my brother did that.

Me: I am going to sleep now. Goodnight.

Melo: Goodnight love.

I went to my room. I went to bed. I wasn't going to study that night. I fell asleep immediately.

In the morning I was woken up by my aunt.

Melo: Alondwe, it's school day. It's not Saturday but Friday.

Me: Okay. I am getting up.

Melo: Bye. Have a nice day

Me: Thanks you too.

She left afterwards. I stood up and I went to the bathroom. I thought about what happened

after school. I was so nervous to go to school. How was I going to face Thapelo? I didn't care about everyone else but him. Yoh! He was going to brag. At least I must give him the whole weekend not to see me. And the kids will talk while I am not there. I sighed. I made a conclusion that I was taking a day off from school. I took a shower and I went to have breakfast. I washed the dishes and I cleaned up the whole flat. I washed our clothes.

Afterwards I went back to my room. I took my phone and I had missed calls from Nkululeko. I sent a "Please me". I took my books and sat on my bed. My phone rang and I answered.

Nkulu: Bitch you are absent!?

Me: I am sick. (I laughed)

Nkulu: You're lying gwala ndini. I know you're running away from Thapelo.

Me: Yhu! Ngeke. I can't face him.

Nkulu: You did face him when you had your tongue on his throat.

Me: I was giving them something to talk about.

Nkulu: You're bad girl. You're bad.

Me: You skipped a class just to call me?

Nkulu: Bitch you're important. You don't know that even now?

Me: Yoh! I am blushing.

Nkulu: Can we meet at South Gate mall after school?

Me: Okay bae. Please go back to class.

Nkulu: Okay. Usuyangixosha.

Me: Kodwa bakithi.

He laughed and hung up. I continued with my studying until I fell asleep.

I was woken up by phone ringing. I took it. It was an unsaved number.

Me: Hello.

Caller: So you've decided to run away from me today? Or you're just avoiding me?

Me: Hello to you too Thapelo. Oh yes I am fine Thapelo and how are you?

Thapelo: I was going to ask that?

Me: When exactly?

Thapelo: We don't do the same routine as you know that people are not the same. We're unique in our own way so am I.

Me: Oh. So what were you saying about me running away? I don't understand. (I tried to be as serious as possible)

Thapelo: Why are you absent? Are you sick? Or you running away from me?

Me: Why would I run away from you?

Thapelo: I don't know maybe after the kiss you realised you made a mistake.

Me: Oh. That's your conclusion.

Thapelo: No. It's just that I don't understand why would you just be absent, unless if you're sick or if the baby is not alright.

Me: You sound like a stupid teenager who is in love right now. Not the Thapelo that I know. Who at times act like a jerk.

Thapelo: Well I am in love.

Me: That's nice. You better go and tell her that you love her and say sorry on my behalf because I kissed you yesterday. Because so God help me. I can't fight Thapelo. I don't even know what I was doing –

Thapelo: Ke a o rata Alondwe.

Me: Huh? What was that?

Thapelo: I love you Alondwe.

I didn't say anything for a long time. Okay I knew that everyone like Mpendulo and Nkululeko kept on saying he was into me but I just didn't expect him to say it! He's my competitor for goodness sake!

Thapelo: Alondwe?

Me: My mom is calling me in the kitchen. Bye.

I hung up the call immediately. I sighed. I went to the bathroom and I took a cold shower. I didn't want to think about what he said to me. I just didn't want to think about it. I went back to my room. I moisturised my body and I put on my gown. I took my phone and I went to eat. I had one missed call from Thapelo's number. I saved it on my phone and I read his text message. "I am sorry for scarring you off" I didn't reply. I finished up and I went to brush my teeth. I got ready for going out with Nkululeko. I wore my brown skinny jeans, a white long sleeve shirt. I put on my brown scarf and a brown woollen Jersey. It was quite cold outside. I put on my boots and I combed my hair loose. I took my backpack and cash. I left because it was after school already and Nkululeko was blowing my phone.

I took a cab to the mall. I saw him as soon as the cab pulled over. I went to him after I paid.

We hugged each other.

Nkulu: You're a coward!

Me: As if you're not a coward.

We laughed, he held my hand. We walked inside the mall.

Nkulu: I want to buy something in here please wait here.

Me: Why can't I go in with you?

Nkulu: No! You can't come in. Just stand here.

Me: Okay, you don't have to shout at me.

Nkulu: Thank you.

He went inside the shop. I waited for him outside. I saw Mpendulo and Thapelo walking inside facing the direction I was in. I turned back and looked elsewhere.

Mpendulo: You don't have to do that.

I didn't look at them.

Mpendulo: Alondwe Ndunakazi?

I sighed, I turned back and smiled.

Me: Oh hey guys.

Thapelo: Are you staying? I want to go man.

Me: Yeah man. Thapelo wants to go.

Mpendulo: Tsk! This is enough. Just admit that you love each other. Stop being childish guys.

Me: Okay I don't know what you're talking about?

Mpendulo: You know exactly what I am talking about. Thapelo loves you and he told you that but you're acting like a child.

Thapelo: You're waisting your time man. She led me on and she want to play games with me.

Me: Can't you all see that I am pregnant?

Thapelo: Being pregnant is not a disease.

Me: I don't even want this baby. And here you're telling me you love me. What do you want me to do?

Mpendulo looked at us.

Thapelo: Just give me a chance is that too much to ask? Who knows maybe I can help you love your child.

Me: My mom failed. You don't know anything about me just go Thapelo.

Thapelo: I am not going anywhere!

Me: Just go please!

Thapelo: I am saying no!

Mpendulo clicked his tongue and walked away from us. I looked elsewhere and wiped my tears away. I was scared. What if he does the same thing that Sphephelo did to me. How do I know that he's real? How do I know that we will be legit! How do I know? He made my face

look at him. He wiped my tears away and he hugged me tightly. He was slowly brushing my back.

Thapelo: I won't hurt you. I am not saying I will be perfect but I won't hurt you intentionally Alondwe. I won't do that to you. I am not saying answer me now but at least let me take you out so that I can get to know you.

He let go of me and looked at me.

Me: Not that we will be rushing into a relationship?

Thapelo: For now no.

Me: I guess I won't say no to free food.

He smiled revealing his dimples. My stomach turned and it made grumbling sounds.

Thapelo: Are you hungry?

Me: No. My stomach does that sometimes.

Thapelo: Okay. Tomorrow at 1'Oclock then.

Me: Okay.

Thapelo: Everything will be alright, don't stress yourself too much.

I nodded and he hugged me again. He kissed my forehead. We said our goodbyes and he left.

Just then Nkululeko came out of the shop. He had the best smile on.

Me: Don't say another word! I am leaving.

I said walking away.

Nkulu: What? No!

Me: You set me up Nkululeko how could you?

Nkulu: No I was getting some two minutes noodles on the bathroom with my man.

Me: Seis! What? You're lying.

Nkulu: No I am not.

I hit his chest playfully. He laughed.

Me: Where is he?

Nkulu: He used another entrance to leave.

Me: Ncoah man. Let's go.

Nkulu: So what happened between you and Thapelo?

Me: What? How do you know that because you were busy being dickled in the bathroom.

Nkulu: No but- I – was-

Me: You lied to me!

I hit him with my bag and he cried like a girl. I laughed at him and I held his hand. We went to the restaurant of my choice. I kept on mocking him just to avoid the Thapelo topic....

---

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

After my session I went to my room to rest. I was really worried about my husband. I didn't want him to have a break down. I know he loves his job and how important it was to him. I didn't want h to loose it. Muzi walked inside my room after I have permitted him to come in of course.

Me: How can I help you.

Muzi: You're making great progress and I can see that the situation back at home is stressing you out.

Me: You have no idea.

Muzi: I understand. Let's just take one week and on the beginning of August you'll go back home and the first assignment would be to clear your husband's name.

Me: Thank you so much Muzi.

Muzi: My pleasure.

He stood up and left. I sighed and prayed. Thanking God for making the weight more lighter for me....

3rd Person Narrator

Philisiwe was getting used to her job. She was getting used to Cape Town and warming up to the city. But she was really missing Philani. She wished she could be on his arms. After work she decided to call him on the public phone. His phone rang and he picked up on a few rings.

Philani: "Hello?"

Philisiwe didn't say anything for a long time.

Philani: "Hello!?"

Philisiwe: "Hello. Philani"

Philani couldn't really recognize her voice. She had flue so her voice had changed.

Philani: "Yes. Who am I talking to?"

Philisiwe: "You're talking to Philisiwe"

Philani: "Philisiwe! Why are you doing this to me? What have I done to you?"

Philisiwe: "Don't ask questions like that!"

Philani: "I should ask you such questions! You can't just up and leave with my child inside you without telling me"

Philisiwe: "Well I did leave. What are you going to do about it now?"

Philani: "Don't talk to me like that Philisiwe! "

Philisiwe: "Why not? You didn't fight for us Philani. All you did was to agree to everything that they said we must do. So tell me why was I supposed to stay?"

Philani: "I am sorry. I didn't know you felt like that"

Philisiwe: "How were you going to know because all you care about is the church and pleasing your parents special your father. You didn't even ask me how I felt about it."

Philani: "I had to do the right thing!"

Philisiwe: "By who? By the church, by your father? Guess what you did the right thing but not by me and our child."

Philani: "I am sorry"

Philisiwe: "It doesn't matter, the church will always come first to you. So you know what I am ending all this"

Philani: "What do you mean?"

Philisiwe: "I mean, it's over between us. You can continue with your church. I will be fine"

Philani: "You can't do that!"

Philisiwe: "But I just did"

Philani: "We have a child together"

Philisiwe: "That doesn't mean we're glued together. Goodbye Philani. Have a nice life"

Philani: "I LOVE YOU MAN PHILISIWE!!"

Philisiwe: "That's not enough"

Philisiwe hung up. The call didn't turn out as Philisiwe thought it was going to be. She left the public phone in tears. She was tired of being second best to Philani because of the church. On the other hand Philani felt so helpless. He didn't want to lose Philisiwe. He then went to his father. He was really angry because everything that Philisiwe said made sense.

Philani: "Philisiwe left without even telling me. I suppose you're happy to hear that."

His father: "That girl was not good for you. She did the right thing by leaving"

Philani: "How can you say that baba? "

His father: "You need a woman that will support your vision. Not just a woman who will seduce you to her bed"

Philani: "What about my child baba? What if she doesn't come back? "

His father: "You'll have another child with a proper wife"

Philani: "I can't believe you right now"

Philani walked out of the house regretting failing Philisiwe and their child.

---

The following day after the dinner date. Themba wanted to meet up with Cikizwa. He really wanted to see her. They woke up in the morning, Themba was going to work and Kimberly went to the university for CAO forms. She was really serious about going to University. Themba drove his kids to school. He started by dropping Uyathandwa off and then it was Sisipho and Uyabongeka.

Themba: Bye girls. Daddy loves you.

Them: We love you too.

Uyabongeka: Please come early after school. I don't like to wait on the streets daddy.

Themba: Relax Princess I will do so. Have a nice day.

Them: You too.

The kids ran off. Themba proceeded to work. He started by calling Cikizwa when he arrived at work. Cikizwa answered.

Cikizwa: "I am going to class now Themba."

Themba: "Can I see you after work?"

Cikizwa: "Where?"

Themba: "Our usual place "

Cikizwa: "Okay. Bye."

She hung up the call immediately. Themba started working. . . .

As promised Themba went to the hotel. He had asked his wife to fetch the kids because he was really busy at work. When he arrived at the hotel. Cikizwa was already there looking sexy as fuck! Themba licked his lower lip looking at that sight of Cikizwa turned him on. But he wasn't ready for real business. He pretended to be serious.

Themba: "That can wait Cikizwa"

Cikizwa: "What? You don't want me now?"

Themba: "I didn't say that. You know what I want to talk about "

Cikizwa: "If you want to talk about my boyfriend. Please just drop it. I will not discuss him with you. Just like you don't discuss your wife"

Themba: "She's my wife. We're already married. What do you want to that guy? What is that that I don't give you?"

Cikizwa: "Love! That's what you don't give me"

Themba didn't say anything. He rather went close to her.

Themba: "I can't show it"

He lifted up her leg and kissed her neck. Cikizwa moaned and started taking off Themba's clothes. They kissed each other deeply and one thing led to another. Themba banged Cikizwa as hard as he could. After that they cuddled on the bed. They had a lot of fun together until it was time for them to go. They walked out of the hotel holding hands. Cikizwa couldn't stop smiling because Themba never did that to her in public. She walked with him to his car.

Themba held her waist. And he kissed her. Cikizwa felt like she was the Queen.

Cikizwa: "I had a great time today."

Themba: "It was lovely "

They kissed once more. Cikizwa turned away and Themba spanked her ass. Cikizwa giggled and ran off. Themba smiled and shook his head. He stepped inside his car and drove off. BUT LITTLE DID THEY KNOW THAT CIKIZWA'S FATHER SAW THEM..

Alondwe Ndunakazi. . .

After having a lovely time with Nkululeko, I went back home. Aunty was home already. I entered the flat and greeted her.

Melo: Where were you?

Me: I was with Nkulu at the mall.

Melo: Did you even go to school?

Me: Yes! Why would I be absent?

Melo: I don't know. Here.. your father told me to make an appointment for you. Monday after school you'll go to your therapist.

Me: What? Are you for real?

Melo: Yes and don't think you'll ditch this appointment like you ditch school today.

Me: I didn't ditch school.

Melo: Let me show you.

Me: Serious I didn't?

Melo: You didn't?

Me: Yes.

Melo: Okay sit down.

I sat down. She took her phone and made a phonecall. I took the popcorn that was on the table and eat it.

Melo:( on the phone) "Yes bhuti.. Alondwe didn't go to school today.."

Me: What? Aunty! She's lying daddy!

She stood up and went to her room. She continued talking. I was left alone panicking. I took my backpack and I went to my room. I didn't sit down. I was pacing up and down. My aunty came inside my room. She was still talking to daddy.

Melo: "Oh and she said she won't go that appointment that you said I must make for her"

Yhu! I was boiling with anger inside. She handed the phone over to me. I took it. She left.

Me: Daddy?

Dad: Uyangilinga huh Alondwe? (You're testing me Alondwe)

Me: What did I do daddy?

Dad: (shouting) Futsegi man what did you do! Why were you absent?

Me: I woke up late.

Dad: Ungangijwayeli kabi Mina Alondwe. Ngeke sizwane uma uzokwenza intando yakho. (We won't get along if you'll do as you please)

Me: I am sorry.

Dad: Tsk! Monday you'll go to that therapist if you don't want to see my wrong side.

Me: Yes.

Dad: Tsk!

He hung up the call. I stood up as angry as I was. I entered her room and I placed her phone on her bed.

Melo: Don't be mad at me. All you needed to do was just tell me the truth.

Me: I covered for you to dad but you told him I didn't go to school. I didn't even say I won't go to my therapist but you lied to dad about that.

Melo: I wanted you to tell you the truth.

Me: Mxm.

I went to my room and locked myself up. I took off my clothes and I went to bed. I was slowly drifting off when my phone rang. It was my mom's foreign number. I answered.

Me: Mom?

Mom: Alondwe don't give me stress. Ngiyakucela. Your father told me you're not going to school. Why did you do that?

Me: I woke up late.

Mom: What kind of late because they say your aunt woke you up?

Me: I am sorry.

Mom: And your therapist? Who were you telling "awuyi lapho"

Me: I didn't say that.

Mom: You're saying your aunt is lying.

I didn't say anything.

Mom: Ungangicasuli mina wena! (Don't make me angry)

She hung up. I mumbled "Mxm" and I tried to sleep. I couldn't sleep. I took my phone and I chat with Nkululeko. I was telling him about what my aunt did. He was saying all sort of crazy things. I was laughing. He started talking about my date with Thapelo. I felt goosebumps all over my body. I told him I don't want to talk about it. I ignored him and placed my phone away. I thought about Thapelo. I was scared but he was a nice guy though he was full of himself. I am also full of myself, how was our relationship going to survive? Two bulls on the kraal? I was scared of being in a relationship again. I told myself I was going to go on the date with him and never speak to him again! But how? Because I like him too. If I didn't like him I wasn't going to tolerate his behaviour but I did. I sighed at my thoughts. My phone rang. Nkululeko was calling. I answered.

Nkulu: Bitch you're ignoring me because I am talking about Thapelo now.

Me: No! Girl come on. I dozed off. (I lied)

Nkulu: Jesus! You love him and you're even scared!

Me: What? No dude. I don't love him. I mean the guy acted like a dutchbag why would I love him. (I laughed nervously)

Nkulu: Yhu! Unezimanga! Please look good tomorrow. I just want to see you.

Me: How will you see me?

Nkulu: You'll send a picture! Stupid!

Me: Oh. Okay.

Nkulu: Please treat him right mama bear. He was my crush so I don't want to see him heartbroken. I would have given up everything for him!

Me: How sweet!

Nkulu: Hhaysuka. You'll make me cry. You two are cute together. Milk and coffee with milk.

Me: Really now?

Nkulu: Yes. You're the milk and he's the coffee with milk.

Me: Mngani wami please sleep now because you are sleepy. Goodnight.

I hung up the call before he could say anything. He called again. I answered.

Nkulu: Manje uzosenzenjani lesi esiwu anti wakho? (What will you do about your aunt)

Me:(laughing) Isini? (He laughed)

Nkulu: You know!

Me: I don't know but she won't stop me from going.

Nkulu: That's the spirit. Nyt.

Me: Nyt.

I hung up the call and I went online on WhatsApp. I was chatting with Andiswa. Thapelo called. I didn't answer his call. He called twice. I didn't answer. He sent a text on WhatsApp "I just wanted to say goodnight. I wasn't going to bite you off. Specially not through the phone"

I smiled and replied: "I didn't say you'll bite me . Goodnight."

I logged off and I drifted off to dreamland.

In the morning I woke up and I felt so nervous. I checked my phone and there was a text from Thapelo reminding me about our date. I wanted to switch off my phone and ignore him but I decided against that after a long time. I went to shower. My aunt was having cereals on the couch.

Me: Morning.

Melo: Morning. **Selibohlile iconsi.** (You're not angry anymore)

I didn't say anything. I went to shower and I went back to my room after brushing my teeth. I straightened my hair and styled them nicely. It was cold outside. I wore black jeans, black

long sleeve shirt and a purple winter coat. I wore my purple boots. I put on black scarf and silver knob earrings. I put on the purple lipstick. My phone rang and I went to it. Thapelo was calling.

Me: Hello.

Thapelo: Hey the cab is outside the building.

Me: Okay.

I took my phone and sling bag. I locked my room and headed to the door.

Melo: Going somewhere?

Me: Ngiyabuya. (I will come back)

I walked out. Thapelo was outside the cab wearing black jeans and brown winter coat. With brown timberland boots. Brown scarf and gloves. He met me halfway and hugged me. He kissed my cheek. I looked down just to hide that I was blushing.

Thapelo: If you can look at yourself right now?

Me: What?

Thapelo: You look like a child who is shy to take the candy.

I laughed and hit him playful.

Thapelo: Ouch! Alondwe!

Me: You sound like a sissy.

Thapelo: You mean I sound like your friend Nonku.

Me: (laughing) Let's go please.

Thapelo: After you.

I led the way the way. He opened the door for me. I stepped inside. He followed after me. I greeted the driver and he greeted back. He drove away. Thapelo kept on looking at me and I'll look away. I looked at him and he was looking at me.

Thapelo: You look beautiful.

Me: (smiling) Thank you. So just because you saw me wearing black and brown yesterday you thought you must copy me.

He looked at himself and laughed.

Thapelo: Don't start please.

Me: What?

He looked at me and smiled. God! My stomach had butterflies. His dimples. I looked down. I looked at him. I fixed his scarf up for him.

Thapelo: Tjo your hands are cold.

Me: Sorry.

He took out his gloves and made me wear them.

Me: No you'll get cold. At least take one and I will take one.

He smiled and agreed to my idea. We arrived at the mall and we went to the restaurant of my choice. He told me to chose. We arrived and placed our order.

Thapelo: There's a movie I would like us to go and watch afterwards.

Me: Okay.

Thapelo: Which type do you like?

Me: I like everything. I am not picky!

Thapelo: Just like me.

Me: Liar! (We laughed.)

He insisted so I let him be. After eating, we went to the cinema. We bought popcorn and drinks. We then went to watch a movie. The movie was really nice. I enjoyed myself with him. He was an open minded person and eyisa kakhulu. I was laughing and I felt so happy and at ease with him. I didn't think I was going to feel that way but I did. The feeling was so nice. After the movie we looked around, doing window shopping. He asked a certain guy to take pictures of us. I refused at first but the guy that he asked convinced me so I agreed. We

took a number of pictures with his phone. We thanked the guy and he left. Around 15:00 we took a cab back home. He dropped me off first. We stepped out of cab.

Me: I must admit. I had a wonderful time with you.

Thapelo: I had a perfect time. So we can do it again?

Me: If I will pay for the movies we can and you can pay for the food.

Thapelo: Why do I have to pay for food though?

Me: Because you're a man!? Hello?

He smiled and looked down.

Me: What?

Thapelo: I like this side of you.

Me: Oh. I have sides now.

Thapelo: Yes you do. I also like the cheeky one but this side takes the trophy because it makes your face shine.

Me: Okay. Stop it. (I smiled and touched my cheeks) I think they are red now.

He smiled and kissed them both. I blushed. Hhaybo! We looked at each other and hugged each other for a long time than before. We let go and he baby kissed my lips softly. And my forehead.

Thapelo: I want to see you going inside.

I smiled and nodded. I ran off. As I was about to go in. I looked back and he was still looking at me. I waved my hand back at him and he did the same. I walked inside with a smile. I realised I still had his glove on my hand. I shook my head and I went to our flat. Aunty was not in so I went to my room and I threw myself on the bed. I kept on thinking about my day.....

---

3rd Person Narrator.....

Cikizwa's father was really mad at Themba. Yes! He was his boss but it was really disrespectful of Themba to sleep with his daughter. His daughter was only yrs 23old. To him, Cikizwa was just a baby girl. He was going to hurt Themba but he didn't how. The only thing he thought about was telling Samkelo the truth. The day Themba called the meeting on his house. He asked Uyathandwa to borrow him his phone. He looked for Samkelo's number and he found it. Later that night he called Samkelo using the public phone. Samkelo answered.

Sam: Samkelo Ndunakazi speaking hello?

Cikizwa's dad: Themba Smith is behind your downfall at work. He stole all that money and framed you for it.

Sam: Woah! Woah! Themba Smith?

Cikizwa's dad: Yes. Your wife's ex husband.

He hung up the call before Samkelo could utter another word....

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

I must have fallen asleep because I woke up when my aunt was calling my name. I rubbed my eyes and looked at her.

Melo: Come and eat.

Me: I am not hungry.

Melo: Where were you the whole day Alondwe?

Me: I was with my friend.

Melo: Oh really? You leave early in the morning and come back at night?

Me: Ha.a I did not come back at night. I come back by 3'oclock but you were not here. So don't twist it please.

Melo: My brother made a mistake you by making me live with you. You're so disrespectful. I didn't say anything. I took off my clothes. My phone rang while I was doing that. My aunt

walked out of my room. I took my phone. My heart started pounding. My grandmother was calling. My father's biological mother. I was so scared to answer. I haven't heard from her ever since I left her house. I answered.

Me: Gogo?

Gogo: How are you Alondwe?

Me: I am fine and you?

Gogo: I am fine. I have been meaning to call you but I just didn't have the courage to call.

Me: I am sorry gogo.

Gogo: You don't have to be sorry. It's not your fault. Your father told me the whole truth about what really happened.

Me: Oh.

Gogo: That's what happens my baby. The sins of the fathers fall on their children. Yes you did not deserve any of the things that happened to you but the child is already there you must love it, talk to it and cherish it.

Me: I don't know how to love it.

Gogo: It's still early baby. You'll see. The love will come. The only thing that's bothering your father now is telling your mother.

Me: They'll fight grandma he must not tell her. Mom's health is not stable.

Gogo: I know baby but it has to be done. Don't worry about it. Samkelo will look after her okay?

Me: Yes gogo.

Gogo: Okay goodnight then baby. Take care of yourself.

Me: Goodnight. Thank you.

Gogo: Okay.

She hung up the call. I sighed and took off the rest of my clothes. I had a lot of messages on WhatsApp from Nkulu, Thapelo and other people. I ignored them and sleep. The following morning was a Sunday. I went to church with my friend like we always do. Just to thank the Lord for being good to us. After church he wanted me to tell him about my date. I did and he went all crazy. I couldn't stop laughing. We were having lunch.

Nkulu: So are you going to give him a chance?

Me: I don't know. I think I like him too.

Nkulu: That's so sweet. Just give him a chance if it doesn't work out then stop.

Me: That's my problem. What if it doesn't work out after I have fallen deep for him?

Nkulu: Thapelo is a nice guy from a well mannered family. He will treat you right.

I smiled and nodded. We continued talking and having a good time together until it was time for us to go our separate ways. I arrived at home and I cleaned up the flat. I cooked after that. I went to shower and I studied my books while chatting with Thapelo.

The following day was a Monday. I was going to school. I woke up in the morning and I prepared myself for school. I took my books and I went to have breakfast. My aunt was not around. I didn't even know if she slept in the flat the previous night or not. After breakfast I took a taxi to school. I arrived a school. I was a little bit late. I rushed into my first class and luckily the Teacher wasn't there yet. I went to my seat and there was a sugar gum pasted on it. Not just a small amount of sugar gum but a lot. I looked at it and looked at Mpendulo. He smiled.

Mpendulo: Morning.

Me: Morning who did this?

Mpendulo: I don't know but I suppose you won't sit here with me anymore.

Me: Where am I supposed to sit?

He looked back and pointed a chair next to Thapelo. It was the only sit available.

Me: Where did the other seats go?

Mpendulo: I don't know. Here's the teacher coming. Go and sit down.

Me: Mxm!

I took my bag and I went to sit down next to Thapelo. He smiled and looked at the teacher.

Me: (whispering) I know you did this.

Thapelo: What? I did nothing.

Me: Why did you put the sugar gum on my seat?

Thapelo: I am not a child. I wouldn't do that. Kids do that.

I pinched his ear. He screamed "ouch!" Everyone looked at him even the Teacher.

Teacher: Is everything alright Mr Moloji

Thapelo: No Sir. Miss Ndunakazi –

Me: He's lying Sir.

Teacher: Lying about what?

Me: That I pinched him. (The class laughed)

Teacher: And how did you know he was going to say that you pinched him.

Mpendulo: Just the question I had.

The class and the teacher laughed. Thapelo laughed too.

Teacher: Miss Ndunakazi please stand up and apologies to Mr Moloji.

Me: But –

Teacher: Please!

He said using the gesture of his hands to show me to stand up. I stood up and faced Thapelo.

He smiled.

Me: I am sorry Thapelo Moloji for pinching you.

The class laughed.

Thapelo: Apology accepted Alondwe.

Teacher: Thanks. You may sit down.

I sat down and looked at the front.

Thapelo: Don't be mad at me.

Me: Mxm.

Teacher: I got your tests scripts.

My heart started beating really fast.

Teacher: They are in highest to lowest. Okay. Our highest is Alondwe Ndunakazi with 96% (the class clapped hands) and Thapelo Moloji with 96%. Come.

I rolled my eyes and stood up. Thapelo stood up with me. We walked to the front together.

He held my hand. I looked at him and he didn't look back at me. We took our scripts and we went back to our seats. He let go of my hand.

Thapelo: At least it was a draw.

Me: Maybe something went wrong.

Thapelo: Really now? You should be happy that I didn't beat you.

Me: As if you would.

Thapelo: We have a Maths test coming up. We will see what will happen.

Me: Okay. Game on Thapelo.

He smiled and looked at his script. I was happy that Mpendulo moved from 60% to 80%

Me: And here you were saying he is a tough learner.

Thapelo: Okay. I admit you're patient with him. Thanks for helping him.

I smiled and nodded. I was proud of myself but at my school I would've gotten a 100% for that test. Just that competition plants some anxiety but it is good for a learner. It keeps you focused.

---

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

The week ended and finally I was going back home. I made a farewell to the team. Muzi, a

few guys and girls and I left for South Africa. I landed home it was a Saturday morning. I took a cab straight home after saying my goodbyes. The cab dropped me off after I have paid. I went inside the gates and I opened the door. The house was still quiet. I suppose they were still sleeping. I went upstairs in our room. My husband was sleeping with the boys. I put down everything I went to shower. It was still early. I moisturised my body and wore my pyjamas inside the bathroom and I went to join them in bed. I did it slowly so that I won't wake them up. Luckily they didn't wake up. I fell asleep immediately. I was tired. I was woken up by a loud scream. I quickly got up Alupheli was screaming. Samkelo and Mesuli woke up.

Sam: Alupheli man! What's wrong now?

Alupheli: Mom is back!

They need both looked at the direction that Alupheli was pointing and Mesuli screamed too. Samkelo smiled.

Me: Come to me.

I hugged my boys tightly. I was so happy to see them in one piece! I then stood up and I went to hug my husband. We kissed each other for a long time. We stopped after some time.

Me: I have missed you.

Sam: I have missed you too Mrs Ndunakazi.

We kissed once more and we let go.

Alupheli: Mom! Mom! Please make breakfast for us please.

Kuhle: Yes! Yes please!

Me: You missed my breakfast that much?

Them: Yes.

Me: (smiling) Okay. I will make breakfast for you all.

They screamed. I went to wash my face and I went to make breakfast for them. I was so happy to be home. Mama uNancy walked inside my kitchen. We hugged each other.

Nancy: It's good to have you back. I hope everything went well?

Me: Yes mama. It did. Thank you for looking after them. I really appreciate it.

Nancy: It's my pleasure dear.

Me: You can go home today. I will deposit the money on Monday.

Nancy: Okay thanks.

She left. I finished up and my boys came back smelling fresh and looking good. We prayed and had breakfast together. They were telling me about how their father was treating them. I was laughing because they were even lying saying "He called the crocodiles for us but we beat them and beat them until they died" I laughed and Samkelo was laughing too. The only person who was missing was my daughter. I was missing her so much.

After breakfast we went upstairs to change Samkelo was taking us out for games. I showered first and I went to my room to change.

Sam: Can we talk first before you finish up?

Me: Okay.

I sat down next to him.

Sam: I know who did this to me.

Me: What? Really who?

Sam: Themba Smith.

Me: Okay. From?

Sam: Your ex husband.

I looked at him and laughed sarcastically.

Sam: You're laughing?

Me: Because I am waiting for you to tell me that you're joking.

Sam: I am not kidding. Someone called and told me that Themba framed me.

Me: And you believed them. Just like that?

Sam: Yes! I believed them. I haven't confronted him because I wanted to tell you first but obviously you don't believe me.

Me: Yes I don't, because this is ridiculous. Themba would never do that. Specially knowing that this will hurt me. He would never.

Sam: Wow!

Me: Maybe this person wants to create a feud between us.

Sam: Between who? You and Themba?

Me: Our families. But I know Themba would never do that.

Sam: Wow! You still love him neh?

Me: What? Where does that come from?

Sam: Look at you! How are you defending him right now. You don't even say let's not make accusations without proof but you're defending like he is your lover.

Me: That's because he's the father of my kids. And he cares about me.

Sam: Wow and you care about him too.

Me: Samkelo please let's not fight about this please. I will help you find the person behind this and we will put him behind bars.

Sam: You know what? I don't need your help because if it's your ex husband clearly we won't put him behind bars.

Me: That's because it's not him Samkelo. Bbe I will help you and –

Sam: Ey Futsegi man I said I don't need your help! Do you hear me? Stay out of this. I don't need you. If you even try to help me even if it is without my knowledge. You'll make me do something you wouldn't like. So stay out of my business and continue defending your boyfriend. Clearly he's so important to you. Tsk!

He stood up and left. I sat down there just surprised. He was so angry but I was sure that Themba didn't do it and I was going to prove that even if Samkelo didn't want me to. I dressed up and I went downstairs. They were all gone. He had taken the kids and left without me. I took my phone and called him but he didn't answer. I sighed and I went to the garage. I saw a white motorbike. It had a red ribbon on it. I went close and the leather of its seat was written "Happy Birthday Mrs Ndunakazi" I smiled and a tear fell off. I wiped it immediately. I took my car and I drove straight to the centre. I was going to start investigating with our IT lady

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

I went back home late. It was even dark outside. We tried to make progress on Samkelo's case but the person we found didn't seem to exist. But we were going to use another approach the following day to find this person. I wasn't going to let him blame Themba about something he didn't do. Not that I still loved Themba. That love was long gone but I cared about him because he's the father of my children and he'll always be part of my life. He's practically my family. On my way home I called him. He answered.

Themba: Mrs Ndunakazi.

Me: Hey how are you?

Themba: I am fine mama and you?

Me: I am fine. You know what I want to talk about?

Themba: What made you not to call me for three weeks?

Me: I was in America. Wait why did you fool me Themba?

Themba: I didn't fool you Thandeka. I forgot.

Me: What's more important than our child's education. You left my house with guns and even forget that you must hire a tutor for Uyabongeka but you have balls to tell her that you pay a lot of money for her education.

Themba: Who told you that?

Me: Our daughter told me that. Please hire the tutor for my child. I beg you. The year is about to end. She must atleast grab something that will make her get 50% not to fail maths dismally.

Themba: I will do that right away.

Me: Good. And one more thing I am taking her next year.

Themba: What?

Me: You heard me. She told me that she wants to live with me so next year she's coming to Durban.

Themba: You can't do that she's my daughter.

Me: Our daughter. And don't think about threatening me. It won't work. My daughter will live with me. Have a goodnight.

Themba: (on a low tone) Goodnight.

Me: And please don't forget on Friday. I am coming to fetch them for September break.

Themba: No. I am coming to Durban. I will come with them.

Me: I will be bringing my sons to their grandparents I would like to take them in your house myself.

Themba: Don't be stubborn. Your kids will have to leave on Monday maybe. At least give them a weekend together.

Me: I don't like it but it's okay.

Themba: Why didn't you mention Alondwe where is she?

Me: Alondwe is a big girl now. She visits whoever she wants to visit.

I didn't want to tell him about her pregnancy.

Themba: Yet she's not even 18yrs. That's what you'll teach my daughter.

I stepped out of my car and walked inside the house. Samkelo was on the lounge with the boys. I went upstairs in our room.

Me: Every parent must give their children a sense of independency Themba. Prepare them for the world. They should not depend on us forever. At least that's what I learnt from growing up without a mother. If I didn't have the attitude that I had. I wasn't going to make it out there. Life was going to swallow me.

Themba: I suppose you're right. She'll live with you.

Me: Thanks. Goodnight.

Themba: Goodnight.

I hung up the call. I was happy that my daughter was going to live with me. At least Uyathandwa was comfortable with his father. I didn't want to ask him about the money. I just couldn't ask without proof. Samkelo walked inside our room while I was taking off my clothes.

Sam: Where have you been?

Me: I went to the centre.

Sam: What were you doing there the whole day?

Me: I was working Samkelo. I told you I will help you.

Sam: I think I made myself clear that I don't need your help.

Me: Well I am not helping you then. I am helping our kids because they need a daddy who has a job to look after them.

Sam: We don't need your help. Continue with this investigation of yours. It won't end well.

Me: Are you threatening me Samkelo. Me your wife? You're threatening me?

Sam: It's not a threat but I am just saying continue that's all I am saying.

He left his phone on the bed and he went to the bathroom. I didn't understand his anger. I heard the water running. I laid on my back for a few minutes. I stood up when I heard the water stopping. I continued with taking off my clothes. His phone rang while I was still

wearing my gown. I took it and answered. Candice was calling.

Me: Hello.

Candy: Hello can I please talk to Mr Ndunakazi.

Me: You're talking to his wife how can I help you?

Candy: Okay. Please remind your husband about the meeting tomorrow morning.

Me: What meeting?

Candy: I think that you should ask him not me.

Me: You can't just request a meeting with my husband without my knowledge.

Samkelo came back from the bathroom with a towel wrapped around his waist. He saw that I was on his phone. He didn't say anything. He never had a problem when I answer his phone and I didn't have a problem too when he answers mine. He continued with what he was doing.

Candy: I am not requesting it Mrs Ndunakazi. I am reminding him. And please stop waisting my time. You asked and I told you.

Me: You haven't tell me enough.

Candy: I said ask your husband. I am just doing my job and I believe my job description does not include me reporting to you. Have yourself a goodnight. I also have better things to do and a family to entertain.

She hung up the call. I clicked my tongue and I put his phone on the bed.

Sam: Who was that?

Me: It was the owner of Candy crush.

I walked out of my room. I didn't understand what business did he have with that Candice woman. I didn't even know her. I stood by the stairs and breathed in and out.

Me: Alupheli! Come let's go and bath.

He stood up from the couch and came up to me slowly. His head was looking on the TV.

Me: I don't have all night Alupheli. And you Ndunakazi omdala. Why are you sitting your behind down?

Kuhle: I am still watching.

Me: Don't make me come down there and beat your way up to the bathroom.

He stood up quickly. He mumbled something and switched off the TV. His little brother was smiling. He was probably happy that he wasn't leaving the movie alone.

Me: What are you saying?

Kuhle: (smiling) Nothing mommy.

I picked up my little boy.

Kuhle: Who will run the water for me in my room?

Me: Come you'll use our shower.

Kuhle: Yes!

Alupheli: I want to bath with him too.

Me: You can't bath yourself.

I walked inside the room. My husband was on his laptop with a lot of papers around him. He was on the phone discussing whatever it was about accounting. I went to the bathroom with my sons. Mesuli insisted on using the shower. I bathed with Alupheli. We having conversation on the bathroom with my sons...

---

3rd Person Narrator...

The Friday came for Themba to go to Durban with his children. He was taking them to their mother. He did hire the tutor for his daughter and Uyabongeka was getting along pretty well with her tutor. He went to his family.

Themba:"Mom. We're leaving now. I will come back on Sunday. I have some business I have to take care of in Durban "

Mrs Smith: "Did you tell your wife?"

Themba: "Yes of course I did"

Mrs Smith: "Okay. Goodbye my grandchildren"

Uyabongeka: "Oh my granny. I will miss you so much"

She hugged her grandmother. Uyathandwa followed after her. Uyabongeka hugged her baby sister.

Sisipho: "Can I go with you too"

Uyabongeka: "You can't go with us. But I promise I will take you with me next year to visit Durban and my little brother Alupheli"

Sisipho nodded. They hugged their stepmother and went to the car. Uyabongeka ran to the front door.

Uyathandwa: "I am the one taking the front seat."

Uyabongeka: "No! I chose it first. Tell him daddy"

Themba: "Let the Princess sit on the front"

Uyabongeka stuck out her tongue for her brother. She laughed and took the front seat. They all stepped inside the car.

Uyathandwa: "Who will come back with the car dad?"

Themba: "Thabani will."

Uyathandwa: "Okay"

Uyabongeka: "Daddy why are we taking this route?"

Themba: "It's the shortest drive to the airport"

Uyabongeka: "Yoh! I hate short cuts"

Themba: "Watch your tongue young lady"

Uyabongeka: "Sorry"

She giggled.

On the other hand Cikizwa's father saw that Samkelo didn't take what he told him seriously. He was expecting Themba to be behind bars by the end of two weeks but it did not happen.

He chose to revenge him flesh to flesh. He felt so disrespected because Themba was banging his little girl. Him and his hit man were waiting for Themba's car. On the cosy corner.

Cikizwa's father knew that Themba loves using short cut when going to the airport. Little did he know that he wasn't travelling alone but he was his children. As soon as the car showed up, they started firing guns at his car. The children screamed.

Themba: "Get your heads down now!"

Themba shouted trying to protect his children. Cikizwa's father heard the voices of the kids and he told his hit man to stop. They stopped and ran off. Themba pulled his car on the other side side of the road. He quickly stepped out of the car. He was not hurt. He checked Uyathandwa.

Uyathandwa: "I have nothing daddy"

Uyabongeka: (on a low tone) "Daddy?"

Themba quickly went to her. He untied her from the seat belt. He gave his son the phone.

Themba: "Call an ambulance your sister has been shot"

Uyathandwa: "What?? Sese!"

Themba: "Ethan Junior hurry up please! Hold on Princess try not to speak"

Uyabongeka: "Mom? I want my mommy"

Themba: "You will see her my baby. I promise you. You will see her"

Uyabongeka shook her head as she held her wound and tears fell off because of the pain. She was only a 11year old child. The pain was too much for her and the bullets were two inside her. She coughed out blood.

Themba: "Uyathandwa come and hold her. I will drive to the hospital myself"

Uyathandwa quickly landed on the front seat and tried to sit. Themba was holding his

daughter. He placed her on the hands of his brother.

Uyabongeka: "My mom. Daddy.. I wanted my mom.. My mom -"

Themba: "You'll see her -"

She coughed once more and took her last breath as life left her. Themba shook her.

Uyathandwa: "Daddy?"

Themba:"NO! Uyabongeka! No! Please stay with me baby. Thembeke! Don't leave us.

Sesethu"

He touched her pulse and he realised that his daughter was gone. His mind took him back the day he discovered that Thandeka was carrying his second child. How happy he was though Thandeka wasn't ready and was angry with him. He remembered the day that Thandeka gave birth. The pain he felt when his daughter was going to be born. Fighting with her mother for her custody. All those things came back rushing like floods in his mind. He looked at his son who was crying holding his sister's lifeless body. He held them both.

Themba:"What will I tell Thandeka? How will I tell her. How do I look her in the eye and say our child is dead"

He cried, the pain was unspeakable. It was too much. A few cars pulled through to help but both Themba and his son couldn't let go of Uyabongeka's tiny body.....

Chaper : 7

3rd Person Narrator.....

Love is a beautiful thing, love is like a new pair of shoes. You just feel good on them. That how Nobuhle felt. She was so in love and happy. She wished she could share her happiness with her sister or Thandeka but her sister wasn't around. On a Friday morning, she took a gamble and called Thandeka. Thandeka answered.

Thandeka: "This is a surprise"

Nobuhle: "Thandeka, firstly I want to say I am sorry. I didn't get back to you. But the plan didn't go accordingly. The girl blew her cover because it turns out that Sandile was the guy that she was in love with."

Thandeka: "What? So tell me what did you do about that?"

Nobuhle: "He hijacked my boyfriend and held me captive. He was really angry but he made a mistake by putting me on the same room with the girl. I sent her to him. And I covered her tattoo. Rajiv and I escaped."

Thandeka: "Tjo God! That's a relief. At least Rajiv will be getting that virginity"

They laughed out loud.

Nobuhle: "Yes he will. I am so happy. Tomorrow they are coming for lobola negotiations"

Thandeka screamed out of excitement. Nobuhle laughed out loud.

Thandeka: "So tell me are you going to do the Hindu wedding ceremony?"

Nobuhle: "Yes"

Thandeka: "Yhu! Yhu! Can I please get an invite. I will buy the outfit for the wedding. A beautiful Sari and I just want to see you getting married"

Nobuhle: "I will definitely send it to you. I will also invite you for other ceremonies"

Thandeka: "When will be the wedding"

Nobuhle: "On the 15th of September"

Thandeka: "Really now? On my little girl's birthday Nobuhle!"

Nobuhle: "Which one?"

Thandeka: "That one who is too forward but too sweet more than her big sister" (They laughed)

Nobuhle:"Oh. I remember her. Maybe you must come with her, give her a little sari and she'll be a Princess "

They laughed.

Thandeka: "Then Alondwe will be jealous"

They laughed again.

Nobuhle: "You'll be giving her a different birthday gift"

Thandeka: "Only if you knew what she wants for her birthday. I am still saving up for that present. All of them. They are driving me crazy. Please make sure you don't by any chance have a lot of kids"

They laughed.

Nobuhle: "I will take note of that. Thanks Thandeka for everything that you've done for me. I really appreciate it"

Thandeka: "It's okay love. We should meet sometimes"

On the background one of Thandeka's sons screamed. They were playing wrestling instead of eating breakfast. Samkelo was with them. Talk about a naughty father.

Nobuhle: "I will call you then bye"

Thandeka: "Bye. I have to attend that screaming. One thing for sure is that their father is with them as they are screaming."

Nobuhle: "Kids!"

They laughed and hung up. Nobuhle was happy that at least Thandeka wanted them to meet.

She was really grateful. She then took a taxi to west street where she was meeting up with Nadine for the fitting of their outfits for Gary's wedding. Her parents supported her marriage they didn't want to do the same mistake they did with Philisiwe. Sakhile on the other hand was really sad that his favourite sister was getting married and she'll be leaving them....

---

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

The two weeks went by Thapelo and I weren't dating yet but we were really close. I had fallen for him. But I wasn't ready to say it. My mom called and told me that she was back. I was happy to hear that and I couldn't wait to go home and be with my family. I had no choice but to go to my therapist. You know when they say our parents knows better? Sometimes it's true because going there really helped me. I was happy again and I was free. Just that one thing I couldn't do yet was to accept my child and love the child. I went for check ups and my baby was alright. My aunt and I were alright again. So we wrote the Maths test. It wasn't something that I expected. On Thursday we were in class getting our scripts. I was always sitting next to Thapelo in all the classes. He made it sure that I sit next to him. Everyone thought we were dating but we weren't dating yet. The picture of his phone wall paper was us on our first date. It was really beautiful. So people who touch his phone would think I am really his girlfriend. The teacher called out the highest.

Teacher: Our highest is Thapelo Molo with a 100%.

He smiled and looked at me. I didn't smile. He laughed. The class clapped hands for him. I knew that he was going to brag. In that moment I wished that I could just fly to heaven and live with Jesus for the whole month. He came back and sat next to me. I took his script and look at it.

Thapelo: Don't cry nana.

Me: Don't call me like that my father calls me like that I told you.

Thapelo: But you're my Nana.

Me: Mxm.

I continued looking at it. My heart broke instead yoh! I wanted to cry.

Thapelo: You didn't write the test Alondwe?

Me: I did why?

Thapelo: The teacher has stopped calling high marks and yet your name hasn't been called.

Me: Obviously I failed Thapelo.

Thapelo: No you didn't. You just got a lowest mark.

Me: Mxm.

Thapelo: Yeah. Remember I was a nuisance reminding you to study.

Me: Shut up!

My name was called and I went to the front.

Teacher: I think it's me that you don't like.

Me: Why?

Teacher: All the Teachers are aware of the competition between you and Thapelo and yet you got this for me. While you get 90+ for others?

Me: I am sorry mam. I will do better next time.

Teacher: You better. Or else your parents must know that you have dropped on Maths.

Me: That's unnecessary it was just one test and I will fix it.

Teacher: Good. Go and sit down.

I took my paper and I went to sit down. Thapelo made my chair to be close to him.

Me: Why are doing this?

Thapelo: I want to hug you.

Me: Mxm.

I shifted the chair. I put my script in my file. I didn't show it to him. I was down the whole day. I got a 60% really! Like for real 60%?? Nkulu tried to make me better but I was just angry with myself. After school I was with him.

Nkulu: You're still upset?

Me: He got a 100% Nkululeko didn't you hear that?

Nkulu: I had that but you don't have to mop around because of that.

Me: Mxm! I won't be talking to him for the next three months.

Nkulu: Really now?

I saw them coming. Thapelo and Mpendulo.

Me: You'll wait for your bae alone. I am leaving.

I took a taxi home. I passed by the mall and I bought a few goodies so that I will eat them and feel better. I went home after that. First thing I did was to take my paper and Thapelo script. That's what we agreed on. If someone got a huge difference between the other. That person who got the lowest mark must take the script and go with it at home. I looked at our script. I cried Brah! I took my phone and called mom. She picked up.

Mom: Nana?

Me:(crying) I got a 60% mom, not even 70%.

Mom: Okay nana what are you talking about?

Me: We wrote a maths test and I got a 60%. Not even 70% the last time I got a 60% in Maths was in grade 10.

Mom: Oh. My poor baby I am sorry okay. You'll do better next time.

Me: You don't understand mom. Thapelo got a 100% not just a 80 or 90 but a 100% mom.

That is a total.

Mom: Who's Thapelo?

Me:(crying louder) My competitor!

Mom: (mumbling) Jesus! Hormones ale ngane! (Speaking normal) They'll be a next test Alondwe. Don't cry.

I heard daddy requesting to talk to me. I heard shuffling sounds.

Dad: Nana?

Me: Daddy. Your Princess got a 60%.

Dad: That's not Bad at all.

Me: Daddy.

Dad: Other kids don't get that 60% Alondwe.

Me: I am not just any other kid. I am your daughter. The daughter of Samkelo Ndunakazi.  
Have you ever got a 60% in Maths?

Dad: Yes. Sometimes I would fail. Specially paper two. That paper always gave me hard time. (I wiped my tears and listened) But I asked for help and I did better.

Me: But paper 1 has never given me a problem.

Dad: It's okay. Just because you got 60% and your competitor friend got a 100% that doesn't mean this was a final round. The ring of boxing the game has rounds. Loosing the 1st round doesn't mean you'll loose the whole game. You can still win. Do you understand?

Me: Yes daddy.

Dad: You're a Ndunakazi and giving up is not in our genes Nana so don't give up.

Me: (smiling) Yes! I won't give up. You're the best daddy in the world. Thanks daddy.

Dad: Okay Nana. I love you okay?

Me: I love you too mom and dad.

Them: Bye.

Me: Bye.

Alupheli: (shouting) Nikuzwile ukhala Yoyondwe! Waa! (I heard you crying)

Me: Fusegi wena!

(I heard him cry too)

Mom and dad: ALONDWE!!

Me: I am sorry!!

Mom: You're coming home tomorrow don't forget.

Me: I won't mom. Aunty will book the ticket today.

Mom: Okay. Good.

I hung up the call and giggled. I took the scripts and I pinned them on the wall. I wanted to always make me remember that the competition was tough! My daddy made me feel better.

That's what parents should do, they must pick their kids up when they are down.

The following morning was a Friday. I was going home after school. I couldn't wait to see my siblings and my parents. I had breakfast with aunt.

Melo: Don't be late after school.

Me: I won't be late. I will come home afterwards.

Melo: Did you pack your clothes?

Me: Yes.

Melo: And your maths books? (She laughed)

Me: Aunty!

Melo: No it's funny because you were crying just because it's that Thapelo guy who got a highest mark. Just because he has a thing for you.

Me: That's not true.

I stood up, she laughed at me. Maybe I was crying because it was Thapelo. Mxm! I took my things and I went to school. I asked a girl to go and sit on my sit. She refused at first but I gave her money so she went to sit next to Thapelo. That didn't help because on the next class

I was sitting next to him.

Thapelo: So you ditched me on the first class.

Me: Mxm.

Thapelo: You still mad because of the test?

Me: Shut up. Thapelo.

He sang softly "Everything is gonna be alright. Be alright, be alright!"

I smiled a little. He had a beautiful voice. We looked at each other and smiled. The teacher came and the lesson began. During break time I was with Nkululeko. Thapelo came to us.

Thapelo: Nonku bae!

I looked at him. Thapelo winked at me. I looked aside.

Nkulu: Hey Thaps. What do you want?  
Thapelo: Can I talk to her alone.  
Me: I don't want to talk to you.  
Thapelo: I was talking to Nonkululeko not you.  
Nkululeko laughed. I gave him an evil eye. He stopped immediately.  
Nkulu: Let me give you two some time.  
He left. Thapelo sat down.  
Me: So Nonku is your bae?  
Thapelo: Are you jealous?  
Me: No I am not.  
Thapelo: Eww! You're jealous of a dude. How much more if it was a girl.  
Me: I am not jealous.  
Thapelo: Relax. It's suits you. You're cute on it.  
Me: Mxm. (He smiled and kissed my cheek)  
Thapelo: I brought you something for lunch.  
I looked at him. He gave me chocolates. I smiled and took them.  
Me: Thank you.  
Thapelo: I love you Alondwe. It's been two months now since I first saw you. I know I shouldn't be counting but I can't help it.  
Me: I know you love me.  
Thapelo: And I know you love me too.  
Me: Then claim what you believe is yours.  
He smiled and made me face him. He slowly went close to me and he kissed me. I kissed him back. We shifted close to each other and we kissed each other for a long time. It felt so good and exciting. We stopped after some. He baby kissed me.  
Thapelo: I love you.  
Me: I love you too.  
Thapelo: My Princess.  
I giggled.  
Me: Not Queen?  
Thapelo: No. But one day I will make you my Queen my Princess.  
Me: You will be my King my Prince.  
We smiled. Nkululeko came to us screaming. We looked at him.  
Nkulu: So is it official?  
Us: What?  
Nkulu: You! Guys. Come on! I saw you kissing.  
Thapelo: Nonku you're spying on us?  
Nkulu: What? No. I mistakenly led my eyes here.  
Me: My friend though?  
Nkulu: So?  
Us: What?  
Nkulu: Tell me the good news please.  
He closed his eyes.  
Thapelo: Your eyes didn't deceive you.  
He screamed and hugged us both. He kissed my cheek and Thapelo's cheek.  
Thapelo: Eww! Dude!  
Me: Nkululeko that's my Prince you're kissing.  
I wiped Thapelo's cheek.  
Nkulu: Hhaysuka. Just suck it up!  
We laughed and shook our heads. Thapelo and I looked at each other and smiled. We both

looked down.  
Nkulu: Ncoah man. How sweet!  
We laughed..

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

Samkelo was out. I was with my sons on the lounge. It was a Saturday morning. I was really worried about my kids. Alondwe postponed and told me that she was coming on Saturday afternoon. For what reasons? I don't know. Themba's phone was on voicemail.

Uyathandwa's phone was on voicemail. I didn't know what to do. Samkelo didn't care about the fact that my kids weren't home yet because he was busy building a case against Themba. He didn't even care to share information with me. I got a call from the IT lady on our centre. I answered.

Me: Camille?

Cami: We got the guy Thandeka.

Me: What? Really? Who is he?

Cami: It's just an IT guy. Who lives at Cape Town. We have located him. The only thing left is for us to pay him a visit.

Me: Oh Camile I could kiss you right now.

Cami: Okay slow down. I don't think Mr Ndunakazi can be happy to hear that.

Me: What he doesn't know, won't hurt him.

Cami: Amen!

Me: Thank you Cami! I will see you Monday, when we talk about visiting this clever guy.

Cami: Yes. Bye.

Me: Bye.

Just then Themba walked inside the house alone. He was holding Alupheli. Alupheli must have been the one who opened the gate for him.

Me: And there he comes but alone. Where are my kids?

Themba: Not even a how are you Themba?

Me: I can see that you're in one piece. Themba.

He smiled faintly and sat down next to me. He took out a box of Ferror Roche and hand over to me. I smiled and placed it on top of the table.

Me: Thanks.

Themba: My pleasure. But don't eat them yet. Drink this.

He opened the box and took two chocolates, he gave them to my sons. They thanked him.

I took the bottle and drank. It was water but it tasted different.

Me: Okay. Where are my kids?

Themba: They'll come, just that they went to see my friend first.

Me: How nice of you to give my kids away to your friends. Which friend?

Themba: Brandon and Emma.

Me: Oh. So how have you been?

Themba: I've been good and you?

Me: I have been good.

I could feel that Themba had something to tell him and I could sense that he wasn't alright.

Me: Okay out with it. What is it?

Samkelo walked inside the house. He greeted Themba and he went upstairs to our room.

Themba: Is he alright?

Me: Just tell me already. Forget about him.

Themba: Okay. Boys please excuse us.

They nodded and went upstairs. Themba held my hand. He looked at me in the eyes.

Themba: Yesterday I was on my way to the airport with the kids.

Me: Yeah.

Themba: We got shot.

Me: What?

My breath started changing. Themba gave me the bottle for me to drink.

Themba: Please drink all of it.

I nodded and drank the whole bottle. My nerves were so down. I looked at him, a tear escaped from his eye. I went close to him.

Me: What is it?

Themba: Uyabongeka got shot.

I looked at him. For a second I was so down. I looked at him again.

Me: My daughter got shot?

He cried, seeing him cry got me worried. I stood up.

Me: Where is she?

Themba: I am sorry Thandeka.

Me: Where is she Themba?

Themba: She – She – She didn't make it.

Me: What do you mean she didn't make it?

Themba: She died on the scene.

All I could hear was Samkelo's threats. I didn't panic nor whatever. I went upstairs. Themba was crying.

Themba: Where are you going?

Me: Wait!

I went to my room and closed the door behind me. Samkelo was on my dressing table chair.

Me: How could you?

He looked at me and stood up.

Sam: What's wrong?

Me: Stop it! Stop pretending like you don't know.

Sam: What are you talking about?

I gave him one hot slap. He held his cheek and looked at me with so much shock. I didn't have tears, or my mind was still in denial stage. I don't know.

Me: You don't even have proof that Themba framed you. But yet again you have did such cruelty. Not to him alone but to me Samkelo. Me your wife!

Sam: Just tell me what have I done now?

Me: You killed my daughter! You sent people to kill my child just because of some stupid R1 million that got lost.

Sam: Excuse me?

Me: Yeah. Pretend like you don't know. Yesterday you send people to kill my child. I don't know if you wanted Themba or her but you killed her. You threatened me Samkelo. I didn't think you would do such cruelty.

Tears streamed down his face. He didn't expect that I will figure it out. He thought he was going to get away with it.

Sam: I am sorry for your loss but I didn't kill your child Thandeka. I loved your kids like my own. Why would I do that? And regardless of it all. I love you Thandeka. I wouldn't hurt you.

Me: Stop lying! You know what stop it with your lies. Right now I want you out of my house! I never want to see you again. You will never! I mean you will never see my children again. I will make sure that, they know that you're nothing but a cruel beast. After the funeral I want a divorce and I want you out of our lives. You deserve nothing but loneliness.

Sam: Because I killed your daughter?

I got angry. He wasn't even showing remorse or regret. He wasn't the man I fell in love with.

The man whom I love when he didn't want to be loved. The sweet man who was forever my knight in the shining armour. He was someone else full of hatred, violence and anger. For him to kill my daughter. Just like that. I opened my safe.

Sam: Thandeka I would never hurt you. I didn't-

Me: Say it again!

I pointed my gun at him. He stood still.

Sam: Thandeka!

Me: Shut up!

I aimed at his arm. I pulled the trigger. He went down before I shoot him. The bullet hit the wall. He quickly went to the door.

Sam: You can believe whatever you want to believe but you won't poison my kids against me.

He closed the door. Reality sunk in, no matter what my daughter was gone. My little princess was never coming back. I sat down on the floor. Themba's words rang in my mind. I couldn't help it. I just wailed there.

Me: My baby! My little girl.

Themba walked in immediately. He went down and took the gun away from my hand. He held me closer to him very tight. I cried inside his chest.

Me: My baby. Themba. Our little girl.

Themba: I am sorry.

We cried together. There's no amount of pain one could bare then loosing a loved one.

Uyabongeka died with a part of me. A little humanity in me partly died.....

---

3rd Person Narrator....

Samkelo closed the door behind him. Themba was already running up the stairs because he heard the gun shot.

Themba: "What did you do to her?"

Samkelo didn't say anything.

Themba:"I am talking to you!"

Sam:"Leave me alone "

Themba clicked his tongue and went inside the room. Samkelo went to his son's bedroom. They were crying.

Alupheli: "Daddy? What's happening?"

Kuhle:"We heard the sound of the gun"

Sam: "Let's go"

Kuhle:"Where are we going? "

Sam:"Somewhere safe "

Alupheli: "And mom?"

Sam: "She'll be fine. Let's go boys please"

He took their school books. And picked up Alupheli. He held Mesuli's hand. He walked out with his children. Samkelo was so hurt and disappointed. He didn't even know how was he going to prove that he was clean. He couldn't bare the thought of loosing Thandeka as his wife. Regardless of their ups and downs they always have there's no other woman he could share eternity with beside Thandeka. But clearly what they built for years had ended within a blink of an eye. Samkelo drove to the hotel with his sons. As the man that he was, he couldn't stop having tears. The thought of the little girl dying was painful even to him let alone being accused by his wife.

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

I ended up being quiet after crying. Themba and I sat on the floor quietly.

Me: Where is Uyathandwa?

Themba: He's home, with mom. He's traumatised. I think we should tell your family.

Me: I don't really have a family but you can call them. I want to shower.

Themba: What do you mean you don't have a family?

Me: I mean just that.

I stood up and I went to take a cold shower in my bathroom. My mind was all over the place. I didn't know what was happening. It didn't make sense. I was numb. I didn't want to believe that my daughter was gone but she was gone. I finished up and I went to moisturise my body. Themba was not inside my room. I changed and I went to check up on my sons. They were not inside their rooms. I called their names. I figured Samkelo had taken them. I ran to my room.

Themba: What's wrong?

Me: Samkelo took my kids.

He didn't say anything. I took my phone and I called him. Mesuli answered his phone.

Me: Scelokuhle where is your father?

Kuhle: He's busy on the bathroom.

Me: Where are you?

Kuhle: I don't know but we're with dad.

Me: I want to talk to him.

Kuhle: Okay.

I heard him run.

Sam: Hello.

Me: Why did you take my kids?

Sam: You wanted me to leave them because?

Me: They are mine! Samkelo they are mine! Do you understand.

Sam: The last time I check they are called by my name. The one you're going to leave anytime soon. So I don't see how by any chance do you claim them yours. What you can do is burry your daughter and leave the murder alone.

Me: You will pay for this Samkelo. I swear. I will make sure that you rot in jail.

Sam: Now it's you who's threatening me. I bet when my father can have an heart attack now, that will give me the right to blame you like you did.

Me: You know you did it and yet you're denying it.

Sam: Please leave me alone. I have done nothing to you but show you love. Supported you every step of the way. I was the one who picked you up when the father of your kids led you to the wolves and now what? You're cursing at me? It's okay Thandeka believe what you see. Themba will help you through as he always does I suppose.

Me: Fuck you. Uyangizwa? (Do you hear me)

Sam: Yeah ngikuzwa kahle. (I hear you loud and clear)

He hung up the call on me. I threw my phone on the wall and screamed.

Themba: What's going on Thandeka?

Me: I have to tell you something. Let's go downstairs.

He held my hand and we went downstairs.

---

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

I was with Thapelo and Nkululeko on the airport. I was heading home.

Me: Okay guys stop sulking special you My prince you look like a sissy.

Thapelo: I don't care. I will miss you.

Me: It's only a week.

Nkulu: Please come back to us safe.

Me: I promise. I will.

I hugged him and kissed his cheek. I went to Thapelo. I smiled and kissed him. We hugged each other afterwards.

Me: I love you.

Thapelo: I love you too my Princess.

I smiled and we hugged once more. I took my bags and left. I was sad but I had to see my family. I joined the line and we departed from Johannesburg to Durban.

As soon as we land I took a cab home. I arrived, I paid and I used my keys to open the gate. I used the back door. I wanted to surprise them. I smiled and walked in. I couldn't continue because it sounded like mom was crying. She was talking to a man. I had to listen to their conversation.

Mom: "...I can't really say what made him angry but he threatened me Themba. He told me that he will make me feel pain"

Themba: "Wait do you think he's behind the shooting?"

Mom: "Yes. I think so. I know he was angry but I think Samkelo killed our daughter. My little baby"

I couldn't believe it. I held my tummy as I felt so cold. Tears streamed down my face. I couldn't believe that my sister was dead and mom was blaming my father.

Themba: "I think we should take this information to the police"

Mom: "Not yet Themba. Let's burry our daughter first then I will deal with Samkelo. Please I beg you don't do something stupid "

Themba: "Why? He killed my daughter. Do you know what that child meant to me? "

Mom: "I know, she meant life for you Themba but she was my daughter too. She deserves to rest in peace. Samkelo will rot in jail and I will take my kids afterwards "

I won't lie hearing mom talk like that broke me. I just got angry.

Me: You will do no such thing.

Mom: Alondwe?

Me: How could you mom? How could you blame my father?

Mom: Alondwe you're a child you won't understand.

Me: I heard everything you said. Do you have proof that dad killed my sister except his threats?

Themba: Don't get involved in this Alondwe.

Me: I am talking to my mother! Not you.

Mom: You will show respect Alondwe!!

Me: Why? You thought I have forgotten baba ka Uyathandwa. I know that when I was a little girl you shot my father and he landed on the hospital. Mom said you were shooting criminals. I tried to brush it off but the clever child in me knew what was going on. Dad took Sese and looked after her like her own.

Themba: Just like I did with you. I loved you when you're a foetus and looked after you. Protected you.

Me: Yes I know. I haven't forgotten and my dad did partly the same with your daughter so in rich English I believe you're even. But mom I will not stand here and listen to you framing my father for something I know he didn't do. He can be everything you want him to be but he will never murder a little girl. Specially not your child mom. I suppose you don't know him like I do.

Mom: It seems like you have forgotten Alondwe that just yesterday your father chased you out because of your pregnancy.

Themba: What?

Mom: I was the one who was behind you.

Me: Yes. That's before he learnt that I am in this position because of his past. Yeah I didn't tell you because I know you'll ended up in the hospital. I begged dad not to tell you but he

felt so bad about lying to you. But he thought about your health and he had to buy time. Yeah Thandeka a guy wanted revenge on my father for what he did back in high school to his sister. He drugged me and slept with me, took a video and posted it. I got pregnant because I love you guys I tried to lie so that you won't fight but seeing that you already hate my father I might as well tell you this truth as well.

She was just puzzled. I was crying while talking.

Mom: Alondwe –

Me: I am not done yet. The last thing my father would do is to hurt you. He loves you. In fact he worships you mom, he worships the grounds where your feet walked. He would do anything to protect you. He's good with words and threats that he doesn't fulfill when it comes to his loved ones. He always threatens me with "I will beat you even if you're pregnant if you're crazy Alondwe" but he never did. I bet his threat meant I will burn that new pretty motorbike I bought for you if you go against my will because he knows how much you love it. But he would never take a life of my sister to hurt you. Do you think Uyabongeka's death only hurts you? It hurts us too. His children because Uyabongeka was our sister and our father would never do something that will hurt us. I suppose your love for him wasn't really that deep.

Mom: Don't you dare question my love for your father young lady.

Themba: I think we have said enough now. Alondwe go to your room.

Me: I don't take orders from you. You're not my father. I am leaving. I will find my father and I will tell him everything will be alright. Since you have Themba comforting you.

Mom: Alondwe don't you dare leave!

Me: Just like you have loved Uyathandwa more than all of us. I have always loved my father the most. I won't let him suffer alone.

I ran out of the house crying. I was really hurt beyond words. I called my father and he told me where he was. I took a cab straight to the hotel...

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

After seeing Alondwe walk out like that, I knew that Samkelo have won. Even after our divorce I wasn't going to have my kids with me. Part of me was angry with everything. I was hurt that my daughter had said such cruel things to me but she was only a child. She didn't know the whole story. I sighed and looked at Themba. We hugged each other.

Themba: I am sorry for all that.

Me: It's not your fault. If she speaks like that with an adult it's obvious that I have raised myself.

Themba: You wouldn't have spoken like that to your mother Thandeka.

Me: Ey.

Themba: She's pregnant.

Me: You heard her telling you her story. The story that I didn't know. Nobody thought about telling me.

Themba: They were thinking of your health.

Me: Themba can we go and burry our daughter. I will see the rest after.

He nodded. I went upstairs and packed my clothes. I took my damaged phone and everything that I was going to need. I called Themba and he assisted me. He had called the cab. I locked up my house leaving the alarm system on. We went to the cab. We passed by the mall first. I bought a new phone. I started it and on my way to the airport. I called Camille. She answered.

Cami: Mrs Ndunakazi?

Me: Yes dear. Please tell Muzi to send at least two people for me to that guy on Monday.

Cami: Why aren't you going. what's wrong?

Me: My daughter is dead.

Cami: Which one the old one?

Me: No. The little one.

Cami: No man! I am sorry to hear that Thandeka. Are you alright?

Me: I don't know Camille, everything is a mess. But I hope I will be alright as time goes on.

Cami: You'll tell us the details about the funeral.

Me: Okay. No matter what the outcome please don't tell me until I burry my daughter. I don't want any distractions.

Cami: Okay mam bye.

Me: Bye.

I hung up the call.

Themba: Is everything alright?

Me: Yes. Just a small crisis at work.

Themba: Okay. I told your father and your brother.

Me: Okay.

I didn't want to tell him the whole truth about Samkelo accusing him. All I wanted was proof first. We went to the airport, followed procedure and our plane departed from Durban to Cape Town. Arriving there at Themba's house awakened all the pain that my daughter was gone. People looked at me with pity and said words that can make me better but nothing made me better. All I needed was to see my son. I stood up from the mattress and I went to his room. I knocked he didn't open up. I opened. He was standing by the window looking outside.

Me: Smith?

He turned back and looked at me. He ran towards me. I met him halfway and hugged him tightly.

Uyathandwa: I wanted to take the front seat mom. But Uyabongeka refused. It's like she knew that she was going to die.

Me: Oh my baby.

Uyathandwa: She died in my arms. I was holding her. She kept saying that all she wanted is you mom. She wanted you. My sister is dead. She'll never come back. I failed to protect her. I should have persuaded dad to take another route because Uyabongeka didn't like that route. I am sorry mom.

Me: Hey! It's not your fault. God knew that we weren't going to live with her until she's older. The way she died is not your fault. She was my little angel with a very bright and bubbly personality. We will always miss her but she will forever live in our hearts okay?

He nodded. He wanted me to hold him until he falls asleep.

Uyathandwa: Where's Alondwe?

Me: She's with her father.

Uyathandwa: She didn't come? Why mom?

Me: Baby she's not in a good condition to be around pain. If she can come here she'll end up in the hospital. Okay?

He nodded, that's the best answer I could give him. I hummed a song for him and rocked him in my arms until he was asleep...

---

3rd Person Narrator....

The pain that Cikizwa's father felt when he heard that one of his favourite girls died because of his anger. It was unspeakable. He really liked Uyabongeka because she was an active person and very talkative. She was forever on a bubbly mood. Though sometimes she liked to act like a bully but she was nothing but a special girl. He knew Themba's kids pretty well since he was his boss, and he was also there when their grandparents was alive and he wouldn't wish none of them to die. He was really devastated. He then made a deal with a poor man he knew. The who was also part of the gang before. He had a wife with a lot of

kids. This man's name was Bulelani. And hearing Themba tell them that after the funeral, the first thing they'll do is to kidnap Samkelo and torture him until he speaks the truth didn't sit well with him because he knew that Samkelo was the ticket to put Themba behind bars. And Cikizwa's dad has always been the noble man. It didn't sit well with him that Samkelo was the suspect. He didn't know him but for the fact that his late boss Mr Smith (Themba's father) didn't want him to be framed. He felt like he had responsibility to honour his real boss. Clearly Mr Smith had good reasons not to frame Samkelo of which one of them were the fact that he was the husband of his ex daughter in law. He couldn't hurt Thandeka or her family. He respected her, the woman who brought his son back home.

Bulelani: "What do you want Dalumzi (Cikizwa's father)?"

Dali: "What can you do to save your family from poverty."

Bulelani: "Ey. I would do anything "

Dali: "Would you go to jail just to give them life that you can't give them"

Bulelani: "How?"

Dali: "Take a fall for another man. Agree to the crime that you didn't commit? "

Bulelani: "If my family will be safe and well taken care of. I can do that."

Dali: "Good but you'll have to know that I will use our boss's old strategy "

Yes! Bulelani was one of the gang members but Themba kicked him out of the team because he failed to complete the mission. From there Bulelani became poor and failed to provide for his family. The money he used to get. He used to get drunk with all of it.

Bulelani: "What? "

Dali: "I will ship them over to our friends in another province. The ones who don't like Themba. They will clean them up and they'll be safe there because Themba will want to kill them when you're in jail just to get revenge "

Bulelani: "Wait. What fall will I take? "

Dali: "The fall of killing his daughter. You have all the motives in the world "

Bulelani: "But that will mean I will expose the gang "

Dali: "Relax Themba is a very clever guy. He will make sure that his gang is not exposed. I know that. So are you in?"

Bulelani: "For my wife and kids. I am all in"

Dali: "That's the spirit but we will wait until the baby is buried in peace."

He felt the rush of relief. Though he knew that Bulelani was going to end up being dead because Themba would not risk Bulelani stating his motives for killing his daughter. Which those motives were going to expose him as a gang leader and his whole team was going to go down with him.

---

Alondwe Ndunakazi. ....

I arrived at the hotel and I was taken to my dad's room. I knocked and they opened. Alupheli opened. He jumped up and down out of excitement.

Alupheli: "Yoyondwe! Yoyondwe! Baba? Yoyondwe!"

I laughed and went down on my knees. I hugged him. He kissed my cheek. I giggled. I carried him inside. Mesuli was watching TV.

Me: Can't you see that your big sister is home?

Kuhle: Ouch! Sorry.

He jumped out of the couch and went to hug me. I put Alupheli down.

Alupheli: Ushipatheleni? (What did you bring for us?)

I took out the goody bags and gave them. They screamed and went to the couch. I went to my dad, he was working with a coloured lady. I greeted them. Dad stood up and hugged me.

Dad: It's good to have my Princess back home.

Me: I am happy to be back.

Dad: Candice this is my first born Alondwe. Alondwe this is my assistant and soon to be business partner.

Me: Nice to meet you mam.

Candice: Nice to meet you too dear.

Me: Dad are you starting a business.

Dad: Not now Alondwe.

Me: Hawu?

Candice laughed and looked at her watch.

Candice: Mr Ndunakazi. I have to go. I bet my husband is back home with the kids.

Dad: Okay let me walk you out.

They packed their bags and stood up. I sat down and rubbed my feet. My phone rang. I took it out of my pocket. Thapelo was calling.

Me: Mr Moloji.

Thapelo: My sweet little pudding what you're doing is not nice.

Me: Woah! Woah! What did you just call me?

Thapelo laughed.

Thapelo: Don't you like it? I heard it in some old Zulu comedy.

Me: Oh how about I call you phinadi (peanut) ke?

They both laughed.

Thapelo: I wouldn't mind little pudding. How did you go?

Me: I travelled safe, except for the fact my little sister is dead.

Thapelo: What? The one who looks like she's coloured?

Me: Yes that one.

Thapelo: Tjo I am really sorry little pudding. Don't worry everything will be alright. May her soul rest in peace.

Me: Amen. Thank you phinadi. Where is Nkululeko.

Thapelo: Eh. How should I know? She's not my friend.

Me: Did you just call him a she?

We both laughed.

Thapelo: Yes I did.

I heard the front door being opened.

Me: My dad is here I have to bounce (I whispered)

Thapelo: Can I talk to father in-law?

Me: What? Do you want him to whip your ass?

Thapelo: (laughing) No. I suppose we will chat on WhatsApp. I love you little pudding.

Me: It's a draw phinadi.

Thapelo and I laughed. I hung up the call because dad was giving me that eye.

Dad: Who's making you laugh like that?

Me: Who else could it be beside your crush.

Dad: Alondwe watch it.

Me: (laughing) Okay I am sorry.

I went to sit with them on the couch.

Dad: How is your mother?

I looked at him. I didn't expect him to ask.

Me: She's broken. I can see it on her eyes.

Dad: Do you believe what you heard?

Me: Not even for a second. I don't believe it.

Dad: Thanks my Princess.

Me: We will go to funeral right? I have to see my brother.

Dad: On Monday the three of you will go to your grandparents that way it will be easy for

you to go and support your little brother.

Me: Okay thanks. But grandpa?

Dad: Relax. I have sorted that out. I will come on the funeral day. I have a case that I have to attend.

Me: Okay. Why are you starting a business?

Dad: To make sure that your future with your brothers and your mother is secured. That's the reason.

I nodded. He sighed.

Me: It's alright. You and mom will be alright. I know you will be.

Dad: I wish I can believe you.

I could see that he was sad. The only thing that was left was for him to cry.

Me: I am doing well with my therapy.

Dad: Really?

He smiled a little. I wanted to change the subject so that he won't be stressed out..

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

At night my family came, but Andile wasn't with them. My stepmother Evelyn came to sit down next to me. I looked at her with tears.

Evelyn: Hey baby.

Me: Mama.

Evelyn: It will be alright, it will get better.

Me: How?

She hugged me tightly. I sobbed within her arms. I just couldn't stop crying. The women started a worship song. And prayed. I couldn't pray. I didn't know what to say to God. What I do I say to him. After the prayer. I excused myself. I went to my daughter's room. I looked around. Her pictures on the wall, my pregnancy pictures. How beautiful I was. It was so beautiful.

Dad: My daughter.

I looked back and looked at him. He came towards me and hugged me.

Dad: I am sorry baby. I am really sorry.

We sat down on her bed.

Me: How did you and mom deal with losing my other brother?

Dad: Time baby. Time healed all the wounds. Losing a child is painful but it does get better with time. Though you always wonder, the life he was going to live. The dreams he had. But time will heal you.

Me: Thank you.

Dad: Where are the rest of your kids?

Me: They are with their father?

Dad: Why? There should be here and be with Uyathandwa and Kimberly's daughter.

Me: Things are not really good between Samkelo and I. He took the little ones and Alondwe chose to go with him.

Dad: What? That's bullshit. What happened?

Me: I don't really want to talk about it yet dad but chances are we're getting divorced.

Dad: Oh Nkosi yami Thandeka.

Me: I feel so alone without them baba. It's like everyone in the world has turn their backs on me.

Dad: They are your family Thandeka you should feel like that.

Me: I don't know what to do. Who to turn to.

Dad: You'll be alright.

Me: Where's Andile?

Dad: He's working so he'll come on Friday before the funeral.

I nodded and he kissed my forehead.

Dad: Let me go. You should go back to others.

I nodded and said: I will go.

He left. I stood up and went to stand by the window. I looked outside the window. I felt so alone and empty. Like everything just vanished. I took my phone and I read messages from different people. I eventually got tired and I went back to the women.

The week went by people kept on coming. My in laws. The Ndunakazi family. My friend Thobelani and Themba's friends. I asked Themba to tell Nobuhle because I couldn't meet up with her. Alondwe used to come and spend time with her brother. Uyathandwa was better when Alondwe was around. My boys didn't come. We made all the preparations with Themba's wife and the funeral was going to take place on Saturday. Friday we went to fetch her coffin. The whole traditional process was done. At night I couldn't sleep, I kept staring at her coffin. I was so heart broken and feeling too much pain. My headache was back and it was really painful. Themba took me to the Doctor and he gave me some tablets for the headache. It made me better.

Saturday morning finally came. I was still awake. I wasn't crying anymore. I was just quiet. I went to shower and moistened my body, I dressed up on a black pencil skirt, black shirt and coat. I covered my hair and wore my panty hose. Her body was cleansed. Looking at her body cold in that coffin made my whole body numb. I spent a long time looking at her. Mrs Smith and my stepmother came and removed me. I just couldn't move. I can't even describe the feeling. They made me sit down. The rest of the family came in and looked at her for the last time. Even my little boys. They cried and came to me. I took Alupheli. Mesuli sat next to me.

Me: Don't cry.

Alupheli: Daddy said we won't see her again mom. We won't play together again. Is it true?

Me: Yes baby. She's in heaven now.

Kuhle: She's an angel?

Me: Yes. She'll be watching over you.

They nodded. I held Alupheli close to me. Until it was time for us to go. Emma offered to take Alupheli. My mom held my hand and we went to the car. It drove straight to the church. We arrived and stepped out of the church. Emma fixed me.

Me: Where are my sons?

Emma: They wanted to go to their father so I took them to him.

Mrs Smith: You should go and tell him to bring them in the front so that they will be together.

Emma: Okay.

She left. We walked inside the church. We went to the seats reserved for us. Samkelo walked in with the boys. He was carrying Alupheli. He handed him over to me. I took him and Mesuli went to sit next to his siblings.

Mrs Smith: You should sit with us Samkelo.

I looked at him. He looked at Themba's mother.

Sam: No mama. I will be with my family.

Themba's mom nodded and Samkelo left after kissing his son's forehead. The service began. Alondwe spoke on behalf of her siblings.

Alondwe: Today we're going to say our last goodbyes to my little sister. (She kept quiet for a long time) Life is unfair but yet again we can't blame God. My sister was a sweet little girl. Too forward more than me of course (people laughed) She was a lovely little girl. Who was forever talking. I guess she got that gene from her parents. Which parent? I don't know. (They laughed again) I will miss you Sesethu. She used to say I am Themba's Missy. She

made sure that everyone knows that she is the Princess. We lost a sister, a playmate special for my little brothers. (Tears came out of her eyes) I don't know why you left me alone with the boys sisi. They will always bully me even if I am old than them. (People laughed) At least with you. I was gonna share my secrets when you were older. Travel the world with you. I remember when your grandfather died you asked if he'll come back like Jesus. (People laughed) I wish you can come back. (She cried) So that I can hear your laughter and see your smile. Cuddle you in my bed whenever you come to visit. I will miss you Sesethu Uyabongeka Smith. May your soul rest in peace. We love you sisi wethu.

She ran off the stage. Emma went to her and she hugged her. People started a song. I just cried silently. My son was no longer in my arms. My mom brushed my back. It was all painful. People spoke about her. Her friend, Class teacher, Andile and her uncle from the Smith family. The pastor preached and we went to the graveyard. Her body was put on her last place. I stayed behind afterwards. I just wanted to be alone.

Me: Rest in peace my Angel. You'll forever be in my heart. I love you Thembeke.

I placed a rose on top of her grave and I stood up. I went to the car that drove me back home. I wasn't hungry. I went to sleep. I just didn't want to feel the pain anymore.....

REST IN PEACE THEMBEKA UYABONGEKA SESETHU SMITH.....

Alondwe Ndunakazi...

As hard as it was, I accepted that my sister was gone. The minute I saw the coffin going down. After the funeral I went to my father. He was with my brothers and my grandparents. I tried by all means to avoid crossing paths with my uncle Andile and my Dhlomo grandfather. I just didn't want to face them. My mom was asleep. I sat next to dad.

Dad: What will you do, Monday you are going to school.

Me: Where is aunt Melokuhle? When is she leaving?

Dad: She left immediately after the church service. She's going to Richards bay.

Me: Hawu. Leaving grandma behind?

Dad: Hhayi. I don't know. She said she got some business to take care of. She's leaving for Johannesburg tomorrow.

Me: I will leave tomorrow too then. What should I do now? Go back home with you?

Dad: No. You'll sleep here. I will come tomorrow and take you to the airport. Be ready in the morning. Because I also have to go back to Durban. Seems like things are going accordingly at work.

Me: Did you have a problem?

Dad: It was just a minor problem.

Me: Yoh! That's better. So dad what will happen? You and mom?

Dad: Don't worry about us. Just go and work on that Maths. And show that Thapelo competitor what you're made of.

I smiled and nodded.

Me: I will show him daddy. He will be the one crying.

Dad: That's my girl. I will see you tomorrow then.

Me: You'll be leaving with them? (I pointed my brothers)

Dad: Yes. I will leave with them. You'll see them tomorrow.

Me: You'll continue living on the hotel?

Dad: No. I got a flat. We will live there in the moment. Once things are going well. I will buy a house. Just a nice house not too big.

Me: And mom?

Dad: What about her?

Me: She'll live alone dad in the house.

Dad: Eyi Alondwe. Stop stressing yourself about your mother. She knows what she wants.

Me: But I don't think she wants to divorce you.

Dad: I am not discussing this with you any further.

Me: But –

Dad: No. You'll go to school and study. Forget about other things. Everything will be alright. I nodded and he half hugged me. And he brushed my head.

Me: Dad. I am not a boy.

Dad: Whatever.

Me: Rascals!

They ignored me. Alupheli pretended like he didn't hear me while he did. I tickled him. He laughed.

Alupheli: Yoyondwe!

Me: I want to say goodbye.

Alupheli: Bye bye. Hawu!

Me: You don't love me now?

Alupheli: I do.

I smiled and hugged him. I hugged our middle brother. Our quiet kind of a brother. Mesuli was a gentleman too much. One can say uyazitshela. He had that pride in him. That I don't know.

Kuhle: You'll make people look at me stop treating me like a child.

Grandpa: You're a man Mesuli. Tell her.

Me: Mxm uyaphapha. I will see you tomorrow okay. I have to go.

Kuhle: Okay sisi.

I hugged my grandmothers and kissed my grandfather's cheek. He smiled and shook his head. I said my last goodbye and left them. I went at the back to my brother. He was with her friend Amber. They were both eating.

Amber: This is your older sister?

Uyathandwa: Yes. She's not that old though.

Me: Durh. I am turning 16 yrs old on the 1st of September which is on Tuesday.

Uyathandwa: Whatever.

Amber: Uyathandwa always says that you like talking and you're too forward.

Me: Really Uyathandwa? That's all you can say about me?

Uyathandwa: What? It's the truth. But you're better than Sese. Jesus that child.

Me: When she'll wake you up while you are sleeping and laugh afterwards.

Uyathandwa: Yeah man. I will miss her.

Me: Yeah hey.

We looked at each other and sighed. We held each other's hands.

Uyathandwa: It will be alright?

Me: Trust me it will get better with time.

Amber: That's true.

That's what I learnt in every pain that I have been through. That pain heals as time goes on. We sat there in silence. Just looking at people going up and down. My sister was gone and I wasn't going to see her again. That was painful.

Later Amber left, Uyathandwa and I went inside the house. Mom called me. I went to her.

Me: Mama?

Mom: Your father left with your brothers?

Me: Yes. He'll come tomorrow with them. But I will be going back to school. So they'll be going back to Durban.

Mom: Okay when they come tomorrow. Bring them to me before you all leave.

Me: Okay.

I went to Uyathandwa. We went upstairs.

Me: We'll shower first and sleep right?

Uyathandwa: Yeah. In my room though.

Me: Sure.

I went to the bathroom and showered, moisturised my body and wore my pyjamas. I went to my brother's room. He was already in bed.

Me: Shift boy.

He shifted and I joined him. He gave me my phone.

Uyathandwa: Thapelo was busy calling. More than twice.

Me: Okay.

Uyathandwa: Who's he?

Me: Who said it's a he?

Uyathandwa: Oh. I don't know.

Me: He's my friend. He was probably checking up on me. I will call him in the morning.

Uyathandwa: Call him now.

Me: Aybo. I don't want to.

He nodded and we had a great conversation while I was chatting with Thapelo. We ended up falling asleep after the long day. We had....

---

Thandeka Ndunakazi...

The following morning Alondwe walked in with her brothers. I went to another room with them. I wanted to talk with them.

Alupheli: Mom we will be going back home to our house?

Me: Mom will be staying here for a few days. You'll go with your father?

Kuhle: Why are you staying?

Me: I have a lot of things that I have to take care of. Then I will see you if I come back.

Kuhle: See us where? We want to go back home. Dad took a few of our clothes and I heard him talking to Alondwe about buying a new house.

Me: Alondwe?

Alondwe: I was just asking him where will they live. He said he found a flat and he'll buy a new house when everything is going fine.

I looked down and blinked my tears away.

Me: Okay boys. We will see each other in Durban. Please be good boys. Alupheli!?

Alupheli: I am a good boy mom. You know that.

Me: Mesuli please look after this one okay?

Kuhle: Okay Mom.

Me: Come to me.

They stood up and we hugged each other. I kissed them all.

Me: I love you all Okay?

Them: We love you too.

Me: Alondwe take care of yourself okay?

Alondwe: Yes. Will you be alright?

Me: Yes I will be fine.

We hugged once more and they went to Uyathandwa. He walked out with them after they have said goodbye to everyone. I didn't know what I was going to do. I was lost and clueless. Uyathandwa came back and we spend the rest of the day together with my son.

After the funeral, everything went hectic. The police had taken our statements before. The investigation was going through about my daughter's killer. I was meeting up with the police officer about the progress of the case before I go back home. It was Tuesday morning, the first of September. I sat down and waited for him to come. He walked in. We greeted each other.

P/M: I will go straight on point.

Me: Yes.

P/M: It seems like you haven't told us everything that you suspect that your husband is involved.

My heart started beating fast. I didn't want to tell the police first. I wanted to do my own research first. But clearly Themba told them after I asked him not to.

Me: Uhm. Yes but. –

P/M: It will be better if you tell us the truth.

I sighed. If I wanted justice for my daughter I had to tell them everything.

Me: My husband lost his job (I told him every single detail and I left nothing behind)

I felt so relieved afterwards. I sighed. And wiped my tears.

P/M: I am sorry mam. Do you know that this information you've shared with us makes your husband our number one suspect?

Me: I know. Please do whatever it takes to get my daughter's killer behind bars. Even if it's my husband. I don't care I just want justice for my little girl. (I was crying)

P/M: I am sorry mam. We will do whatever it takes. First thing in the morning. We will be in Durban. I want to handle this myself.

Me: Thank you.

P/M: That's all. We will keep in touch.

I nodded and stood up. He offered to walk me out. On the reception there was a man whom I used to see with Themba's father while I was still married to Themba. He looked at me and greeted me. I greeted back. He was there to see the officer handling my daughter's case. I went to Themba's house for my bags.

Kimberly: Travel safe Thandeka.

Me: Thanks.

I hugged them and I took my bags. Uyathandwa was at school and Themba was at work.

Me: Please tell your husband to call me when he comes back.

She nodded. I left. The cab drove me to the airport. I followed procedure and the plane departed from Cape Town to Durban. I took a cab to my house. I arrived at home. It was so quiet. I sighed. I went upstairs and changed. I requested the information about my husband's fraud to be delivered in my house. It was late and I was tired. I drank the sleeping pills and I fell asleep immediately.

I woke up on a Wednesday morning. I must've been really tired. I went to the kitchen and drank water. I saw a note pinned on the fridge as a reminder that I put a few weeks ago about my kids birthday. Alondwe and Mesuli shared the same birthday. I felt so bad because I forgot to wish them a happy birthday. I was going to call and apologies. I took the box of chocolates that Themba had bought for me. I went to the lounge and ate them. The delivery came. I thanked the guy and went to my lounge. It was a CD. I put it on the DVD player. It started playing. I saw the IT guy who was working with Themba's father. I looked closely. I was surprised to see him. They were torturing him to tell the truth. He told them everything that Themba took over his father's position. He revealed that he was the one who said Samkelo must be framed. I started sweating. I couldn't believe it after I protected him. I stood up for him to Samkelo for what? My body heated up, the amount of air intake decreased I was having the anxiety attack. The chocolate must have added the pressure as my nerves were heightened. I tried to reach for my phone. It was on top of the table. I fell on the floor before I could reach for it. I passed out on the floor....

3rd Person Narrator.....

Before the funeral Samkelo's case took place. Muzi and his team got to the IT guy before the investigator of the company found him. The investigator finally traced the account holder

where the money went to. The holder was Themba's IT guy. They found him right in time and brought him back to Durban. It was still an internal investigation. The guy admitted that he stole the money but he didn't reveal that he was working for Themba. But in fear for his life he lied and said he took the money for himself. He was scared that if he stated that Themba was fully involved Themba was going to kill him or his family. He then hacked the account and brought back the money to the company. Themba and his gang haven't use the money because of the distraction caused by Uyabongeka's death. After the funeral Samkelo was called in and he was reinstated as the Accountant of the company. He was so relieved and happy that he got his job back. He knew that he was going to be able to buy the house soon for him and his children. He didn't stop working on the business proposal with Candice. He was certain that he was going to win the custody of the children after the divorce considering the history that Thandeka had of having breakdowns and leaving the kids behind. He wasn't going to allow her to take the kids and poison them against him. It was on Monday that he was reinstated. On Tuesday Midnight. His alarm went off. He took his phone. It was a birthday reminder of his daughter and son. He rubbed his eyes and called Alondwe. Her phone rang for quite a long time. She picked up on the last ring.

Alondwe: "Daddy it's midnight. I am sleeping"

Samkelo: "Stop complaining. Happy birthday Princess. Daddy loves you so much. The day you were born was the best day of my life. May you grow in the grace of the Lord with beauty and intelligence."

Alondwe laughed out of happiness.

Alondwe: "Thank you daddy. Thanks!"

Samkelo: "I hope I am the first one to wish you a happy birthday"

Alondwe: "Yes! You're the first one daddy"

Samkelo: "As you know that I can't buy the gift. I will send you cash baby okay?"

Alondwe: "Okay daddy. Thanks. Please call me when my brother is awake. We're twins today"

Samkelo: "Okay I will call you. Goodnight"

Alondwe: "Goodnight daddy"

Samkelo went back to sleep. In the morning he woke up. He was not really used to waking up alone. He went to his sons room. He woke them up. He sang a Happy birthday song for Mesuli.

Mesuli: "Daddy where is the cake?"

Samkelo: "I will buy the cake after work"

Mesuli: "But I should go with it at school. Please call mommy maybe she didn't forget"

Samkelo: "We will buy the cake now and the snacks. Don't worry"

Mesuli: "Thank you"

Alupheli: "Happy Blesday Kuhle"

Alupheli yawned. Samkelo and Mesuli laughed.

Mesuli: "Thank you dad and my little brother"

Samkelo: "Okay come and get your present"

Mesuli jumped out of bed in excitement. Alupheli followed. They went to Samkelo's room. He took the covered box and gave it to Mesuli. Mesuli unwrapped the box immediately. He quickly hugged his daddy as he saw the PSP that he was always asking for to his father.

Mesuli: "Haha! Thanks daddy"

Alupheli: "Where is mine?"

Samkelo: "You will get yours on your birthday"

Alupheli: "No I want it today. Let's make my blesday today too"

He cried. He also wanted his own present. Mesuli laughed at him. He took his PSP and left. Samkelo was left with Alupheli crying.

Samkelo: "Don't cry. I will buy yours too on your birthday"

Alupheli: "I want it today"

Samkelo picked him up and said: "Let's go and shower"

He went to shower with all of them. Alupheli was on a sour mood. After that they went to dress up and had cereals for breakfast.

Mesuli: "This breakfast is not nice"

Alupheli: "I want mom's breakfast"

Samkelo: "Your mother is not here. Where should I get her breakfast now?"

Samkelo snapped at them. They shut up. There was nothing he could do because Thandeka chose not to trust him. After that they left. They passed by the mall for the cake and snacks. He bought two big cakes and snacks. At the school he had to walk in with Mesuli and give the teacher the cake and snacks. Alupheli went to the daycare. Samkelo then drove to work. After school Mesuli went to his little brother's daycare where their father was going to fetch them after work. That day after work he took them out celebrating the birth day. He remembered to call Alondwe and she spoke with her brother. Alupheli was no longer on the sour mood but he was jealous because he also wanted a blefsday. They went back home late and they slept with their father that night.

Mesuli: "Why didn't mom call me and say happy birthday "

Samkelo: "I don't know boy but maybe she's busy. Don't worry okay?"

Mesuli: "Please check your phone maybe you didn't see her call daddy"

Samkelo checked but he knew that there was no phonecall nor a text. He tried to call Thandeka but her phone rang with no answer.

Samkelo: "Don't worry. I know that she bought a present okay"

Mesuli nodded and tried to sleep. He was sad and he wondered why his mom didn't call.

On Wednesday after school. Samkelo decided to fetch the kids after school they were going to stay with his cleaning lady.

Alupheli: "Where are you taking us daddy"

Samkelo: "Back to the flat"

Alupheli: "Howu sohlala nalowa gogo onezisini?" (We will stay with that old lady who has no teeth on the front)

Samkelo: "Alupheli! Stop saying that"

Alupheli sulked and started crying. He really didn't like the cleaning lady.

Mesuli: "Daddy please pass by our house. I want to see mom."

Samkelo: "I am tired Mesuli that house is far from here"

Alupheli: "please daddy. We will go back to you in the morning and mom will make breakfast. Animfuni lowa gogo."

Samkelo didn't say anything. He drove to his house. He arrived and parked the car outside. The excitement that the children had was heartbreaking to him because their home was broken.

Mesuli: "Let's check our garden first come "

Samkelo: "Please don't get dirty. I don't like mud."

Mesuli: "We will water the veges only "

Samkelo: "And your mom?"

Alupheli: "We will see her afterwards"

They ran off. The boys had a little garden where they planted their vegetables. Part of being naughty. Samkelo walked inside the house. It wasn't locked. That was unlike his wife. He walked inside. His eyes went to the screen and the CD that Thandeka was watching was still playing. He watched the video not noticing that his wife was on the floor unconscious. He was disappointed but not surprised that Themba really planned on framing him. He realised that the guy was the same guy who admitted that he stole the money but to them he didn't

reveal that Themba was behind it. His heart broke as he thought that he owe Thandeka an apology for accusing the father of her kids. Kanti he was right about the whole thing. He went to the coffee table for the remote and that's where he saw Thandeka lying on the floor with white foam on her mouth. He switched off the TV. He went to Thandeka and He shook her.

Samkelo: "Thandeka! Thandeka! No you will not do this to me. You won't die"

He felt her pulse and she was still alive. He called his sons. They ran inside the house looking annoyed because they were still busy. They were muddy on their clothes and school shoes.

Samkelo: "What did I say about mud?"

They started crying seeing their mother on the floor. Samkelo clicked his tongue. He was angry at everything. He picked up his wife.

Samkelo: "Follow me"

They both followed him crying. They didn't understand that what was happening with their mother. Samkelo put her on the middle seat of his car and the boys wanted to share the front seat refusing to take the backseat.

Samkelo: "You want to seat in my car with mud? I will leave you behind get in at the back seat. "

They cried. He made the way for them and they sat at the back. They buried their heads on each other. They were scared to look at their mother. He took his seat and drove straight to the hospital. Along the way he was busy cursing and swearing at whatever. He was so scared that Thandeka might die. Even if she didn't want him anymore she was still the mother of his children. He loves her wholeheartedly. He arrived and stepped out.

Samkelo: "Take off your shoes and follow me. You won't go in here with that mud in your shoes."

Mesuli took off his shoes and assisted his brother. Samkelo carried Thandeka and the kids stepped out of the car. He locked the car and went inside the hospital. They attended him and he was asked to wait. He looked at his sons. They were so ugly and full of mud even on their faces.

Samkelo:" Umdala wena kodwa ufundisa ingane ukuganga!" (You're old but you're teaching Alupheli naughtiness)

Mesuli looked down.

Alupheli: "What's wrong with mom?"

Samkelo sighed and drew them close to him. He was sitting on the couch.

Samkelo: "Your mom has a bad flue but she will be alright don't cry (they nodded)

Niyangicasula yazi bukani nje ninjani?"

They looked down.

Samkelo: "Sit down!"

They sat down and waited. He called his assistant Candice and told her to cancel all his meetings.

Alupheli: "Daddy I am hungry"

Samkelo: "How will you eat because you're dirty"

He sulked that was leading to tears. Samkelo was worried about Thandeka and waiting was hard. He went to buy food for them. They ate but not inside the hospital. They went back inside, Alupheli was sleepy and tired. It was dark outside. The Doctor finally came. Samkelo stood up and the Doctor came to him.

Doctor: "Mr Ndunakazi."

Samkelo: "How is she?"

Doctor: "She's stable for now. It seems like she received something shocking that's why she had the attack"

Samkelo: "Will she be alright?"

Doctor: "Yes. You can go and see her. She's awake"

Samkelo: "Oh. Boys Do you want to see your mom?"

Boys: "Yes"

Samkelo: "Please Doctor get the nurse to take them to her."

Doctor: "You're not going with them?"

Samkelo: "No I am not"

Doctor: "Is everything alright Samkelo?"

Samkelo: "Yes"

The Doctor nodded and went to call the nurse. The nurse came and took the kids to Thandeka. Samkelo stayed behind, he didn't want to see her yet. He buried his face on his hands as mixed emotions overwhelmed him

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

On Tuesday it was my birthday. I was woken up by my dad with a very a sweet message. I felt so special and happy of course. In the morning I woke up and got ready for school. My aunt sang happy birthday for me and gave me my gift.

Me: Thank you aunt.

Melo: After school come to my work place. Please.

Me: Okay I will.

Melo: Okay. Have a nice day love.

Me: Thanks you too have a good day.

She said "Thanks baby" on her way out. I checked my phone and I had birthday wishes from Andiswa. I smiled. How I missed her tiny self. While I was still smiling my phone rang. I took it. It was a private number.

Me: Private number hello.

Caller: Hey how are you?

I didn't answer for a long time. I just got angry. My body boiled. I even felt like I was sweating.

Me: What do you want?

Sphe: I was just checking up on you.

Me: Checking up on me am I a steak on the frying pan?

Sphe: No but I just wanted to say Happy birthday and have a nice day.

Me: Thanks. Bye.

Sphe: Alondwe wait?

Me: What? Sphephelo?

Sphe: Please take care of yourself and the baby.

Me: Mxm. Leave me alone.

I hung up the call. I was angry Brah. The nerve of this guy. "Kake ke of yourself and the kaky" I mimicked his voice in a funny way. I clicked my tongue several times. I took my bag and I left. Sphephelo ruined my day period. I wasn't on the good mood anymore. I arrived at school and we were going to assembly. Mpendulo offered to carry my backpack. I agreed. The principal addressed us about getting ready for the final exams. Then we went to our classes. On my way to my class room. Nkululeko came to me and he smiled.

Me: What?

Nkulu: Yhu. Slima it's your birthday.

Me: I know so?

Nkulu: Okay Whats up with the sour mood?

Me: Just this nuisance called my baby daddy. He's not even my baby daddy he's a sperm donor. He called me and wished me a happy birthday. Telling me to take care of myself and baby.

Nkulu: What's wrong with that?

Me: What's wrong with that? Is that he is the reason that I am in this shitty mood on my birthday.

Nkulu: Ah man. Don't cry. I am sure he meant no harm dear.

He gave me a tight squeeze.

Me: Girl I am not crying.

He let go of me and wiped my tears.

Me: Bloody hormones! I will see you during break time bae.

I kissed his cheek and ran off to my class.

Nkulu: If I were you. I wouldn't go to that class.

Me: Argh. You want me follow your flat ass around.

Nkulu: Don't say I didn't warn you.

I laughed and went to the class. The door was closed. I opened the door and there stood my classmates on the door with eggs, cups, flour on their hands. The minute they shouted "Happy Birthday" I ran for my life. They weren't going to hit me with eggs. I was going to vomit and Lord knows I am scared of vomiting. Just when I thought I was free from them. I bumped into my Maths teacher. "Happy birthday Ndunakazi" she poured the flour on me. I screamed. The school kids were laughing. She quickly ran off as my classmates were running closer. Thapelo was with them. I was angry already. They poured eggs, oil, and margarine on me. They formed a circle and sang "Happy birthday" I felt like vomiting. I pushed them off and ran to the nearest bathroom which was the boys bathroom. I vomited there. I didn't care less about the dicks I saw while vomiting. Boys urinating. I finished up rinsed my mouth. The egg was still smelling horrible. I took out my shirt mind you I wasn't wearing any vest underneath. The boys were looking at me. I was left with my bra only.

Me: Hey guys do you have a plastic bag. I want to put this inside.

Them: No.

Me: Okay.

Other guy: Thaps is lucky neh such a smooth skin.

Thapelo walked inside the toilet. He looked at me.

Thapelo: And then? Why are you half naked?

Me: How was I supposed to stand the smell of eggs. You didn't even warn me that they'll do this to me.

Other guy: It's tradition dear. They do it to all new comers who have birthdays.

Me: I wasn't talking to you. Get out of my way Thapelo.

Thapelo: What? No. You won't be walking outside like this.

Me: Watch me.

I pushed him off and walked out. Nkululeko was waiting outside with a plastic bag.

Nkulu: I did warn you.

Me: Mxm. Fusegi.

Nkulu: Yho! Fusegi nawe.

He said in a funny way. I laughed.

Nkulu: Here is your clean uniform. I stole it yesterday.

Me: Hee hhay. Let me go before –

Just then I wanted to talk about Thapelo. He walked passed us. He looked rather pissed off. I didn't care anyway.

Nkulu: What's up with him?

Me: Mood swings dear. He's on period pains I think.

Nkulu: How happy I am that I don't get those.

I looked at him and laughed. I took the plastic bag and I went to the ladies bathroom where I took a shower. There was soap and everything I needed inside. I finished up and I moisturised

my body. I wore my clean uniform and put the dirty one on my plastic bag. I went back to my class. Luckily I didn't have my bag with me. I figured that's why Mpendulo took it. I went to my class. I went to Mpendulo.

Me: My bag buddy?

Mpendulo: Don't be mad.

Me: Mxm. My bag?

Mpendulo: In your seat.

I looked at my seat and it was there.

Mpendulo: Happy –

I pinched his ear before he even finished. He screamed the class laughed at him.

Teacher: Are you enjoying your birthday Miss Ndunakazi?

Me: It's the worst birthday ever.

The class laughed. Our class prefect stood up and came to me with a paper bag and a card.

She gave them to me. Her name was Lenny.

Lenny: From your classmates and class teacher. Happy birthday and welcome to our school.

I smiled and took the gifts.

Me: Now that's the kind of birthday I know (they laughed) Thank you everyone this means a lot. I love you all sky size. But not more than Thapelo. Haa! Don't flatter yourselves.

They laughed and clapped hands. I looked at Thapelo he was smiling. He tried to hide that when I looked at him. The teacher started teaching. I went close to his ear.

Me: As much as you're angry at me. I am angry at you too my prince.

Thapelo: I didn't say I am angry.

Me: So what's up with the sour ugly face?

Thapelo: Shut up birthday girl. I am trying to concentrate.

I pouted and looked at the board. He giggled and waited for the teacher to face the board. He kissed my cheek quickly.

Thapelo: I love you My Princess.

I smiled and blushed.

Me: Shut up boy!

He smiled. Yoh man I was in love. I even forgot that I was angry. We went to our classes until it was lunch time.

I stood up and I went to Nkululeko. We went to buy lunch and then we went to our spot. He gave me a gift.

Nkulu: Happy birthday baby.

Me: Thanks hey.

I took my gift and I shove it in my bag.

Me: Will you please go with me to my aunt's workplace after school?

Nkulu: Okay no problem. I was thinking.

Me: Thinking about?

Nkulu: December holidays I want to do a transgender.

Me: What? Ain't you scared?

Nkulu: No I am not. My bae will take care of the expenses and my parents have agreed.

Me: Okay friend you have my support.

Nkulu: Thank you.

Me: You'll be wearing skirts next year?

Nkulu: No. Bitch I will still be wearing my boy uniform.

Me: Uzobaba mshana!

Nkulu: So Thapelo must watch out.

Me: Hhaybo what do you mean Now?

Nkulu:(laughing) Tjo the look on your face right now.

Me: Don't start with me please. So tell me Thapelo doesn't have any ex girlfriends around here?

Thapelo: (on our backs) Why don't you ask me if you want to know that?

We looked back at him.

Nkulu: Don't be dramatic she was just asking.

Thapelo: I was just asking too.

Nkulu: Yhu ha.a le ndoda yakho.

He stood up and took his bag.

Me: And then? Where are you going?

Nkulu: I am giving you guys space and besides I have an important call that I have to make.

Me: Okay.

He left. Thapelo sat down with me.

Me: I was going to ask you.

Thapelo: After you've asked your friend?

Me: You're not going to make a big deal out of this please Thapelo. Please.

Thapelo: I wasn't. I was just asking. But I didn't like what you did, walking around with your bra only like that?

Me: I am sorry husband.

Thapelo: Don't be like that. I'll make you my Queen one day and I don't think it's alright for the Princess to be seen half naked.

Me: I couldn't stand the smell of an egg I am sorry for embarrassing you my Prince.

He smiled and kissed me.

Thapelo: Happy Birthday. Owami.

Me: Thank you Thapelo wami.

He gave me a black box. I took it and kissed his cheek. His birthday was on the first of January so I wasn't buying any gifts. I was relieved.

Thapelo: What does that name mean?

Me: Owami. You're mine. Or she's mine.

He smiled. I looked at him with a "What?" Look.

Thapelo: We won't do it soon but we will do after you gave birth to Thabang.

Me: Who's Thabang?

Thapelo: Our baby boy that you're carrying.

Me: Oh.

I looked down. I didn't want to talk about my baby. I just didn't want the baby. He held my hand and looked at me.

Thapelo: Tell me. What happened with his daddy?

Me: I don't want to talk about him yet.

He shifted close to me. He held my hand and he told me to close my eyes. I did. He placed my hand on my tummy. I opened my eyes immediately.

Thapelo: Close them.

Me: Stop it Thapelo.

Thapelo: I said close your eyes little pudding.

I closed my eyes and he whispered on my ears.

Thapelo: I know it's hard. And you're still young. But you'll get through this. You'll love him and he'll give you joy.

Me: Stop it Thapelo!

I removed his hands from my hands and I pushed him off of me. I wiped my tears.

Thapelo: I am sorry.

I nodded and snuggled myself on him. He held me tightly. We sat in that position in silence. I was just listening to his heart beat. I heard him waking me up. I figured I fell asleep. Thapelo:

Let's go back to class. We've already bunked an English period.

Me: What? Why?

Thapelo: You were sleeping so peacefully I didn't want wake you up.

Me: (smiling) Stupid! That's wrong.

Thapelo: It's your birthday, you must do whatever you like.

I smiled and held his collar and I kissed him like the first time I did. He kissed my forehead.

Thapelo: I love you my Princess.

Me: I love you too my Prince.

We stood up and went to the next class. With classmates giving us nasty looks...

---

3rd Person Narrator...

After Nkululeko left Alondwe, he went to call Sphephelo. Sphephelo answered.

Nkulu: Now tell me why did you make mama bear upset?

Sphe: I didn't mean to. I just wanted to wish her a happy birthday. How is she?

Nkulu: She's happy man. Thapelo makes her happy.

Sphe: Wait! Who's Thapelo now?

Nkulu: Shit! Uhhh. It's her boyfriend. I promise I had nothing to do with their relationship. I didn't bring them together. Nor set them up.

Sphephelo sighed feeling defeated.

Sphe: "It's okay man. As long as she's happy. That's all I want for her. To be happy for the rest of her life."

Nkulu: "That's so big of you man."

Sphe: "Just take care of her and make sure that, her boyfriend doesn't play with her feelings"

Nkulu: "I promise I will do that"

Sphe: "Okay thanks. I have to bounce"

Nkulu: "Sure"

They hung up the call. Nkululeko smiled in relief...

Nobuhle Mthembu...

Saturday morning, we all woke up and prepared ourselves for the negotiations. I was praying and hoping that everything goes well. My uncles and aunts were there for the negotiations. It was funny when my in-laws arrived because they didn't know how to praise our clan names. They got help from the boy who was our neighbour. The negotiations were a very huge success. I was practically a Pillay. At night my mom and dad called me. I went to them.

Mom: We've called you here so that you can know that everything went well.

Me: Thank you mom and dad

Dad: It's seems like inqibamasondo and izibizo will take place in two days times. The family asked for this because of time. Their family members from India also want to be here to see it before the wedding.

Me: Tjo! So much pressure? You agreed to it daddy?

Dad: Yes I agreed. It will work out just fine ndodakazi.

Mom: We will help you baby. So now we have to draft the list so that you can give it to your husband. He will also give you their family list.

Me: Okay. Mom do you want to wear the Sari on the wedding day?

Mom: No I will represent my culture.

Me: Okay.

I went to take the pen and paper. We listed everything that is needed for who and who. After that I went to sleep after calling my husband to be. I was really happy. The only thing left was to share my happiness with my sister but I couldn't. But I was nervous because everything was happening fast. As the week began. I received a call from Thandeka's ex husband telling their daughter died. It was so painful to hear that Thandeka's daughter died. It was hard to accept it. I was wondering how was

Thandeka taking it. The worst part about it was, that I couldn't go the funeral because I had to attend Gary's wedding. Friday night was the beginning of the wedding ceremony. I went to their home for the first time. I was nervous to meet the whole family. Some were nice but some were not nice at all. The old woman who was Rajiv's grandmother called me. I went to her. She was with another woman. Rajiv's aunt from India.

Grandma: You're Precious?

Me: Yes.

Grandma: You look beautiful.

Me: Thank you.

Aunt: I don't know why Rajiv chose to marry a black girl.

Grandma: Salome!

Aunt: I am sorry mom. I just don't like her and I will not go back home. I want to stay behind and see if she will take good care of our Rajiv. Rajiv has been treated badly since he was a baby boy. He needs to be treated good by his wife and you girl, you must know that I will stay here and make sure that you do that. I am not going back to India. I will make sure that you make him happy and you give him babies to love and cherish. I am happy that my brother stood up to his wife and you will stay here. That will mean I will have a close eye on you.

Me: I promise I will take care of him. I love him.

Aunt: Save the words. I need action. Stand up now and go help others.

Grandma: You will be fine baby. Don't worry.

I smiled and nodded. I touched their feet for blessings and I left. I went to help Nadine. I started having doubt and cold feet about getting married. But I loved Rajiv. I just wanted to be with him. But his aunt scared me..

---

3rd Person Narrator

Dalumuzi (Cikizwa's father) and Bulelani worked on a plan to move Bulelani's family before war begins. Bulelani's family moved to Limpopo and they were safe there. They were well taken care of. At least they were happy and out of poverty. Dalumzi didn't go to the police with the lead of Uyabongeka's killer first. He wanted to tell Themba first. He met up with Themba after work at his house. Cikizwa was also around but she didn't know that Themba was coming to her father's house. There was a knock on the door. Cikizwa went to attend the door. She was surprised to see Themba. Cikizwa: "What are you doing here?"

Themba: "I am here to see your father dear is he here?"

Themba asked loudly so that Dali could hear him because he knew that he was inside.

Cikizwa: "Yes. Please come in"

Themba smiled and walked inside the house. Dalumzi was on the lounge watching TV. They greeted each other and sat down.

Dali: "Cikizwa prepare something to drink for us"

Cikizwa: "Okay"

She stood up and went to the kitchen.

Dali: "I have called you because I have a lead on Missy's killer"

Themba's face changed, suddenly he was filled with, interest, anger and sadness.

Themba: "I am listening"

Dali: "Do you remember Bulelani?"

Themba: "Yes I remember him"

Dali: "I think he has something with the murder of your daughter. He has a very good motive. And he hates you for what you did to him. The rumours has it he went to the police."

Themba: "What? And we weren't informed about that?"

Dali: "I think he might expose the gang Themba. That will mean we're all in danger."

Themba: "Shit! I have to call our IT guy. We need that money that we stole so that we can persuade the police to close the case immediately. And kill Bulelani. Thank you so much. Let me get this guy

and I will inform the rest of the gang tomorrow "

Dali:"Okay please fix it Themba. We don't want our behinds on prison cells."

Themba:"We won't go to jail. Relax "

Themba tapped his shoulder. He stood up and left without even drinking water....

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

I woke up in a hospital bed. There was a nurse with me. She smiled when she saw that I was awake. I tried to smile back but I couldn't. I was so thirsty. I looked around and the nurse quickly went to the jug of water. She poured me some and I drank the water. I cleared my throat.

Me: Thank you. How did I get here because I was alone in the house?

Nurse: Samkelo Ndunakazi and the kids brought you here. He's your husband right because you're also a Ndunakazi?

Me: Yes. He's my husband. Did they leave?

Nurse: No. They are still here.

Tears filled up my eyes. Through it all I didn't deserve Samkelo's kindness because I defended Themba to him. And yes knowing that Themba really stole the money was a very strong motive for him to go to jail. Yes I owed him an apology but that didn't change the fact that I suspect him as the killer of my child. Themba is to blame because if he didn't steal the money my husband wouldn't have been the prime suspect.

Nurse: What is it dear?

My Doctor came in. I wiped my tears.

Doc: Our patient is up. How are you feeling Mrs Ndunakazi?

Me: I feel tired Doctor and my body is heavy.

Doc: Relax you'll be feeling better tomorrow. We will keep you here for a week or two. You're under a lot of stress and that's not good for your entire health. You've had a lot of panic attacks and as a result you'll end up having heart problems and your headache might be permanent.

I nodded and closed my eyes. I just didn't want to cry.

Doc: For now I will go and brief your husband. Maybe he'll want to see you.

I smiled faintly and nodded. I wanted to thank him but honestly speaking I didn't want to see him. The nurse and the Doctor left. After a few minutes a different nurse came in with my children. Samkelo was not with them. The smiles on their faces when they saw me was priceless.

Me: Hey boys. Where is their father?

Nurse: He stayed behind. He told me to bring them only.

Me: Oh thanks.

I suppose he didn't want to see me because guilt was eating him up for what he did.

Me: How are you boys?

Them: We're fine and you?

Me: I am fine. Mom is better now.

Alupheli: Daddy found you on the floor mom.

Kuhle: We wanted to visit you and Daddy found you. What is wrong?

Me: I am sorry that you had to see all that. Mom was sick.

Kuhle: You didn't say happy birthday to me.

My heart broke, I couldn't imagine how Alondwe must be feeling if Mesuli was sad.

Me: I am sorry my son. Mommy was sick I couldn't call you but you will get your present okay?

Kuhle: Okay mom thanks.

Alupheli: Daddy bought him a PSP mom. But he didn't buy it for me.

Me: You'll get yours when it's your birthday and when you're older like Mesuli.

He smiled and nodded.

Me: Are you happy that you have a PSP now?

Kuhle: Haa! Mom you don't understand. I am happy. I told my friends and they were happy for me.

Me: That's nice. It shouldn't disturb you from doing your school work. Okay?

Kuhle: Yes. It will never. At least not while dad is there.

I smiled.

Alupheli: When are we coming back home. Our garden has no one to look after it.

Me: You'll come back home soon. But you can't come back while mom is stuck in here.

Kuhle: Daddy will come back with us?

I didn't know how to answer that. I brushed it off. We stayed until the nurse came to take them because their father wanted to leave.

Me: Goodnight. I love you guys.

Them: we love you too.

I brushed their heads and they left. I ate my food, took my medication, a shower and I went to sleep.

In the morning I woke a nurse was in my room. There was a sport bag beside my bed. I greeted the nurse. She greeted back.

Me: Who brought these?

Nurse: Your husband brought them for you.

Me: Oh.

That was so kind of him. The day at the hospital was a drag and I didn't like staying there.

During the day my phone rang. I took it. Themba was calling me. I answered.

Me: Hello.

Themba: How are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Themba: I am fine. I got some news.

Me: I am listening.

Themba: We found the killer of our daughter.

Me: What? Please tell me who is it?

Themba: It's a man from my father's gang.

My broke into million pieces. I just felt so numb like I have been drugged. I couldn't hear the rest of his explanation. I just dropped the call and cried. I have ruined everything. My life, my marriage and family all for nothing. Muzi walked in while I was crying. I wiped my tears immediately.

Muzi: Don't cry. You don't want to die in here please we still need you.

Me: How can I not cry. I have ruined everything.

Muzi: What are you talking about?

Me: My husband (I told him everything)

Muzi: Thandeka! How could you? How could you blame him without proof.

Me: I was hurt and angry. I needed someone to blame for this. And I blamed the wrong person.

Muzi: You should've kept it to yourself even if you saw that the motive was strong. And confront him when you have proof. And Themba? You know his father was a gang leader what do you think happened to the gang?

Me: I wasn't thinking straight.

Muzi: How are you going to fix this?

Me: I really don't know Muzi.

Just then my kids walked in with a coloured woman. I smiled at them. They ran up to me.

Them: Mommy.

Me: Hey boys. Greet uncle Muzi over there.

Them: Sawubona.

Muzi: How are you boys?

Them: We are fine thanks and you?

Muzi: I am fine too thanks.

Me: I wonder why you don't say thank you to me when I ask how are you?

They laughed and buried their heads on the bed.

Muzi: Tell her boys it depends on how serious you're.

Kuhle: Yes mom.

Me: ncnenc! Hello dear? I am Thandeka.

Woman: I am Candice. Their father's assistant. He sent me to bring them here. So that they can see you.

Me: Oh. Thanks.

Candice: I will come back after the visiting hours boys okay?

Them: Okay bye aunty.

She smiled and left. Muzi and I looked at each other.

Muzi: Potential replacement?

Me: I doubt. My husband likes black women, not whites, Indians or coloureds And besides she's wearing a wedding ring.

Muzi: She's beautiful though.

Me: Yes I saw that.

Muzi: Fix your marriage we don't want any stepmother for the boys and Alondwe.

Me: He won't forgive me Muzi. I know. He doesn't even come to see me.

Muzi: He's angry. Boys where is dad?

Kuhle: He's at work.

Me: He's working? How do you know?

Alupheli: He wears suit when he's going to work. And a tie. And he smells nice.

Muzi and I looked at each other and laughed.

Me: Are you saying he doesn't smell nice when he's not working.

Alupheli: No. My father always smells nice.

Kuhle: We were with him at his office. Where we went to visit him mom. Do you remember?

Me: Yes I remember.

Muzi: They have reinstated him.

Me: Yes. I am happy for him. He was really stressed about his job.

Muzi: The smile on your face right.

Me: Argh! Don't be silly.

We laughed. They stayed with me til late. The visitors hours were over. Candice came and took them. They left. I stayed there thinking about what I've done. I couldn't stop crying. I felt like everything I touch I destroy. It was painful.....

---

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

After school Nkululeko and I went to my aunt's workplace. We asked for her and they showed us where she was.

Melo: Yoh! Guys I am buried up in my work. I wanted us to go shopping. Mom and dad deposited money for you to spend for your birthday. I will give you the card since Nkululeko is here you'll go with him.

Me: Yoh thank you.

Melo: They gave you R1 000 each so you have R2 000 to spend.

I was happy yoh! I had cash to spend that was music to my ears.

Me: Thank you.

Melo: Thank them.

Me: I will call them late.

We took the card and we went shopping with my friend. Because I had money I bought a belated birthday gift for my Thapelo. I had fun with Nkululeko. We went our separate ways later. I went home and I slept. I woke up thinking I will have a call or text from my mother but there was nothing. I was heartbroken, clearly she forgot my birthday or she was angry with me. I didn't know. I called my grandparents and thank them. Even Uyathandwa called to wish me a happy birthday but the woman who gave birth to me didn't.

The following afternoon I received a call from my dad. I was still sad because my mom didn't call. Even at school I was in a sour mood.

Me: Daddy?

Dad: How are you Princess?

Me: I am fine and you?

Dad: I am fine. Your mom is in the hospital. I will deposit cash Friday you're coming back to see her.

Me: I won't come she didn't say Happy birthday to me.

Dad: Alondwe! Thandeka is going through a lot right now. She needs you guys so that she can recover.

Me: Just a phonecall wouldn't have hurt her. Just words two words Happy birthday.

Dad: You're not listening to me are you?

Me: I am.

Dad: Friday you're coming back home..

Me: But –

Dad: No buts!

He hung up the call. I screamed. I wasn't getting peace!

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

After the phone call with my dad. I stood up and I went to the kitchen. My aunt was dressed up nicely.

Me: Going out?

Melo: Yes. I called Nkulu. He's coming. I won't come back tonight.

Me: You shouldn't have. I just want to be alone. My mom is sick.

Melo: What is wrong?

Me: I don't know. Daddy said she's in the hospital. He said he'll deposit money for me to buy a ticket and go home on Friday.

Melo: I am sorry love. I will call her just now. Please be safe.

Me: Okay.

Melo: Don't worry. I will call Nkulu and say I cancelled.

Me: Okay thanks.

She took her things, tapped my shoulder and she left. I made something to eat for myself and I went to sit on the couch and ate my food. I didn't want to call mom but I was going to go and see her. I had no choice but to go she's my mother after all. My phone rang while I was still thinking. Mpendulo was calling me. I smiled and answered.

Me: Don't tell me that you want me to give you tutorials now?

Mpendulo: What happened to those? Ever since you dated Thapelo we don't hang out more often.

Me: You're lying!

Thapelo: (they both laughed) I am heartbroken you know?

Me: Why Phinadi?

Thapelo: You didn't hear that it was me who was talking?

Me: No it was Mpendulo.

Mpendulo: It wasn't me.

I then heard the difference. I laughed.

Me: I am sorry my Prince. But why are you pranking me?

Thapelo: I wasn't pranking you little pudding. I was conversing with you as Mpendulo.

Me: Weeee same staff.

Thapelo: Please come out I want to see you.

Me: Excuse me? Where are you?

Thapelo: I am outside the building.

Me: Jesus you'll see me tomorrow.

Thapelo: Please Alondwe.

I smiled, I always liked it when he pronounced my name because he wasn't Zulu so he pronounced my name in a different way.

Me: But Thapelo it's cold outside.

Thapelo: So you don't want to see me? Are you even in the house?

Me: Hell yes! I am in the house.

Thapelo: Then come to me.

Me: Mxm!

I hung up the call before he could breath another word. Thapelo had the baddest insecurities. The Stinky kind of insecurity. If it was according to him I was going to live with him. The fact that my aunt sometimes leaves me alone, he didn't like it. I didn't blame him though Nkululeko told me that he grew up in a very good home with love and care from both his parents so the caring gene comes naturally to him. I was just lucky to have him as mine. I went to my room and changed my pyjamas. I wore the tracksuits and slippers. I went out of the building. I didn't want to invite him in because he was going to make a big out of the fact that I was alone. He smiled when he saw me. I smiled and looked aside. I went to them and I hugged him tightly. We let go and he kissed my forehead. I hugged Mpendulo.

Me: How are you Mpendulo?

Mpendulo: I am fine and you?

Me: I am fine. What's up ngawe wena wenzani la? (What are you doing here)

Thapelo gave me the confused look. Mpendulo laughed at him. He told him what I said in Sesotho. Thapelo looked at me.

Thapelo: How can you ask me something like that?

Me: I was just asking.

Thapelo: You weren't okay at school so I wanted to check up on you. I didn't know if that was a crime.

Me: Don't eat me up Thapelo.

Thapelo: Sometimes I just don't know how you think. It's like you insert your brain in your ass before you think.

Mpendulo laughed really hard. I folded my lips and my eyes filled up with tears.

Me: You're saying that to me?

Thapelo: Yes.

Me: Please go.

Thapelo: Go back inside. I won't leave if I don't want to.

Me: Because you want girls who will come out here?

Thapelo: Yes. Maybe they will appreciate my efforts than you ungrateful brat.

Mpendulo laughed some more. He was even crying from laughing. Tears voluntary came out of my eyes.

Mpendulo: You guys are funny man. It's like you're a cat and a dog, staying in one cell.

Me: He came here to mock me that's not funny. Mpendulo.  
Thapelo: You wanted that. You're happy when I mock you.  
A really cute guy passed by. I wiped my tears and looked at him. He looked at me and smiled. I smiled too.  
Thapelo: Why are you looking at him?  
Me: I am looking at him because he's cute than you.  
Mpendulo laughed. Thapelo called that guy. The guy came to us. I looked at Thapelo. They spoke Sesotho. I understood a few things they were talking about.  
Thapelo: I think she likes you.  
Guy: She's pretty. She looks so tiny and beautiful.  
I didn't understand my boyfriend bathong! His brains. I didn't understand.  
Thapelo: She's my friend I can give you her number.  
Guy: Please.  
Thapelo said the number out loud but he wasn't giving him my number. He was giving him his number. The guy thank him.  
Guy: (to me) I will call you.  
Me: I will wait for your call.  
The guy left. Mpendulo was far from us. He was still laughing his lungs out. Thapelo held my hand.  
Thapelo: I love you my little milky bar.  
Me: I love you too my Prince. He doesn't stand a chance on you.  
Thapelo: I know he doesn't. Nobody does.  
I smiled and kissed him. One can never say we were arguing just a few minutes ago. We stopped kissing each other when we heard Mpendulo saying that sweet "Aah man". We looked at him and looked at each other, then back at him.  
Us: Argh! That's so gay!  
We all laughed.  
Mpendulo: If one can compete with you guys or even try to keep up with your relationship they can never succeed. Y'all are crazy.  
Me: He's the crazy one.  
Thapelo: You make me crazy sometimes. The things you say.  
Me: You're the cause.  
Mpendulo: So now you'll point fingers at each other?  
We laughed.  
Me: Where's your girlfriend since you're busy commenting on our business?  
Mpendulo: (laughing) After seeing you. We're going to him.  
Me: Thapelo? You'll be with who?  
Mpendulo: He'll be alone like I am right now.  
Me: I wasn't talking to you Mpendulo.  
Thapelo: (laughing) I will be alone my Princess relax. Nobody can take your place.  
I smiled and kissed him briefly.  
Thapelo: Did your mother call?  
Me: No. Daddy said she's been hospitalised.  
Thapelo: What? Why?  
Me: It happens when she's stressed. She'll be fine. I will go and see her. So on Friday I am leaving.  
Thapelo: Okay. She'll be fine don't worry okay?  
I nodded. We hugged each other once more and he kissed me.  
Me: Thank you for checking up on me.  
Thapelo: That's my responsibility to look after you my Princess.

Me: I love you so much.

Thapelo: I love you too little pudding. Please go so that I can see you going in safely.

Me: Okay. Good night Mpendulo.

Mpendulo: Goodnight mama.

I kissed Thapelo's cheek and I wished him a goodnight. I then ran back inside the building with a smile on my face. I love that boy too much!

---

Thandeka Ndunakazi...

The week went by I was still in the hospital. My kids were coming almost everyday to check up on me but my husband wasn't with them. That was one of the things stressing me out. I really didn't know what was going on with him. The Doctor came in while I was still thinking about everything.

Doc: How are you feeling today?

Me: I feel better. Can I please go back home. I am fine now.

Doc: I have to keep you here for another week then you can go home.

Me: But I am fine.

Doc: I am your Doctor I know what is best for you. I will be back.

Thobelani walked in with a bunch of flowers and fruit basket. I smiled.

Me: Hey stranger.

Thobe: I am sorry man. My friend at the funeral I was busy. I couldn't talk to you.

Me: It's okay.

Thobe: What's going on Thandeka. Your husband called telling me you're here when I asked him to tell me when he's coming here I will come with him. He just didn't come out with a word.

Me: Things are really upside down. (I told him everything that has happened)  
He kept quiet for a long time.

Me: I know.

Thobe: He didn't come even once?

Me: No he didn't.

Thobe: That's so unlike him. I am sorry man. But what you did wasn't right.

Me: I know. The hardest part is that everyone has turned their backs on me. My dad and my brother they didn't even call me. Just to ask how I was doing.

Thobe: Do you think he told them?

Me: Yes he did because Evelyn and Shemah called. But even if he didn't tell them. I just buried my daughter just to call and ask how am I doing? What have I done to them?

Thobe: I am sorry.

Me: Ever since Alondwe got pregnant and they chased her out. They have been distanced. Even in the funeral they were there but distant.

Thobe: It's unlike them.

Me: Maybe they are tired of me and my problems. But I don't blame them. I just have to accept that I am alone.

Thobe: You can't give up on Samkelo.

Me: I will apologise but I doubt he'll forgive me.

Thobe: It's tough shame. My daughter was really heartbroken. Your daughter did not treat her right..

Me: Alondwe told me. I forgot to call her and explain it to her. It happens that when you're pregnant they'll be that person you don't want to see. Their sight will disgust you. That's what happened to Alondwe with Zenande.

Thobe: I know. I tried to explain it to her. I remembered how you hated that intern at your workplace. The time you were carrying Alupheli.

We both laughed.

Me: Yoh! That poor girl. It was hard shame. Unamagqubu bo.

We laughed again. He stayed with me for quite some time until I saw my husband walking inside the room, carrying Alupheli on his arms, with Mesuli holding his hand. My heart started beating fast as our eyes met..... My daughter Alondwe and my son Uyathandwa walked in together talking and laughing.... I smiled and looked at Samkelo. He didn't even smile back nor fake it.....

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

My kids came close to me, I hugged Uyathandwa first and Alondwe after wards.

Alupheli: Why didn't you hug us mom?

Everyone in the room laughed. I laughed too.

Me: I am sorry Ndunakazi omncane. (Ndunakazi junior)

Alupheli: (smiling) Ubani uNdunakazi omkhulu?(Who is Ndunakazi senior)

Me: (brushing his head) That's your father.

Alupheli laughed clapping his hands and looking up. Alupheli: Daddy did you hear that?

I looked at him and he looked at Alupheli.

Sam: Yes boy. I heard it loud and clear.

Kuhle: Does that mean we are coming back home mom and dad?

I played with my fingers waiting for Samkelo to say something. I didn't know what to say.

Sam: We're not here to talk about that. Scelokuhle.

Kuhle: Okay dad.

Uyathandwa: Dad, you're not staying with mom anymore?

Sam: Uhm –

Alupheli: Yes they don't stay together. We stay with dad now. Mom stay alone.

Me: Uyathandwa wasn't asking you Thando. Please learn to talk when needed syezwana?

Alupheli: Yes mom.

He ate his fingers. He was disappointed. I took the fingers out of his mouth. He wanted to cry.

Me: Kuyakhalisa lokhu engikushilo? (What I said makes you cry?)

He shook his head "No".

Me: Then don't even think about crying.

He nodded and looked at his daddy. Samkelo picked him up and sat down with him. Alondwe was awfully quiet. She must've been angry because I didn't call her on her birthday.

Me: How are you doing Alondwe and Uyathandwa?

Uyathandwa: I am fine mom, I was just worried about you. Please promise me you won't die too?

Me: I won't die my baby. Don't worry. I will be fine.

He smiled and nodded. I looked at Alondwe.

Alondwe: I am fine.

That's all she managed to say.

Me: I know you're still angry about your birthday. I am really sorry for not calling you. I promise I will make it up to you.

Alondwe: Why didn't you call?

Me: I don't want to make excuses baby. I am really sorry.

Alondwe: It's okay. How are you feeling?

Me: I am much better now.

Alondwe: What happened mom?

Me:(I cleared my throat) I received some shocking news. That's why I had a panic attack. She looked at her father.

Sam: (confusingly) What?

Alondwe: Daddy you have to go back home. Please.

Sam: Alondwe I told you to stay out of my business please.

Uyathandwa: Why are you separate?

Thobe: Guys I think you should let your parents solve their problems without you interfering.

Alondwe: They won't solve them if we don't have interfere.

Sam: Alondwe Ndunakazi!

She shut up and looked down. A tear escaped from her eye. She raised her head again.

Alondwe: You don't understand mom and dad! This is not right. You're tearing apart our home. The home you swear to God and people to protect and keep. What about us? Do you ever think of us before signing up for dirvoce? Or it's all about what you want? Why can't married couples stick to their vows because now you're doing the opposite. It's just wrong!

She stormed out. Uyathandwa followed her and Mesuli followed them.

Alupheli: Can I go too daddy?

Samkelo put him down and he ran off following them. Thobelani looked at me. Samkelo was looking down. Thus was all my fault.

Thobe: I think you guys need to talk.

Sam: There's nothing to talk about. Thandeka made it clear that she won't stay married to a murder now tell me what is there to fix?

We all went silent. A tear escaped from my eye. I wiped it immediately. I didn't know what to do.

Me: Samkelo?

Sam: No! I have heard it with you. Just because you saw that your Themba is not innocent after all you want to change everything. You'll make me a fool til when Thandeka huh?

Thobelani slowly walked out.

Me: I am sorry Ndunakazi –

Sam: You're sorry?

Me: I was –

Sam: Let me guess you were hurt, you needed someone to blame and Samkelo the puppy was the right person to blame because he loves hurting his wife. That's what you were going to say right?

Me: No Samkelo. I am sorry, I didn't –

Sam: Yazini ngikhathele! Ngikhathele Thandeka ukubezelela wena. Ngikubekezelele ngathi imina umfazi wakho. You're the one who sang uyobekezela on our traditional wedding day but with just one suspicion you wanted divorce. Please do us both a favour and tell your lawyer to draw up the damn papers and I will give you what you wanted. You're the one who broke our children's home!

He left me after saying those words. I was left alone crying. I was regretting everything I have said to him. He's my husband and I love him but I failed him. I failed our children and our marriage. What kind of woman does that?

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

I took my siblings and we went outside the hospital building. I went to buy drinks and chips for them. I bought juice for myself. We sat down.

Uyathandwa: Why are you drinking something different to what we are drinking?

Me: I don't like any drinks with acid.

Uyathandwa: Are you sick?

Me: No I am not.

Uyathandwa: So?

Me: I just –

Alupheli: She said she just don't like it bhuti.

I laughed and said: Thanks Alupheli.

Uyathandwa looked at me once and continued with eating the chips. I didn't know if he was suspecting something or what but my tummy wasn't showing yet. And for all I know mom didn't tell him that I was pregnant. Mom's friend passed by.

Thobe: Hey guys I am leaving now.

Us: Uhambe kahle (go well)

Me: How is Zenande doing?

Thobe: She's fine but she misses you. That I know of.

Me: I am sorry uncle about everything. I didn't mean to disappoint you guys. And I didn't mean to hurt my friend but the feeling I have towards her is out of my control.

Thobe: We all do mistakes love. Everything will be fine. She understands.

Me: Send my regards to her.

Thobe: I will. Bye.

Us: Bye.

He went to his car and he drove off. We looked at his car until it disappeared.

Kuhle: He's driving a nice car.

Us: Yeah.

He was driving a silver c-class (I don't know if it's written like this or what) Mercedes Benz. We continued talking and eating with my siblings until our father came out of the hospital. He didn't look happy. He looked quite pissed. He came to us.

Dad: Let's go.

Me: We're leaving already?

Dad: Do you want to go back inside?

Me: I want to be with my mom right now.

He took out his wallet, took out a few notes and gave it to me. I took it and I went back inside the hospital. I went to my mom's room. She was crying. I went close to her. She looked at me and we hugged each other.

Me: I am sorry mama.

Mom: I love your daddy Nana. I was just angry and vulnerable. I don't want to loose him.

Me: Talk to him mom please.

Mom: He doesn't want to listen to me. But I will try Nana. Don't worry. Sit down we have to talk.

I nodded and sat down as she said.

Mom: I want us to talk about the father of your child. I started frowning. I didn't want to talk about that. I had let that pass and my mom was bringing it up.

Mom: We have to talk about it.

Me: Why Mom? I don't want to talk about the past.

Mom: This was not your fault Alondwe. Your father did apologies to everyone that he had hurt. Maybe that girl was already dead but you didn't deserve what happened to you. Are you sure that you didn't see the guy?

Me: No. I didn't.

Mom: Where was Sphe ? Your partner?

I didn't know what to say but after a few seconds a lie came up.

Me: He was with his girlfriend. Mom please.

Mom: I will have to ask everyone who was on that party. I can't –

Me: MOM! PLEASE JUST LET IT GO!

I roared at her, I didn't mean to but it just happened.

Mom: Don't shout at me young lady I am your mother.

Me: I am sorry. I just don't want to talk about this. I am happy at my new school. Talking

about it will only open the wounds that I have buried. Please mom.

Mom: Okay I will let it go.

I nodded but I didn't trust her at all. I didn't want to go through every pain that I went through all over again. I had my friend and my boyfriend and they made me happy. Mom and I chatted about my new school and Johannesburg. It was fun just to be with her and see her laughing and smiling after losing my little sister. While we were still talking Nkulu called. I answered my phone.

Me: Nonku?

Nkulu: Hey mama bear How are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Nkulu: I am fine. Not even a phonecall to tell me that you arrived safely?

Me: Eish I am sorry my friend. I forgot.

Nkulu: But surely you told Thapelo.

Me: No I didn't (I was lying)

Nkulu: You're lying. I know you did. It's like you're getting his dick already.

Me:(laughing) Okay dude. I am with my mom.

Nkulu: Yoh! Aybo how is she can I talk to her?

Me: Excuse me?

Nkulu: Please chomi!

Me: Mom. Nkulu Wants to talk with you.

Mom smiled and nodded. I gave her my phone. They started talking. My mom was in stitches with laughter I tell you. She was even crying. I was also laughing because I saw her laughing. After a few minutes they said their goodbyes. She gave me back my phone. Nkululeko had hung up.

Me: What were you talking about?

Mom:(laughing) We were talking about "our man"

Me:(laughing) I suppose that is daddy?

Mom: Obvious. December holidays he must definitely visit us. I really like him.

Me: that's nice. I have to go now visiting hours are over. I will pass by tomorrow before I go to the airport.

Mom: Okay. My love. Thanks. I love you okay?

Me: I love you too.

I kissed her cheek and I left. I took a cab straight to my dad's flat.....

---

Nobuhle Mthembu.....

Everything went well with Gary's wedding. Now it was a turn for my wedding to take place. All the Zulu ceremonies before the wedding were done. (Nqibamasondo and izibizo) I was waiting for my big day. I was so nervous but Nadine was very supportive. Her and I were planning the wedding. Rajiv's aunt was giving me hard time but I tried to endure the pressure and though it was hard to know that most of the family members didn't like me but hey I was marrying the man of my dreams. I was so nervous about the day but my mom was supportive. Only a day was left then my wedding was going to take place.....

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

My kids came to visit me the following day and they had to go back to school. I was really grateful that they came to see me. I was feeling better than before. A few days went by I was still in the hospital feeling helpless and bored. Candice, my husband's assistant used to bring the kids to me almost everyday. Samkelo never came back ever since the last time he saw me. Even when I call him, he would just give the phone to the kids. I was really running out of hope. It was a Friday morning, my Doctor came in and did her work.

Me: Doctor I am really feeling okay now. I think it's time that I go back home.

Doc: But I was planning on keeping you for a few more days.

Me: What? How many days maybe?

Doc: To be honest, a week.

Me: What? Are you hearing yourself right now?

Doc: Yes and your husband gave me a go ahead to keep you here as long as I should and to do everything in my powers to help you.

Me: Really? Have you seen him coming here to see me? No he hasn't come but he's giving you orders.

Doc: But he does come almost everyday here with the kids and that lady.

Me: Maybe you're mistaken Doctor.

I took my phone and showed him my husband's picture.

Doc: Yes that him. The last time he came here was last night. He wanted me to brief him about your progress. I am just surprised that you say he doesn't come. Maybe you're having amnesia. I will be right back. We'll run some tests.

The Doctor left me speechless. I was just surprised that Samkelo came to the hospital almost everyday but not even once did he come to see me. "At least that means he still cares" I thought to myself. My Doctor came and she started to examine me.

Me: What are you doing now?

Doc: I am running tests for amnesia.

Me: There's no need for you to do that. I know why he doesn't come to see me. He's still mad at me. I don't have any amnesia.

Doc: Oh I am sorry to hear that.

I didn't say anything I just nodded. She left after a few minutes. I took my phone and logged in on Twitter. I just got emotional when I saw a cute couple. I just cried.

Voice: "You know it's not healthy for a beautiful woman like you to cry"

I sniffed and wiped my tears. I looked up and Themba was at the door. I smiled faintly. He was the last person I wanted to see.

Me: Oh hey. what are you doing here?

Themba: Oh so I am not allowed to come and see the mother of my kids?

Me: That's not what I am saying.

Themba: Well it seems like that.

Me: Oh sorry.

He walked inside my room with a basket of fruits and flowers.

Themba: So how are you feeling?

Me: I am feeling much better but the Doctor wants to keep me in here for a week.

Themba: You should put your health first.

Me: I know but a week has passed since I have been here. I am tired of this hospital bed.

He held my hand. He brushed it softly. I looked at him.

Me: What are you doing?

Themba: I heard your conversation with the Doctor earlier. What's happening with your husband?

Just then the door swung open, Samkelo walked in with plastic bag and my favourite flowers. "White Roses". My heart skipped a beat.

Sam: Oh I am sorry I didn't know you had company. I thought maybe we could talk.

He said that looking down at Themba's hands who were holding my hands. Themba removed his hands as he saw that. He cleared his throat and stood up.

Themba: I will give you guys some privacy.

Sam: No you can stay. I will just leave.

I looked at him as he put the plastic bag and the roses beside me. I held his hand and looked

at his eyes.

Me: Please don't go.

Sam: I will come back some other time.

Me: But –

Sam: Thandeka?

I knew what that meant so I let go of his hand. He kissed my forehead and left. Tears gathered up in my eyes.

Me: Can I be alone please. Thanks for coming.

Themba: But –

Me: I get it Okay. Please go.

He nodded and he stood up and left. I just cried silently. I was just angry and frustrated. I knew I should have confronted Themba about what he did to my husband but his day was coming. I was going to plan something big on him and take my son afterwards. I cried, I kept on brushing my forehead where my husband kissed me until I fell asleep.

Two more days passed, I was still in the hospital. Samkelo wasn't taking any of my calls and the kids didn't come to see me in two days. I was really tired so I decided that I was going to discharge myself. It was a Monday night after medication and supper. I got out of my bed. I removed the drip needle nicely and I covered my wrist. I wore my clothes which were in my sport bag. It was black skinny jeans, brown vest with a brown leather jacket. That showed that Samkelo picked up the clothes. I brushed my weave nicely and fixed myself up. I cleaned up and packed everything that I needed with me. I waited for visiting hours and that was the right time for me to leave. I took my phone and I walked out looking at it. No one paid attention to me. As soon as I was outside. I lifted my head up and I went to get a cab home. As soon as I arrived home. I went upstairs to my room. I took a long ass shower, just washing my body and singing. I finished everything later and I went to prepare something nice for myself. I went to my bedroom and ate. I took off the weave and washed my hair. I then fell asleep nicely in my comfortable bed.

The following morning I went to make breakfast for myself first, I went to my room with my plate while I took off my clothes. I ate half of my food, I put the plate on the bathroom chair and I went to take a shower. I finished up and I dried my body. I lotion my body in there and wore my matching red panties and bra. I took my plate and I went back to my room finishing up. I really missed my food not that hospital food. One can never say you're in a private hospital even the food vibe is just not that good enough.

Voice: So you decided to discharge yourself?

I got a fright and let go of my plate. It didn't break because of the carpet on the floor.

Samkelo was sitting on the edge of my bed. He was looking at me.

Me: Whoah! You gave me a fright.

Sam: I asked you a question Thandeka.

Me: I was tired of that hospital bed.

Sam: Excuse me? The Doctor didn't say you can go but because you're smart enough you discharged yourself.

He was really angry, even his nose was changing colour.

Me: I didn't think you care.

Sam: You didn't think – heeh imihlola. You're the my mother of my kids of course I care about you. You're my wife for goodness sake!

I looked down without saying anything to him.

Sam: But why are you doing this to us. To me? What have I done to you to deserve all this ill treatment you're giving me huh?

Me: I didn't mean to hurt you. Please forgive me.

He didn't say anything for a long time. I was still looking down. He pulled me by my hand

and he gave me a warm hug. I teared up inside his chest. He brushed my back softly. He held my chin up and we kissed for a while. We haven't kissed like that a while. His hand went down my back, then stopped halfway and came back up. He played with my hair and ran his fingers on my scalp while he was looking at me without a word. His eyes were so peaceful. With my free arm I held his face, pulled it closer to mine. I didn't want him to stop kissing me. It felt so good. He led me to our bed and we kissed even more, his hands pulling me closer to him. We lay on the bed. I was on top of him. Then he turned us over and he was on top. He started grinding on me, he kissed me. His breathing quickened and he took off my bra and rubbed my boobs softly. He went down a little and sucked on my nipples, using his tongue to create different sensations which gave me a tingling feeling. My body craved him, I craved him and he craved me too. His little man hardened against me. He was still going down on me, playing with his tongue on my belly button, he moved further down, slowly...licking me. He looked up at me.

Sam: I love you Thandeka.

Me: I love you too Samkelo.

He proceeded and the rest is history.....

Nobuhle Mthembu.....

Our wedding was taking place in Chatsworth. It was at night, in the family friend house. We couldn't do it in my father's house because it was small and the place was not convenient. I was looking beautiful in my red and gold sari. The make up and jewellery it was beautiful. Nadine came in where I was getting dressed.

Nadine: You look beautiful my sister.

Me: I don't feel beautiful but I feel nervous.

My assistant: You shouldn't be here.

Nadine: I know. I just wanted to tell you guys that you should come at the gate now.

My assistant: That's just an excuse.

Nadine:( laughing) Okay. I just wanted to see my sister.

She kissed my cheek and left. We laughed and finished up. The time for us to go came. The Milne (meeting) and Swagatam (welcome) ceremony started. This ritual is where the groom's procession party arrives at the bride's home or the location where the bride is and marriage will be celebrated. The Pillay family was dancing and rejoicing. My family was also dancing to the instrument. On their arrival, there is a ritual where my father and Rajiv's father were introduced to each other. The Pillay family was welcomed. We went to venue where the wedding was taking place. I was accompanied by my mother and other ladies. I was looking down. I stood next to my Rajiv who was looking very good. The venue was full of Indian people family, relatives and friends.

The first ritual that was done was the Kanyadaan, the giving away of daughter by the father. The ceremony was done by my father. Nadine had taught us everything about the ceremony and we watched other weddings that had happened in the family. My father's hand was on the left, holding my hand and he handed it over to Rajiv on his right hand. While my father was giving me away the Kamasukta verse was pronounced:

“Who offered this maiden?, to whom is she offered?

Kama (the god of love) gave her to me, that I may love her

Love is the giver, love is the acceptor

Enter thou, the bride, the ocean of love

With love then, I receive thee

May she remain thine, thine own, O god of love

Verily, thou art, prosperity itself

May the heaven bestow thee, may the earth receive thee.”

My father spoke: Rajiv my son please do not fail my daughter. She's my younger daughter. I give you her so that you can love and cherish her. Treat her with love and respect. She shall do the same.

Rajiv: Thank you Mr Mthembu. I promise to love and honor her til death do us part.

The ceremony proceeded. The ritual of Panigrahana came after Kanyadana. The ritual is preceded by vivaha-homa rite, where in a symbolic fire was light by Rajiv to mark the start of a new household. Rajiv held my hand as a symbol of our impending marital union, and he announced his acceptance of responsibility to four deities.

Rajiv: I take thy hand in mine, yearning for happiness. I ask thee, to live with me, as thy husband. Till both of us, with age, grow old. Know this, as I declare, that the Gods. Bhaga, Aryama, Savita and Purandhi, have bestowed thy person, upon me, that I may fulfill, my Dharmas of the householder, with thee. This I am, That art thou. The Sāman I, the Ṛc thou. The Heavens I, the Earth thou.

The Saptapadi. We tied our clothes representing lifelong bond formed during the seven promises ritual with fire as witness. The ceremony was performed accurately. I led the first six circuits. After completing the seven steps. Rajiv and I said the vows together:

“We have taken the Seven Steps. You have become mine forever. Yes, we have become partners. I have become yours. Hereafter, I cannot live without you. Do not live without me. Let us share the joys. We are word and meaning, united. You are thought and I am sound. May the night be honey-sweet for us. May the morning be honey-sweet for us. May the earth be honey-sweet for us. May the heavens be honey-sweet for us. May the plants be honey-sweet for us. May the sun be all honey for us. May the cows yield us honey-sweet milk. As the heavens are stable, as the earth is stable, as the mountains are stable, as the whole universe is stable, so may our union be permanently settled.”

Hindu wedding ritual, Saptapadi, started with preface announced by the priest, and thereafter followed by a series of vows that Rajiv and I make to each other. We made a lot of vows to each other.

A lot of rituals were performed. The exchange of garlands. The wedding necklace and the dots on our foreheads. The rice and other grains, seeds and pastes. The, rice was thrown at me and Rajiv. Rituals done include darshan, where we as newly married couple were met, blessed and greeted by family and friends.

After the wedding was complete, I had to leave for Rajiv's home, where his family members welcome us as the newly wedded couple in a ritual known as Grihapravesa (home coming/entry). This ceremony typically requires participation of the mother, father, brothers, and sisters, or other guardians of the groom. All the family members welcomed us warmly and that

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

A MONTH LATER....

After that weekend of visiting mom in the hospital, I went back to Johannesburg. I was really looking forward to studying because the final exams were about to begin. Mpendulo and I studied together. Thapelo didn't want to join us. He was still my competitor and judging from our trial reports, he was winning. Mpendulo's girlfriend had a problem with me studying with her boyfriend even though she knew that I was dating Thapelo. I suppose she did not trust me around her man. I was now five months pregnant, my stomach was showing a little but only to me and those who knew. My shirts were quite bigger and the blazer hid my belly so no learners noticed that I was pregnant. I thought at five months I was going to have a big belly but the Doctor told me that some women usually don't show up quickly on their first pregnancy. My baby was really active and I hated the fact that something was always moving inside of me. I just didn't want to connect with the baby. So it was the first week of

November. The final exams were going to begin on the second week. I was with Nkululeko during break time. We were having lunch together, just the two of us. My baby started moving. My facial expression change from smiley face to sour face.

Nkulu: What's wrong mama bear? Is baby bear moving?

He asked and touched my stomach.

Me: Please don't do that. You know I don't like it.

Nkulu: But you gotta stop doing this to yourself. The baby doesn't know anything. All this anger is not right for him.

I was having a baby boy. And I hated that even more. The Doctor didn't have problems with showing me the gender. My baby was on the right position and she was able to get the gender. I hated the fact that my baby was a boy. I was hoping that maybe I was going to get a girl. Maybe then I was going to be able to love her and protect her. Thapelo was very excited about it. One could vow that the baby was his. He also had plans of the game that he was going to play with the baby. I just wasn't interested in all that.

Me: Please don't lecture me. Please!

Nkulu: Okay! Okay! But you're being bitter for nothing now. I mean you have a good guy and he loves you. He also support you why don't you just accept the baby?

Me: I will see you after school Nonku.

Nkulu: Don't avoid the question. Stop running away from this Alondwe!

Me: Bye.

I took my bag and I went to my class with my food. I was also gaining weight and I hated that even more. I went to my desk and continued with eating. I didn't want to think about what Nkululeko had said. My phone rang. My mom was calling. I answered.

Me: Hello mama.

Mom: Hey baby how are you guys doing?

Me: I am fine and you?

Mom: I am good. How's my grandson?

Me: He's fine.

Mom: Okay. We're going to plan something, you and I.

Me: What's that mom?

Mom: Your mama's vow renewal ceremony.

Me: What? Please say that out loud Mrs Ndunakazi.

Mom: (laughing) Your father and I, we are going to renew our vows.

I was so happy to hear that. I couldn't stop smiling.

Me: When did you get back together?

Mom: It's been a while now.

Me: Mom? When you say a while. What do you mean?

Mom: Okay. We didn't want to tell you as yet baby. But your daddy said I can tell you now because he knows that I am dying to tell you.

Me: My dad loves surprises. I can't wait for the summer so that we can start planning.

Mom: Tell your friend that I will need him too. You know his kind know more about beautiful events.

We laughed and chatted some more. We said our goodbyes and hung up. Lunch time was over and we had to go back to our next classes. I went to the next class. Thapelo ran after me and carried my bag. He gave me a packet of fritos. He kissed my cheek.

Me: Where were you?

Thapelo: I was with my friends babe. I saw your friend walking alone what happened?

Me: Nothing just a baby argument.

Thapelo: Alondwe –

Me: Don't start.

He raised his hands up and I looked away. He held my hand and we walked together in class. The day proceeded until it was after school. Mpendulo, and I were going to do Maths by Thapelo's crib. His parents were not home so Mpendulo was going to sleep with Thapelo and his baby sister and baby brother. His little siblings were twins. They were 11 yrs old doing grade 6.

I went to Nkululeko before leaving. He was packing up his books.

Me: Hey, I am leaving.

Nkulu: Okay. Go well.

Me: Look I am sorry about earlier. Okay.

He smiled and nodded. We hugged each other. We walked to the gate together.

Nkulu: So are you really going to study with Mpendulo or you want Thapelo's mushmellows?

Me: What?

Nkulu: Yes. When are you giving it to him?

Me: Anytime.

He looked at me surprised by my response. I looked at him and we laughed. But honestly I have thought about it, just that the opportunity hasn't represent itself and he hasn't asked nor talk about it. I just wanted to feel how it was to have a guy inside me. I didn't feel Sphephelo because I wasn't myself but I wanted to feel my Phinadi. And my body sometimes used to react in a way that I didn't understand.

Nkulu: You're kidding.

Me: Come on. I am not. Just shut up. Here, he is.

He laughed and shut up.

I went to my baby and hugged him. We kissed briefly and he held my hand.

Me: Where is Mpendulo?

Thapelo: He went to my siblings school. Let's go home they will find us there.

Me: Okay.

We said farewell to Nkululeko who was giving me wired looks. I smiled at him and I left with Thapelo. We arrived at his house. It was a beautiful mansion. It was big and white. We entered the house and it was completely beautiful.

Me: Your parents gave you guys a beautiful home.

Thapelo: Thanks. Do you want something to drink?

Me: Yes. But can I lie down, my feet are killing me.

Thapelo: Okay come and lie down in my room.

I followed him and he opened the door for me. His room was simple and beautiful. It was messy a little.

Thapelo: I am sorry about the mess. I was running late.

Me: Yeah right.

He laughed. I sat on his bed and he took off my shoes and socks. He went to get something to drink and I took off my skirt just to get under the covers. I laid on my back and closed my eyes. I felt his soft hands softly touching my face. I opened my eyes and he gave me the glass with an appetising juice. I drank it and gave him the glass back.

Thapelo: I will prepare something for you. I hope-

Me: No please come and hold me. I want to sleep a little.

Thapelo: Okay.

He took his uniform off. He was left with his underwear.

Thapelo: Take off your shirt so that you won't have to iron it. I will hang it with your skirt. I nodded and took it off. I was left with my vest only.

Thapelo: Your belly is huge without your shirt and blazer on.

I smiled. I was sleepy. He hanged my clothes and he joined me inside the bed. He held me

closer to him.

Me: When will Mpendulo come back?

Thapelo: I don't know.

I nodded and closed my eyes slowly. I was slowly drifting off when I felt something poking my thigh. I opened my eyes and Thapelo was looking at me.

Me: What's wrong?

Thapelo: You're cute when you're sleeping.

I smiled and slowly our foreheads met and we kissed each other slowly until the kiss got heated up. His hands were all over my body. He took off the vest I was wearing and he played with my boobs giving me a ticklish feeling. He sucked my boobs while his fingers went down on me. I gasped as I felt his finger entering my world. I felt his penis getting hard against my thigh. I was wet and he went down on me using his tongue. Moans escaped me I couldn't control them they literally came out of my mouth. I was feeling the pleasure that I never felt before. He came back to my lips and kissed me.

Thapelo: Should I stop? (Lazy voice)

Me: No...don't stop...

Thapelo: it's okay if I- are you ready or you want me to stop?

Me: Yes it's okay.

He smiled. He walked out of his room. I was left alone feeling nervous and hot. He came back with two condoms. He kissed me again while he took off his underwear He broke the kiss and opened the condom. He slide it in, on his guy and he departed my legs. He kissed me again and I felt a strong hard thing like it was wood. It poked my vagina and I screamed. He told me to relax and I tried by all means. He tried again and I felt tears coming out of my eyes. As he kept on trying until he was inside. He started moving in and out. I felt nothing nice about sex that day. He finished, I think I did come I didn't know. He wore another condom and started all over. We did another round which was magical. I really enjoyed it. I moaned through out the session. We both reached the highest point. He kissed my forehead and he smiled at me. I smiled shyly.

Thapelo: You were perfect.

Me: (blushing) So were you.

Thapelo: I love you Princess.

Me: I love you too Prince.

He kissed my lips softly. He took out the condom and wrapped it with the tissue. I was so tired. I dozed off the second he got up from the bed.....

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

A MONTH EARLIER.....

Samkelo and I fell asleep very fast after our make up sex session. It was so good to have his arms around me. I wish I could do it over and over again. We woke up later, the time was about 1'oclock. He kissed my forehead.

Me: I wish every woman was lucky as I am.

Sam: Why do you say that?

Me: Because I have a handsome husband, who loves me dearly and we have a beautiful family.

Sam: (smiling) You made him yourself, don't you remember?

Me: I love you Mr Ndunakazi.

Sam: I love you too Queen Ndunakazi. And I am sorry I couldn't be there when you lost little princess.

Tears formed in my eyes. I didn't want to think about my daughter's passing but how can one avoid thoughts about someone who meant the world to you. It's just hard. Samkelo held me closer to him.

Me: I just can't believe that she's no longer here Samkelo. Justice is just not enough.

Sam: God knew she was going to take her, it will get better with time. Just hold on to the memories my love everything will be alright.

Me: I am sorry for accusing-

Sam: Don't even mention it. It's all in the past. Let's just focus on the future.

Me: I love you so much.

Sam: I love you too.

We kissed some more and we went to take a shower together. I felt much better. Inside the shower he lifted my leg up.

Me: What are you doing?

Sam: I am trying to heal you.

Me: (giggles) So you're a Doctor now?

Sam: I am a man of many talents mkami.

Me: Fix up the rubber mat then, we don't want to fall now do we?

Sam: No mam.

I smiled and he fixed the rubber mat. We had a great shower session. After that we went to dress up in our room.

Sam: Let's go and fetch the kids.

Me: Okay. I miss them.

He smiled and we walked out of the bedroom. We went to the garage and he drove our car. We were singing the song "use somebody" but covered by the The soil. I was so happy. I have missed my husband in every way and I was so miserable without him. He was that type of a husband who made everything easy and simple. We were just singing and laughing.

Me: Uyabimba ke manje.

Sam: Nawe nje.

We laughed. The school was already out when we arrived at the gate. Samkelo stepped out of the car and went to get the kids. I stayed behind. They came back, Alupheli was crying. Samkelo had him on his arms. He opened the door and passed him over to me. He wiped his tears away as soon as he saw me.

Alupheli: Mama wami? (My mom?)

He was really surprised to see me so was his big brother. I smiled and kissed his face.

Me: Why are you crying?

Kuhle: Mom are we going home?

Me: Hold it Mesuli.

He didn't say anything. Their father started the car.

Me: Tell me why are you crying?

Alupheli: That girl beat me. I wanted to beat her back and daddy told me not to beat her.

Me: Where was your daddy?

Sam: I came at the right time while he was about to beat her back.

Me: Why was she beating you?

He just cried and he didn't answer that question.

Kuhle: He laughed at her because she fell down.

Me: Sorry baby. But you did well by not beating her back. Violence doesn't solve problems. And you shouldn't beat girls Okay?

Alupheli: But she beat me first. The

Me: I know but it's not okay to beat her back.

He nodded and rested his head on my chest. Samkelo looked at me and smiled.

Kuhle: So mom?

Me: Yes?

Kuhle: My answer?

Me: What answer?

Kuhle: Mom!?

Me: Okay! Okay. We are going home.

The boys: Really?

Alupheli looked at me. They screamed and sang “ama wololo. Wololo wololo!”

Me: And then who taught you that?

Them: It’s daddy.

Me: Samkelo?

Sam: Not me.

We laughed. It was so nice to be with them again. I felt at ease.

Kuhle: We must call Alondwe.

Sam: No we won’t.

Me: Why?

Sam: I know the reason so no one must tell her. Understood?

Us: Yes daddy.

We laughed. Samkelo offered to take us out. We had a great time together. Then we went back home. That nice we slept together.

Weeks went by Samkelo and the kids moved back in to the house. They moved their things back basically. After a week my family and I had a romantic dinner. Which was prepared by my husband. That’s where he asked me that we must renew our vows. I was very happy and when I had to tell my daughter. That made me more excited. I went back to work and everything went back to normal.

Muzi called me. We sat by his office.

Me: Okay. You called me.

Muzi: I know that you’re already running after Themba but can we please do it together because he was going to be your first mission anyway before this drama happened.

Me: But I wanted to be alone on this one.

Muzi: I know but please Thandeka. I think there’s more to this than what we know.

Me: Let me think about it and get back to you.

Muzi: That’s fair enough.

I smiled and stood up. I wasn’t really pleased with what muzi was offering. I wanted to get Themba myself and look for the guy who ruined my daughter’s life. Those were two important projects in my life.

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

I woke up when someone was softly shaking me. I opened my eyes and Mpendulo was smiling at me. He was giving me a silly smile. I rubbed my eyes.

Me: What?

Mpendulo: Are we still going to study or you’re exhausted?

Me: Exhausted from what? Don’t be silly we will study. Where is Thapelo?

Mpendulo: He’s making something to eat for you. The twins and I have already ate. Though I had to take them out because of the noise. It was kind of too much when I entered the house.

Me: What noise?

Mpendulo: The noise you were making.

Me: Tsk! Fusegi get out of here.

He laughed, I threw the pillow at him and he ran out of the room. I was left alone feeling embarrassed. Thapelo walked in a few minutes later with a tray of food. He smiled at me. I didn’t smile back.

Thapelo: And then? What’s up with the sour face?

Me: You didn’t tell me Thapelo.

Thapelo: Tell you what Princess?

Me: That I was making a lot of noise.

He looked down and let out a soft giggle.

Me: Was I too loud Thapelo?

Thapelo: Princess don't worry about that you were alright. We were just lucky that our cleaner was not here today otherwise-

He had the mean face that wanted to laugh at me. I just stood up and wore my uniform.

Thapelo: And then what's wrong now?

Me: I am leaving so that you and your friend can discuss me when I am gone.

Thapelo: We didn't discuss you Alondwe.

I didn't say anything. I continue with wearing my uniform.

Thapelo: You won't even shower?

Me: What? You gonna tell me that I am stinky too?

Thapelo: No but –

Me: Save it!

I finished up. I was just angry but more like irritated by the whole thing. I just felt embarrassed. I took my bag, I took out my perfume I sprayed myself and I went to the door. I opened the door and made my way to the front door passing Mpendulo and the kids on the lounge. Thapelo was running after me. He held my hand as we were by the door.

Thapelo: Little pudding.

I wanted to smile, I always like it when he calls me like that. He was about to say something. The door swung open. An ugly but classy looking woman was at the door. You know those kind of people you see that this one is ugly but she has money and class. Thapelo was surprised to see that woman by the door.

Thapelo: Mom?!

Oh Lord! I closed my eyes shortly. I didn't expect his mom to look like that.

His mom: What's going on in my house?

Her voice was so sweet you wouldn't say that it came out of her mouth.

Thapelo: Uhm why did you come back early?

A yellow bone cute man who looked older than my dad passed us by like he didn't even see us. He looked rather pissed off.

Thapelo: Dad?

Him: Son.

He disappeared from our sight.

His mom: I am waiting for an answer young man.

Me: Thaps let me go. I will see you at school.

His mom: You're going nowhere young lady. I am still talking where are your manners?

Me: I am sorry.

Thapelo: Mom this is Alondwe Ndunakazi. She's my girlfriend. We were studying with Mpendulo and her.

His mom: (raising her voice) Girlfriend! After what happened with Nonjabulo you are still trusting girls. Specially Zulu girls.

Thapelo: But mom you're also Zulu.

His mom: At least I was raised in a decent family. Look at how she looks like, how can you wear your school uniform like this.

She said trying to fix up my shirt. Her hand also ran by my tummy. She looked at me in a different way and she raised my shirt up.

His mom: Oh Msindisi! Imithi (she's pregnant) Thapelo? This is your work?

I could see that Thapelo was about to say yes. I wasn't going to watch him lie to his mother.

Me: No. The baby is not his.

His mom: Huh? So what are you doing with her huh?

Thapelo: I love her mom.

His mom: You love her my foot? Young lady if you know what is good for you and that brat you're carrying you'll stay away from my son.

I looked at Thapelo with tears threatening my eyes.

His mom: Do you understand?

I nodded slowly and I fixed my shirt properly. His dad came to the door.

His dad: So much noise MaZulu what's going on? I am trying to sleep.

His mom: Thapelo has decided to date a pregnant girl. The baby is not his.

His father: Why would you do that?

Thapelo: I love her papa.

His dad: That's madness, where is that girl? I have to see her.

His mom: This one who is standing right in front of you.

He looked at me up and down. I looked down and wiped my tears.

His dad: Young lady please help me, stay away from my son. I don't even know how many diseases you're bringing from your previous boyfriend who impregnated you to my son.

Please don't ever talk to him. Leave my house I don't want to ever see you again.

I was more than hurt. I just couldn't stop crying. His words had cut very deep.

Thapelo: Dad you can't do that I love-

His father gave him one hot slap that it even hurt to me to see him being slapped like that.

His dad: Just because we gave you freedom to date that doesn't mean disrespect us. I was trying to make you feel comfortable because dating comes naturally. I cannot stop you from it. But I didn't say bring hoes in my house.

That hit the last nerve. I just pushed his mom off and I ran to the gate. I opened the gate and I stood outside. I looked for my phone and called the cab. I was crying. I was really hurt and angry. And to make it worse the cab took forever to come. Mpendulo came out of the gate.

He looked at me.

Mpendulo: All that didn't change the way he feels about you. My boy loves you. Don't give up because of those talks from his parents.

I didn't say anything. I just wiped my tears. He gave me a warm hug.

Mpendulo: Everything will be alright ntwana.

I nodded and wiped my tears. The cab finally came. We both stepped in and it drove us to our respective homes. I arrived at my apartment and I went straight to bed where I cried myself to sleep.....

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay.....

I was tired from all the smiling and greeting the family members. I just wanted that day to be over. After the rituals that were supposed to be done in my in-laws house. I went to say my goodbyes to my family. I couldn't stop crying. I just didn't want to stay behind, I was scared. I just felt like everything happened too fast.

Mom: You'll be fine Hlehle don't cry.

Me: How mama? His mom doesn't like me.

Mom: Just tell yourself that you're here for him. He's your husband. Love him unconditionally and respect him baby. Okay?

I nodded and hugged. She wiped my tears and kissed my forehead. I hugged my father and brother.

Me: Please stay out of trouble Sakhile.

Sakhile: I promise I will.

Me: I hope Philisiwe will call me.

Mom: Don't worry about that, just enjoy your wedding night baby Okay?

Me: Yes mom.

I said my goodbyes to the others and they left. I looked at them until they disappeared with tears streaming down my face. I finally wiped them when Nadine grabbed my hand.

Nadine: Lets go back inside.

I faked a smile and followed. That was where I thought I was going to sleep but no! after the ceremonies were over, there were games that were played to keep Rajiv and I awake that night by singing songs, poetry and jokes offered by the family and friends. It was really enjoyable except for the fact that I was tired. We stayed awake til midnight.

The morning after the wedding ceremony there was another ritual to be done. I was really irritated by these rituals. Rajiv applied vermilion on my forehead. This was a symbol of my marriage status. We were in the presence of the priest, we then worshiped the Sun God. Rajiv's grandmother was coaching me. We then seek the blessings of all elders. My feet were washed with milk. I was really scared and I saw what was meant by "you don't just marry a guy alone" I was married to the whole family. My sister in-law (Gary's wife) her other name was Priya. I wasn't supposed to do the house chores until my Menhdi has vanished. I was with Priya in the kitchen looking at her cooking breakfast

Priya: Just sit down and relax. Precious.

Me: I just want to see what you're doing.

She smiled and I kept on following her around. Rajiv entered the kitchen. He kissed my cheek.

Rajiv: What are you doing here?

Me: I am just trying to learn a thing or two.

Rajiv: But your Menhdi hasn't vanish

Me: I am learning baby not doing.

Rajiv: Okay.

He walked out. After that breakfast was served. Rajiv's father blessed the food.

Mr Pillay: Thank you for the breakfast Priya.

Priya Just smiled.

Rajiv's aunt: I hope your breakfast will be this good Precious.

Me: I hope so too.

Rajiv's aunt: And the babies.

Granny: Will you give her a break please. She just got married and you're already requesting babies.

Rajiv's mom: But we do want babies naina.

Granny: Priya got married first ask for babies from her. Rajiv hasn't even make love to his wife.

Rajiv chocked, I quickly passed a glass of water to him. He took it and smiled.

Granny: What's wrong are you scared Rajiv?

Rajiv: (clears throat) No I am not.

Gary: But it's seems like you're.

Rajiv: Just shut up!

Everyone laughed at him. I smiled and looked down. I brushed his back.

Me: Don't worry my love everything will be alright.

He smiled and nodded.

Granny: That's good. I really like that Precious. You'll be a good wife to my grandson.

I smiled and looked down. Rajiv held my hand tightly and we continued eating.

After breakfast I went to my room. I was reading my letters and gift cards. Rajiv walked in.

Rajiv: We had a beautiful wedding.

Me: Yes we did. Now I just want to get a chance to study.

Rajiv: We have to discuss that with mom and dad first.

Me: Why?

Rajiv: It's a big decision so we must let them know.

Me: How is my education a big decision?

Rajiv: You just got married so going to school next year won't be a good idea to them. But

we can convince them.

Me: Amen!

I stood up and I went to the bathroom. He followed me.

Rajiv: Baby –

Me: No. You didn't tell me that before we got married because you knew that I wasn't going to agree to that. And you know that your mom doesn't like me so she won't let me go and study. This is just wrong. Please leave I want to use the bathroom.

He nodded and left. I was just angry. I really wanted to make something out of myself and they were going to deny me that chance. That really hurt me. I did my business and washed my hands. The fact that I was going to wear sari for the rest of my life was also a great annoyance to me. This family had their own fucked up values. I wasn't going wear beautiful jeans, leggings and all those stylish dresses. Argha!

That big night came where I had to sleep with my husband. I wore the same sari that I was wearing in my wedding ceremony. His grandmother showed me how I was supposed to sit in the middle of the bed and she covered my face.

Granny: Don't be scared.

Me: Won't it be painful?

Granny: It will be your first time?

I nodded shyly. She smiled.

Granny: My grandson is so lucky. I will tell him to go easy on you.

I giggled softly. She squeezed my hands and she went to Rajiv. I heard him laugh. Her grandmother laughed and left. There was soft music playing on the background. Rajiv came to me and uncovered me. He lifted my chin up.

Rajiv: We don't have to be all formal you know. Now it's just the two of us.

I smiled and he started kissing me. My body started feeling the all sort of ticklish feelings. The fireworks and all that. We did the process that I think we all know. Those who haven't done it yet relax your time is coming. Lol! We did the deed and it was painful! But what is more important is my husband made love to me....

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

I woke up later when my aunt was telling me to come and eat. I wasn't really hungry.

Melo: Have you been crying?

Me: No why?

Melo: Your eyes, they are red and swollen.

Me: Argh maybe I overslept.

Melo: Okay wake up and eat.

Me: I am not hungry.

Melo: But the baby is hungry come.

She held my hand and I grabbed my phone with the other hand. I went to the bathroom and washed my face. I ended up taking a shower because I remembered that I didn't shower at Thapelo's crib. I finished up went to my room to moisturise my body and I wore my pyjamas and gown. I went to join my aunt on the dining table.

Melo: Thapelo has been blowing up your phone.

I tried to ignore her, I just didn't want to talk about him because I was going to cry.

Melo: Did you hear what I just said?

Me: Yes aunty I did.

My aunt knew that I was dating Thapelo. And she had no problem with that. She really liked him. Just when my aunt was about to speak my phone rang. Thapelo was calling. I looked at it and I didn't answer it.

Melo: Answer that phone Alondwe!

I quickly took it and answered it.

Me: You're disturbing me. I am eating.

I hung up the call afterwards. My aunt looked at me.

Me: I can't talk to him I am eating.

Melo: What happened between you two?

Me: Nothing aunty. It's just hormones(I lied)

Melo: Poor boy.

I didn't say anything because if only she knew, she was going to say poor girl. This was very hard for me and I didn't like what was happening. His parents didn't like me and I had nothing to do about that. I stood up with my phone and plate because I was about to cry. Tears escaped my eyes as soon as I was about to reach the kitchen sink. I wiped them quickly. My phone rang again. Andiswa was calling. I smiled.

Me: This is a surprise.

Andiswa: Yeah. You have forgotten about me because you roll with Nonku now hey?

Me: (laughing) Don't be silly I have been very busy.

Andiswa: I see. How is my little brother?

Me: He's fine though Nonku won't agree with you when you say that.

Andiswa: Then it's a good thing that he's not involved in this conversation.

We laughed. We chatted some more and we said our goodbyes. I felt better after talking to her. She was just sweet. I washed the dishes and I went to study. I put my phone on aeroplane mode and I studied til late. I went to bed by midnight. I didn't want to think a lot about Thapelo and I.

In the morning I woke and I prepared myself for school. My aunt was already gone. I ate breakfast and I walked out of my apartment after taking my bag. As I was walking slowly because I wanted to call a cab a car stopped next to me and it was my grandmother Evelyn.

Grandma: Hey baby. Let me give you a lift to school.

I smiled and stepped inside her car. My little uncle was inside the car.

Me: Hello Christian.

Chris: Hello Londwe how are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Chris: I am fine thank you.

Grandma: How are you doing baby? I never saw you after what happened to your uncle's house.

Me: I am fine grandma.

Grandma: I am really sorry about what happened. I just don't know what came over your grandfather. I couldn't even get through him because he was stubborn.

Me: It's okay. It's not your fault. But how are they?

Grandma: They are fine but Thandeka is missing in their lives. They just don't want to admit that they miss her. What they are doing to your mom is very painful and I don't get why they are doing it.

Me: What does grandpa say?

Grandma: He says she's teaching her how to stand on her own and not run to them everytime there's a crisis.

Me: But I thought that's what family is about.

Grandma: My granddaughter I just don't know. But please don't stress about this study and everything will be alright okay?

Me: Yes grandmother.

She gave me a R200 note. I took it and thanked her.

Grandma: Be out by 7'Oclock every morning. I will drive you to school. Then you can take a taxi after school.

That was music to my ears. I was so happy to hear that.

Me: Yes! Thank you so much grandmother.

Grandma: Okay baby. Have a nice day.

Me: Thanks you too.

I said my goodbyes to them and I went to school. Evelyn was just a sweet person. I couldn't wait to tell my mom. My mood changed as I was about to enter my classroom. Thapelo was on his seat. I went to Mpendulo.

Me: Morning. (I smiled)

Mpendulo: Don't even think about it. Just go to your seat.

Me: I just –

Mpendulo: Please don't do this to him. Don't run away from my friend Alondwe.

I didn't say anything. I just went to my seat. I sat down.

Thapelo: You don't want to sit next to me now?

Me: Morning to you too. Yes I am fine. I slept well Thanks. And how are you?

Thapelo: Tsk!

He stood up. He went to Mpendulo and Mpendulo came to sit next to me. He didn't say anything to me. I didn't say anything too. The teacher came and marked the register and we were supposed to go to our first period. I was too hungry to go to class. Luckily I had lunch with me. I went to a cosy corner and I sat down. I ate my food and I went online on WhatsApp. Mpendulo texted me.

Mpendulo: \*You bunked your first period so that you can be online on WhatsApp?\*

I knew that it was Thapelo. I knew because he doesn't use short cuts when he's texting and Mpendulo loves short cuts.

Me:\*I am hungry.\*

He didn't reply. I stayed out the whole period. I stood up when I had to go to the next period. I went to class and I sat next to Mpendulo. Finally it was lunchtime. I took my bag and made my way to the door. Thapelo grabbed me by my arm.

Me: What are you doing?

Thapelo: We need to talk.

Me: There's nothing to talk about.

He didn't let go of my arm. We went away from the others. He lead me to a quiet spot.

Me: Is this the place where you use to stay with Nonjabulo?

Thapelo: Alondwe stop it.

Me: What? You never told me about her or any ex.

Thapelo: Just like you haven't told me about your baby daddy.

Me: Oh so it's a grudge against that? Well here! Sphe was my first boyfriend who fooled me. He drugged me and slept with me against my will. So basically he raped me I suppose in a fancy English I can say. I fell pregnant and here I am. Are you happy now?

He didn't say anything. I was crying. He held me closer to him and hugged me tightly. I just fell in love with him even more. He let go and wiped my tears. He kissed my forehead.

Thapelo: I am sorry to hear that little pudding.

I nodded.

Thapelo: Nonjabulo is just an ex who gave me love portion but my mom saw that and she took me to a traditional healer around her home. A place called Kwamhlaba uyalingana.

Me: Oh.

Thapelo: So everytime I am with a Zulu girl. She thinks they will do the same thing.

Me: What do you think?

Thapelo: I know that you love me and you won't do that. And you don't believe in those things.

Me: Yes I won't do that to you but –

Thapelo: Don't do that.

Me: What?

Thapelo: You're about to break up with me because of what my parents said to you.

Me: Thapelo I –

Thapelo: Wow! I thought we had something that won't be broken by anyone. I guess I was wrong.

He said that and started walking away.

Me: Thapelo! Don't you dare walk away from me!

My voice had so much authority that he stopped walking. I looked at him with anger.

Me: I love you and I don't want to lose you. Nobody will break what we have. My Phinadi please come back.

He walked back to me and he kissed me deeply. My emotions rose up right there. He looked at me.

Thapelo: I love you little pudding.

I smiled and snuggled myself on him. I wasn't going to let that ugly woman stop me from loving her son. NEVER! I SAY NEVER!

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

I had no choice but to work with the team on bringing Themba down. Muzi was really happy that I agreed to work together with him. It was Monday morning I woke up and made breakfast for my family. A few minutes later they came downstairs and we sat down.

Me: Scelokuhle please pray for our meal.

He nodded and prayed for our meal. We all chanted "Amen" after him. We started eating.

Alupheli: I don't want to go to school mommy.

Samkelo: Alupheli please stop doing that!

Alupheli has been having problems with going to school. I tried to ask him what was his problem but he didn't want to tell me. Even his brother didn't know what was wrong with him.

Me: Mesuli please go to his teacher during lunch time and ask how is he performing Okay?

Kuhle: Yes mom.

Alupheli: Don't come to my class. Why should you come to my class?

Samkelo: You will not tell us what to do. You're only 4yrs old and you want to rule us. I will not tolerate that syezwana?

Alupheli didn't say anything.

Me: Your father is talking to you.

He looked at Mesuli instead. It's like he was waiting for him to say "Yes". Samkelo and I looked at each other.

Kuhle: Why are you looking at me?

Alupheli: Dad is talking to you. Why are you pretending like you didn't hear him.

Kuhle: He's not talking to me.

Alupheli: Yes he is.

Alupheli was so serious about this, Samkelo and I looked at each other and laughed. It was funny because he was just pretending. Our last born was too clever for his age.

Samkelo: Stop it! Both of you. Alupheli I was talking to you.

Alupheli: (holding his chest acting all surprised) Oh me? I didn't get that daddy. Sorry. My bad. What were you saying?

Samkelo: Tsk! Thandeka control his behaviour otherwise I won't be held liable for my actions.

He clicked his tongue and left. I looked at Alupheli and he shrugged his shoulders. I just didn't understand his behaviour.

Me: Finish up your breakfast. Thando you're going to school and there's nothing you can do about that.

He sulked and they finished up their breakfast. I had to take them to school.

After driving them to school. I drove straight to the centre. I had a meeting with Muzi. As soon as I arrived at the office. I took the documents about Themba's assignment and I went to his office. We greeted each other and sat down.

Me: So I thought about how are we going to get information about Themba.

Muzi: Please share.

Me: We need someone who will be our inside man. He will be a person who is so desperate to be part of the gang and if they allow him. He must be close enough to Themba to get all the information we need.

Muzi: That's a very good idea. But we need someone who is from Cape Town. That means we can't use our American team.

Me: Don't worry I will work something out.

Muzi: I trust you.

I smiled and nodded. I stood up.

Me: I have to go to my daughter's previous school. There's information that I need.

Muzi: It's okay mam.

I smiled and went back to my office. I sat down and drafted my plan for the person I was going to train. I was going to look for a street kid in Cape Town and train him. I was going to take Themba down once and for all!

Lunch time I went to Alondwe's previous school. I had informed the Principal that I wanted to see Sphephelo who was my daughter's partner on the ball. I really needed to know what happened because I felt like Alondwe wasn't telling me the whole truth. I arrived at the school and the principal asked the little girl to take me to Sphephelo. We went to his class and I asked to talk him in private. The learners who were inside during the lunchtime left the class to us. We greeted each other.

Me: I need your help.

Sphephelo: About?

Me: It's about the after party. Do you remember what happened that night?

Sphephelo: I don't remember much mam.

He looked down. I wasn't really convinced with those words. I knew that there was something that he knew after all he was my daughter's partner.

Me: Please tell me what you know because I trusted you with my daughter but you allowed her to go while you knew exactly that her father and I didn't want her to go to the after party.

Sphephelo: Alondwe wanted to go and see what happens to the after party. We planned to spend less than an hour there but it didn't happen like that. I left her on the couch and I went to my girlfriend. She had no problem with staying alone. When I come back after about an hour she wasn't there. I looked for her everywhere and I found her in one of the bedrooms crying. I told her we must tell her parents but she didn't want to tell you.

Me: Okay. Can you show me someone else who was in that party?

Sphephelo: Uhm.... Why?

Me: I need to talk to them. It will be much better if you show me a girl.

Sphephelo: Oh okay. I can show you.

He stood up uncomfortably. I stood up and followed him. My guts told me that Sphephelo knew what happened and he was protecting that person who abused my baby girl. He pointed a girl from afar and I went to that girl. I greeted her.

Me: Hello dear I am Mrs Ndunakazi. Alondwe's mother. I don't know if you know her.

Her: Yes. Everybody knows Alondwe. She was the brightest girl of this school. And – She didn't finish that sentence.

Me: Relax. I am aware of the video. You're doing grade 12 right?

Her: Yes.

Me: Did you go to the after party. I need information about what happened there.

Her: No I didn't go to the after party but I can take you to the guy who was there. I am pretty sure that he knows what happened. But I think he'll want your money in return.

Me: Money is not a problem dear.

She smiled and told me to follow her. From there I knew that Sphephelo was lying and I was going to find out soon enough that why was he lying to me....

3rd Person Narrator

Ever since Uyabongeka has died Themba's life has never been the same. All he did was go to work, get drunk and take out his temper on his gang members. He was so distant from his family. He missed his baby girl very much. All that he ever thought about was how things were when Uyabongeka was alive. How much he loved her, and how close they were. He would sit alone during weekends watching soccer games. He would look at the space that his daughter used to sit on and they would watch soccer together and debate about the game through out. It was so painful for a man like him to be that down. It was a Saturday afternoon. He was sitting alone on his office. He was drinking whiskey. His mom walked in and sat on the opposite chair. Themba looked at her without a word.

Mrs Smith: "Ethan you must stop doing this to yourself. It's not healthy at all."

Themba: "What have I done mom?"

Mrs Smith: "Uyabongeka is gone, we all felt pain but you must move on"

Themba: "You don't understand mom. She was my baby girl"

Mrs Smith: "Don't make the same mistake your father and I did when we lost your sister. You still have kids here. Ethan Junior and Sisipho they are still alive. You don't want to loose them over a child who is not here anymore. You'll regret it"

Themba: "What are you saying mom? Are you saying I should forget about my daughter!"

Themba shouted at his mother out of anger.

Mrs Smith: "That's not what I am trying to say-"

Themba: "Please leave me alone."

Mrs Smith: "Ethan -"

Themba: "Leave me the hell alone"

His mother stood up and walked out of his office. Themba threw the glass of whiskey on the wall. He started crying all over again because nothing did close that space in his heart where his daughter was....

\*\*\*\*\*

As Themba was drowning his sorrows in whiskey, his wife on the other hand was busy trying to apply for study opportunities. She wanted to do something with her life the following year. On her journey to look for study opportunities she met a white man named Josh. She has been seeing Josh for over a month now. Nothing was serious between them. They were just close friends who would kiss here and there but they did not engage in sexual relationship. Josh was a Lecturer at the University of Cape Town(UCT). Kimberly needed this distraction because her husband was someone else that she barely knew. Themba's mother went to Kimberly after talking to Themba. Kimberly was busy chatting with Josh. Mrs Smith sat on the edge of the bed.

Mrs Smith: "Kimberly please try to talk to your husband. What he's doing is not right to himself and the kids"

Kimberly: "Mom you know I have tried everything that I could but he doesn't want to listen to me. I don't know what to do anymore."

Mrs Smith didn't say anything. She stood up and went to her bedroom. She took her phone

and called Thandeka. She was the only person that she thought would help Themba. Thandeka answered her phone after a few rings.

Thandeka: "Hello"

Mrs Smith: "Thandeka baby. How are you?"

Thandeka: "I am fine mama and you?"

Mrs Smith: "I wish I can say the same thing but I can't."

Thandeka: "What is it?"

Mrs Smith: "It's Themba (she told her everything about Themba's behavior)

Thandeka didn't know what to say. For a few minutes she just went silent.

Mrs Smith: "Are you still there?"

Thandeka: "Yes I am. I won't promise anything but I will speak to him"

Mrs Smith: "Okay. Thank you baby. Have a good night"

Thandeka: "Thanks mom you too."

Mrs Smith: "Thank you"

They both hung up with Thandeka not so sure about what she was going to do about Themba's situation. What was also making the situation intense was that the gang had lost the money that they stole from the company where Samkelo was working. Everything was hard on Themba....

\*\*\*\*\*

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay.....

After my Menhdi has vanished, I started learning more about the duties of a Hindu wife.

Priya was teaching me together with Rajiv's grandmother. Things were still going smooth and my husband was such a lovely husband. I was in the kitchen with Priya preparing lunch.

Me: Do you think mom and dad will have a problem if I go and study?

Priya: What do you want to study?

Me: Bachelor's degree of Education.

Priya: Together with your husband you must talk to them.

Me: Okay.

I looked down. I was so worried about my education. My phone rang while I was busy. I took it out, it was a private number.

Me: Private number, hello?

Phili: Hello Sisi it's me.

For a moment I decided to shut up without saying anything.

Phili: I am sorry Nobuhle but please don't do this.

Me: How are you?

Phili: I am fine and you?

Me: I am fine.

Phili: I will deposit money tomorrow, so that you can buy groceries for mom.

Me: You think that's okay? What you're doing is okay?

Phili: I know I am wrong but I don't need stress. I am carrying twins Nobuhle and I can't put them in danger by adding stress in my life.

Me: Oh Wow! Congratulations. Did you tell Philani?

Phili: No I haven't told him. I will come back home.

Me: That's nice. It will be better if you call mom. I don't live with them anymore.

Phili: Where do you live?

Me: I live with my husband.

Phili: Husband? You got married without telling me how could you do that?

Me: Excuse me! How was I supposed to tell you. Because you were hiding, running away from your problems.

Phili: Wow!

She hung up on me after that. I didn't know that how was I going to tell her because she chose to run away!

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

After that kiss, we went back to class together holding each other's hands. Nkululeko was on the door. He looked rather not pleased.

Me: Prince I have to talk to him.

Thapelo: Good luck my Princess.

I smiled and went to Nkululeko.

Nkulu: You know Alondwe

That was the first, he usually doesn't use my name. I suppose he was really angry. I composed myself and looked at him.

Nkulu: Sinawo amadoda nathi (we also have boyfriends) but we don't just ditch friends to be with them the whole break.

Me: I am sorry my friend. There was something that we had to fix so I couldn't just come to you without talking to him.

Nkulu: You should've told me. Now I just looked for you like I am a fool.

Me: I am sorry.

Nkulu: What was is it that you needed to fix, atleast you owe me that much.

Me: Really now? Are you being realistic?

Nkulu: Yes I am being serious like a person dying.

I laughed, he gave me the look.

Me: Okay. I can't tell you. It's between me and him.

Nkulu: You're so not forgiven.

He gave me my lunch package and left. I tried to call out his name but he just left me. I sighed and went to my place on the next class. Thapelo was already seated down. I sat next to him.

Thapelo: What did he say?

Me: Arh. He's just angry at me. He wanted me to tell him our problem so that he can forgive me.

Thapelo: I hope you didn't.

Me: What do you take me for?

Thapelo: I am sorry.

I looked aside and started eating.

Thapelo: You're not going to make a big deal out this are you?

I didn't answer him, I just continued with eating. Mpendulo came to us running with his phone.

Mpendulo: Dude come here.

He literally dragged him out of his chair.

Thapelo: What is it?

Mpendulo: Look who's back.

Mpendulo gave him, his phone and he looked at me as I was looking at them. Thapelo was really surprised by what he was looking at.

Mpendulo: Eish Come.

They both left. I sat there wondering that what were they talking about. I really needed to know because Thapelo looked really surprised. Break time was finally over and that's where Thapelo came back. He was so avoiding eye contact.

Me: What is going on?

Thapelo: Nothing to worry about Princess.

Me: Who is that person who is back?

Thapelo: It's just our old friend.

Me: Oh.

I didn't want to ask further, I just continued eating my food because clearly he didn't want to tell me the whole truth. I stopped eating when the teacher came inside the class. Our lesson began.

We had two more classes then it was after school. Some girl from our class came to Thapelo with math text book. She was asking some questions. I packed my books and I started walking towards the door.

Thapelo: Alondwe please wait for me.

I pretended like I didn't hear him. I just continued walking. As I was just a few steps away from the gate. I felt him grab my arm.

Thapelo: Alondwe can you please stop this attitude that you have?

Me: What attitude? I just wanted to know that who is it that is back. Surely Mpendulo was excited to show you this person but you seemed rather disturbed.

Thapelo: I was just surprised that's all.

Me: Okay now let go of my arm.

He did let go of my arm. But he held my hand.

Me: You'll talk to me when you're ready to tell me the truth, do you understand?

Thapelo: Alondwe?

Me: Yeah I think you do. Now please shut up.

He didn't say anything. What I liked about Thapelo is that as much as he liked me to listen to whatever that he wants to say or what he wants me to do. He was able to listen to me too. We both walked out of the gate. He was still holding my hand. He walked with me to the cab. We heard a familiar voice calling him.

"Thapelo" we both turned back and oh dear Lord it was the ugly beast mother in law. I quickly let go of his hand and walked to my cab really fast.

Thapelo: Alondwe! My mom is calling you.

I just froze right there. I didn't want to die. Hello? I am not a Doctor yet! I thought about running but I told myself that I was going to face her. Big girls don't run away. I went back to my Prince and we walked up to his mother's car.

Me: How come didn't you see her car?

Thapelo: So I am supposed to talk now?

Me: Mxm! Arrogant little atleast cute beast.

Thapelo: Excuse me?

Me: I didn't say talk.

He didn't say anything. We made our way to his mother's car. She looked at me with so much hatred

Mrs Moloi: Didn't I tell you to leave my son alone.

Me: You did mam.

Mrs Moloi: So? What is the meaning of this? You two walking together holding hands?

Me: Maybe you should ask your son since he was the one holding my hand.

Thapelo looked at me so surprised by my response.

Mrs Moloi: Young lady. I repeat and for the last time. Stay away from my son.

She said that pointing at me with her finger which had long nails.

Me: I will gladly stay away from him only if you could tell him to stay away from me.

Because right now you're making it sound like I am the one following him around.

Mrs Moloi: You're so disrespectful. I don't even wish to see your parents.

Me: Just because I am telling you the truth, you'll say I am disrespectful?

Thapelo: Alondwe?

Me: What? I can't view my thoughts just because I am talking to an ug- adult? Well that's not

how I was raised. My mom told me that if I have something that I want to take out of my chest. I must say it because shutting up with it will only make damage to me. So excuse my manners for telling the truth Thapelo. I hope your mom will tell you to stay away from me and you'll take her advice.

Thapelo: What happened to not giving up?

Me: You're already keeping secrets from me so you might as well leave me alone and please your parents.

I left, running up to the cab. I just didn't even mean that I wanted Thapelo to stay away from me. Hell yes I needed him in my life but I was just angry that he was keeping a secret from me. The cab drove me back home, I was just wondering. I didn't even cry. Big girls don't cry.....

Thandeka Ndunakazi,...

The girl took me to a cute coloured boy. Who was with a crowd of boys. They were listening to hip hop music. The girl commanded them to pay attention. I saw that the coloured boy was about to give her a rude answer but she saw that she was with me and he didn't say anything. They all cleared their throats and chanted "Morning Mam"

I smiled and said: Morning boys.

Girl: This is Alondwe's mom Riley. She would like to talk to you about something in private.

Riley: Talk about what?

Girl: That, you have to ask her yourself. (she turned and faced me. She smiled) Goodbye Mrs Ndunakazi.

Me: Goodbye dear.

Girl: And oh Riley. You can thank me later.

She gave him a smile and left. The boys laughed.

Riley: I swear that girl wants my marshmallows.

The other guys: DUDE!

Riley: Oh Eish! I am sorry mam. Excuse my manners. Guys can I talk to Mrs Ndunakazi.

They all nodded and left. I sat down on the chair with him.

Me: I will just go straight to the point.

Riley: I am listening.

Me: I want us to talk about what happened to the party. Where my daughter was made a porn star.

Riley: What? I am sorry mam but I can't talk about that. It's not in my place to snitch or gossip about things that guys do to girls.

I was willing to give up every cent that I had just to get the information on who hurt my baby girl. I took out three hundred rands. And I placed it on top of the table.

Me: If you tell me nothing but the truth. I will give you all the notes I have on my purse and the coins as the bonus.

He swallowed hard. I took out my purse. I had about R 1 500 and a lot of coins. I withdrew that money because I wanted to deposit it for my son but I was going to do that afterwards with another cash. Riley couldn't believe his eyes. He looked at me.

Me: And don't you dare think about lying to me because I will know. My daughter is pregnant and your lies will come out if she has given birth and the guy who you will tell me his name will have to match the DNA of being the father of her baby. And if it –

Riley: I will tell you the truth.

Me: Okay. Thanks.

Riley: This is simple. Alondwe went to the party with Sphephelo and they were dating almost everybody knows that. Girls envied her relationship with Sphephelo because Sphephelo is known as a good guy. And I was also convinced that he was until he did what he did to her.

Now he was clever because it looked like that person wasn't him so the girls and everyone else hated her for hurting Sphephelo by sleeping with someone else.

Me: And how do you know this?

I wanted to make sure that he was telling me the whole truth. I didn't want to get all worked up.

Riley: That was my party. I know everything that happened there and I am the king of this school. There's nothing that happens without me knowing it. I know. Sphephelo took her to that room and I know that he's the one who broke her virginity.

Me: You're really the King of the school. You even know that she was a virgin.

Riley: Your daughter was a good girl Mrs Ndunakazi and I had plans of marrying but then Sphephelo ruined them.

I laughed at that. I didn't want to show him my emotions about what he told me. I took every money that I had and gave it to him.

Riley: You don't have to give me all of it. I was just being a good kid and helpful kid.

Me: Well I want you to have it. Thank you so much for helping me out. It means a lot.

Riley: I am glad I could help. I am sorry about what happened to your daughter.

Me: Thanks Riley.

I stood up. I tried so hard to hold it in together. I didn't trust my legs because they were a little bit wobbly but I made to my car. I drove out of the school and I parked my car afar from the school. I just burst into tears. I didn't know how on earth was I going to tell Samkelo that I sold our daughter to the devil because I am the one who convinced him that Sphephelo was a good kid. I was really hurting. After some time I gathered my strength and I drove to the bank. I withdrew money and I deposited it to my son's account. I then drove back to the centre that's where I planned on how was going to confront Sphephelo.

Later I went back home with a few documents I wanted to continue working on my strategy. Samkelo had fetched the kids and he had offered to cook for us that night. I was really surprised when I arrived at home and find him cooking. I kissed him.

Me: What's the occasion?

Samkelo: Nothing. I am just treating my family.

I smiled and nodded. I kissed him again and I went upstairs. I took my laptop and tried to connect to the WiFi and I figured it out that he forgot to pay for it that is why he was cooking. I laughed, changed my clothes and went downstairs.

Me: Really Samkelo?

Samkelo: What?

Me: You think I wasn't going to see that you're just bored because you didn't pay for the internet.

He laughed really hard. I took a few carrots and o threw them no him.

Samkelo: Akushawana ngokudla maDlomo.

Me: Mxm! Usile.

I went to the lounge. When he called me MaDlomo. I just wondered what I did to my dad and my brother because they weren't taking any of my calls. I sighed and joined my boys on the lounge. I had greeted them before.

Me: Mesuli did you go to your brother's Teacher?

Kuhle: Yes and she said he's performance is good.

Me: So what's wrong with going to school?

Alupheli pretended like he didn't even hear my question. He stood up.

Alupheli: Let me go and help daddy cook.

He ran to the kitchen.

Me: Can you please follow him during lunch time Okay?

Kuhle: Yes mom.

Me: But don't let him see that you're following him.

He nodded. My phone rang while we were still talking. Themba's mom was calling. I answered. That's where she was telling me about Themba's behavior because of the death of our daughter. After talking to her I stood up and went upstairs. I just cried. Yes it was painful but that wasn't going to stop me from bringing him down. I was going to bring him down no matter what. Him and Sphephelo were going to get what they deserve for hurting my family!

\*\*\*\*\*

Bonus Scene of the episode!

Riley was really happy about the cash that he had. He felt like he really owed Nosipho. The girl who brought Mrs Ndunakazi to him. So after school he went to Nosipho. Nosipho was in an empty classroom. She was doing her homework because she couldn't do it at home because her stepmother was a bully who didn't want to see her passing her metric.

Riley: Hey Nosi can we talk?

Nosipho: What do you want?

She said in an attitude feeling hot. Riley was just a cutie that she couldn't stand near without getting any reactions from her body.

Riley: I know you want it so come get it.

Nosipho: What?

Riley closed the door and went to her.

Riley: You want my marshmallows I know.

Nosipho blushed looking down. Feeling shy because the bitchy side of her was about to shine bright like a diamond. Riley grabbed her by her hair and he gave her his marshmallows so good that they were almost caught by the cleaning lady. Thanks to Thandeka, Nosipho got what she always wanted

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

I arrived at home I went to my room. Thapelo was busy blowing up my phone but I just didn't care about whatever that he wanted to say to me. I changed my uniform and I went to make something to eat for myself. Nothing was really interesting so I just went to take a few notes and I went to the mall. I wanted to eat something nice. While walking around the mall. My phone rang, I took it out of my phone. It was private number. I thought about answering my phone but then again I was really sure that Thapelo was the one who was calling me. I ignored the call. I opted for a triple deck. The large pizza. I was going to eat until I was satisfied and leave two pieces for my aunt. I smiled at that thought. After waiting my order was ready. I went to fetch it and I went back home. I couldn't wait to sit down and eat I was really hungry. When I arrived in our apartment. I took three pieces and put them on the microwave for my aunt. I then went to sit down and ate my pizza while watching dragon balls. I remembered that I had to call my mom and tell him about grandma Evelyn driving me to school. I dialed her number and my little brother picked up instead.

Kuhle: Mom is upstairs Alondwe.

Me: Is that a new way of greeting your sister?

Kuhle: I am sorry. How are you?

Me: I am fine thank you and you?

Kuhle: I am alright. Mom is upstairs.

Me: Is that your way of telling me that you can't climb the stairs now?

I heard mom shouting on the background.

Mom: What are you doing with my phone!

Kuhle: It's Alondwe mom.

Mom: Oh let me talk to her.

I heard some shuffling sounds.

Mom: Hello baby?

Me: Hello Mama how are you?

Mom: I am Okay Nana and you two?

Me: I am fine. (I tried to avoid having to talk about the baby) I wanted to tell you that my grandmother offered to drive me to school every morning mom.

Mom: Which grandmother my love?

Me: My white grandmother. Mrs Dhlomo.

Mom: What? Are you serious?

Me: Yes. She came this morning and she said she'll drive me to school every morning.

Mom: Wow! That's nice. Did she say anything about my dad and my brother?

Me: No. I didn't ask about them I was just too excited to get a free ride.

I didn't want to tell her what she said because she was going to feel bad and I didn't want her to be stressed. She laughed at what I said.

Mom: It's good to know that she still cares.

Me: Yeah. How is everyone?

Mom: Everyone is good, how is school and your aunt?

Me: My aunt is alright. My exams are about to begin so things will get hectic soon.

Mom: Please study hard baby. Make us proud.

Me: I will mom.

Mom: Did Nkulu agree to be part of the planning team for my ceremony.

Me: Oh that! I will call him just now and I will get back to you.

Mom: Okay. Thank you for the call baby.

Me: Okay. Bye mom.

Mom: Bye Nana. We love you.

Me: I love you too guys.

We hung up the call and I continued with eating. I was going to tell Nonku about the ceremony in person. The ceremony was my ticket to get him to loosen up and forgive me. I was really looking forward to it. Though I was going to have a big tummy but atleast I was going to be with my family. I continued with eating and watching my cartoons. I was feeling sleepy.

I think I might have dozed off because I woke up in the middle of the night I was still on the couch but I was covered in blankets. The box of pizza and my drink was no longer there. I looked at the phone to confirm the time and it was just after 1am. I stood up and I went to the bathroom to pee. I did my business and I washed my hands. I went back to the lounge and I took the blanket. I went to my room, I changed my alarm clock and I went straight to bed. I woke up early the following morning because I was supposed to be ready by 7am. I went straight to the bathroom and I took a shower. I went back to my room to lotion and wore my uniform. I took my backpack and I went to the kitchen. My aunt was having breakfast. I joined her.

Me: Morning aunty.

Melo: Morning baby how are you?

Me: I am alright thanks and you?

Melo: I am fine. Thanks for the pizza last night.

Me: It's okay. I thought you were going to complain.

Melo: Relax I understand.

I smiled and finished up my breakfast. I told her that my grandmother was going to drive me to school every morning and she was happy for me. 7'Oclock I was outside the building waiting for her car. After a few minutes she was where I was. I hopped in and greeted them. She drove me to school. We were just having a light conversation. We arrived at school. I thanked her and said my goodbyes. I sighed before walking inside the premises. I was early

so I went to look for Nkulu. He was not inside his class so I went to my class. Apparently that day we were going to have a special assembly. Mpendulo was with Thapelo. I went to my seat and I sat down. We were told to go to assembly. Mpendulo came to me as usual.

Mpendulo: Good morning.

Me: Good morning.

I handed him my backpack. Thapelo carries my backpack but if Mpendulo knew that there's some tension between us Thapelo ask him to carry it for me when we have to attend assembly. I thanked him and I attempted to walk away but he held my arm.

Mpendulo: I am sorry about yesterday.

Me: It's okay.

He smiled. I had no idea what he was apologising for but I assumed it was either about his friend's mother or the time he showed Thapelo the picture of whoever that was back. I walked alone to the assembly. Mpendulo was with Thapelo. The assembly began and at the end the principal had a special announcement to make.

Principal: I think we all remember our Cassandra Noah. She went to London last year February. Now she's back, please let's give her a warm welcome.

Everyone screamed and clapped their hands. The beautiful coloured girl with beautiful long black hair took the stand. Some girls next to me were looking at me. I didn't even know why, and I didn't know what was so important about Cassandra. She stood there and spoke about how amazing her journey has been. After that long speech she stepped down. The principal took the stand. I raised my hand.

Principal: Yes young lady.

Me: Uhm Sir. I don't mean to be rude and not that I don't know English. (Others laughed. I continued once they were done) But some of us, like the grade 8s and myself. We are new in this school so please brief us on what is so important about Cassandra. I would like to know so that I can clap hands for something that I know. Thank you.

The others laughed and the principal demanded order.

Principal: I am sorry about that to the new comers. Our school and the London academy school. We developed a relationship through a campaign that our English teacher Miss Ndwane started so we exchanged students. We had Aria from London last year from February but she left at the beginning of the new year and Cassandra just got back. So she was our ambassador and Aria was their ambassador. We also have the website of our relationship with the school. But there will be a day where she will be briefing the school on what happened in London. We were just welcoming her today.

Me: Thank you.

Principal: So you can clap your hands now.

I laughed and the others laughed too. I clapped my hands and the others joined in. After that the assembly was dismissed.

We went back to our classes. I went to my class and I sat on my seat. Mpendulo brought my bag.

Me: That's the girl you were showing Thapelo, the other day?

Mpendulo: Uhm..... Yes.

Me: Were they dating?

Mpendulo: I think you should ask him that.

I didn't say anything. It was obvious to me that they were dating. Thapelo came and sat next to me. He didn't greet me. I didn't say anything either. Our class teacher came and marked the register. We then went to our next class. We sat on our seats. You know that insecurity that comes out of nowhere. It hit me that just because Cassandra was back Thapelo wasn't going to tolerate my nonsense so I decided to talk to him.

Me: So you not going to talk to me?

Thapelo: You don't want me to talk to you right?

Me: I told you that?

Thapelo: Yesterday I blew up your phone but still you didn't even return not even one of my calls and messages.

Me: Because I was mad at you Thapelo.

Thapelo: What did I do?

Before I could answer him our English teacher came inside the class with Cassandra. Everybody clapped their hands.

Miss Ndwalane: Find any seat of your choice. I will be back Just now class.

The teacher left. Cassandra looked around and I think she found the seat because she walked up to our direction. She stood next to Thapelo.

Cassie: I am back now. Can I have my seat back if you don't mind girl.

Huh! I pretended like I didn't hear her. Jizas ngiyalingwa ngisehlane inkosi! She touched my shoulder, I sighed and looked at her.

Me: You're talking to me?

Cassie: hierdie teef is vol van harrself (this bitch is full of herself)

She thought I didn't knew Afrikaans but luckily I knew it because I was doing it on my previous school and I had a coloured sister who loved speaking Afrikaans.

Me: Ek sal nie voor jou neerbuig, jy is nie my koningin (I won't bow down to you, you're not my queen)

She got angry. Thapelo looked at me with a surprised look.

Cassie: Thapelo tell her to move I want that seat.

Thapelo: Why should she move? This is her seat and she's not going anywhere. Just find another seat.

Cassie: Is this the best welcome you got for me?

Thapelo: You didn't tell me to prepare any welcome Cassandra.

The teacher walked in and Cassandra sat on the available seat that was on our back. She clicked her tongue. The teacher asked if everything was alright and everybody chanted "Yes". I looked at Thapelo and smiled. That felt so good, him standing up for me.

Thapelo: (whispering) I suppose that means you're no longer mad at me?

Me: I am still mad at you.

Thapelo: But little pudding –

Me: Shhh!

He shut up. The lesson began. We went to the two periods and Cassandra was also there. I just felt so intimidated by her. I mean she was beautiful and reality says I am pregnant and Thapelo can go back to her if he wants, bearing in mind that his parents don't want me anywhere near him. And I come with a baggage which is the baby that I don't even want. Wait? Who said she was his girlfriend? Mxm but it's clear as daylight that she was dating him. I sighed.

Thapelo: What's wrong princess?

Me: (I snapped out of my thoughts) It's nothing Prince.

He smiled and I looked down blushing. Lord help me I love this guy. But everyone wants to take him away from me. I just wonder. Will he stay with me til the end of my days?

\*\*\*\*\*

Bonus Scene.....

During break time Cassandra went to her old clique. She wanted to know that who was this girl who was all over Thapelo. The girls were so happy to have her back. It was three girls. Mbali who is Mpendulo's girlfriend and the two other girls. Londeka and Londiwe. The two were twins. They screamed and welcomed each other with a group hug. They sat down.

Cassie: So girls tell me who is that bitch who is all over my Thapelo?

Mbali: Argh! It's his new girlfriend from KZN. She's so full of herself.

Cassie: What? He moved on after me? I thought he promised that he will wait for me.

Londiwe: What was he supposed to do? That girl had her close on him on the first day.

Cassie: Tsk! She must so get shaken up because I am about to make her seat hot. Thapelo is mine and nobody will have him beside me!

The girls: Yeah!

They did high five to support their friend!

Hard time for Alondwe...

3rd Person Narrator

Themba was about to knock off at work when his ex wife called him. He was surprised to receive a call from her. He sat down and answered the call.

Themba: "This is a surprise"

Thandeka: "Why is it a surprise?"

Themba: "I didn't think you'll call me after losing ur daughter"

Thandeka: "We still have a son together Mr Smith. Or you have forgotten about him. Your mother told me about your behaviour."

Themba: "Oh I should've known."

Thandeka: "What goes through your mind Themba huh?"

Themba: "It's easy for you to say that because you still have your family together and

Uyabongeka wasn't your favourite"

Thandeka didn't say anything for a few minutes. She was feeling really hurt by what Themba had said.

Thandeka: "Thembeke was my daughter too and I loved her. She was in my womb for nine months not yours. I bonded with her first before any of you could but that doesn't mean that I should neglect my kids who are still alive just because God took her away from me. That is so wrong Themba. Do you want your only son to end up like you did? Huh is that what you want?"

Themba: "No"

Thandeka: "Then stop acting so weak. If Uyabongeka was an angel and she could see you. She wouldn't be happy to see you doing what you're doing to her siblings. You will lose the only kids you have left with over pain? Are you prepared to deal with that?"

Themba: "No"

Thandeka: "Then stop it. You should be bonding more with them because they also lost a sister. You don't even know how they feel about that."

Themba: "I will try Thandeka"

Thandeka: "You better because if you don't. I am taking my son. That is a promise I will keep"

Themba: "Thank you for the call"

Thandeka: "No problem Bye"

Themba: "Bye"

They both hung up. Themba thought about what Thandeka had said and he was willing to try and do the right thing by his kids. He sighed and stood up. He was going to prison to meet up with his IT guy. He managed to pull a few strings so that he can meet up with him even though it was in weekdays. As soon as he arrived they took him to the private room where he was with the IT guy alone. They greeted each other and sat down.

IT guy: "I am sorry that we got busted Themba. But I don't know that how on earth did they find out that it was me because everything pointed Samkelo"

Themba: "Clearly you didn't do your work accurately and you have caused us a lot of money. What are we supposed to do now?"

IT guy: "I don't know but I have thought about this long and hard. I think someone on the gang sold us out. Nobody was going to know my name and where I live if it wasn't someone on the gang who told them"

Themba: "Who can that be?"

IT guy: "I don't know maybe someone who has an agenda with you that you're not aware of. Maybe they are the ones who made a hit on you and killed your daughter instead"

Themba: "You're making sense but it can't be that low life who is already in prison for the murder of my daughter because he didn't know about our operations."

Themba tried to crack his head but he couldn't find anything that would tell him who sold him out.

Themba: "I have to go man. I have some digging out to do. Thanks for giving me the heads up"

They said their goodbyes and Themba left. He had a lot to do. He really wanted to get to the bottom of this...

---

With the money that Thandeka had given his son Uyathandwa. He took a quarter of the cash and he went to the dealer that he knew. He knew this dealer through the crowd of boys that his grandfather had planned for him to be around him just for protection. Uyathandwa was so helpless. He felt so alone after his sister died and his father started shutting him out. Even his girlfriend Amber tried her best to tell him that everything will be alright but Uyathandwa was breaking. He wished that his mother was still around but it wasn't like that and Kimberly was not his favourite person. Even if his grandmother tried to be there for them that was not enough for him. He wanted his parents. He got the cocaine and he went back home. He found his father on the lounge. He greeted and made his way to his room.

Themba: "Can I talk to you Ethan?"

Ethan: "Not now dad I have a lot of school work to do"

He went to his room and he locked up. He took his cocaine and everything that he needed and he started sniffing. The drug slowly kicked in....

---

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay....

Being a wife to this family was really hard. It felt like i was doing a 24hour job. I just wished that my husband and I could find a place of our own but that wasn't going to happen clearly. The rest of the family had left. Even grandma left. They went back to India. We were left with Mom (Claudine) and father (Mr Pillay). The two aunts Theresa who was already living in South Africa and the one from India Tashrika. Then it was Garry and his wife Priya. And Nadine my sweet sister in-law. That's where my life started being hard. The minute that Grandma went back to India. I was treated like a slave when my husband, sister in-law Nadine and father was not around. My mother in-law would tell Priya and the cleaner not to do anything and I would do the rest of the chores. I would always go to bed tired and my back was always burning. My husband also wanted me to satisfy him and because he didn't know any of what was going on during the day. I would sleep with him. Sometimes we used to fight if I tell him that I am tired in a row. I was getting used to the food and the lifestyle of my in-laws. And the rituals that were always done. But that didn't stop me from praying to my God. I was told to stop working because my job wasn't fancy enough for a Pillay wife. What were people going to say if they find me working at Nandos. Priya did work but not full time. She was an accountant. They wanted her to stop working but she asked to work part time instead and they agreed. It was hard. My marriage was not as nice as I always imagined when growing up. My sister didn't call again after the last call I had with her. It was a Saturday morning I was going to visit my mom. Claudine and father had agreed that I can go. I was feeling really tired.

Rajiv: You need to stop over working yourself Precious. This is not good for your health.

Me: I know. When are we talking to mother and father about me going to school?

Rajiv: Tonight when you come back.

Me: But I thought you agreed that I can sleepover at home.

Rajiv: This is your home now baby. And I didn't agree to that.

Me: Mxm.

I didn't say anything. This really sucks. I had no power over everything in this house even Rajiv would agree to things just to please his family. I finished up dressing up. Rajiv was looking at me all the time. I was wearing a pink and silver sari. He held my waist as I was covering my hair.

Rajiv: Did I tell you how beautiful you look in your saris?

Me: You tell me everyday.

I removed his hand on my waist and I went back to our room. I didn't even like to go around wearing Indian clothes. I mean Indians in South Africa they don't usually wear their saris. A few of them does. But most of them wear normal clothes. And they usually wear their saris during the days of Dewal. But no for us the Pillay wives we had to wear like that. At least Nadine wasn't wearing like that. I just didn't like it because it invited more eyes on me when I was outside home. I went to say my goodbyes to the family and took the blessings from our parents. Claudine tolerated me when her husband was around.

Claudine: Come back safe Precious and sent our love to your mother.

Me: I will do that mother. Thank you.

I touched her feet and she touched my shoulder. She smiled and gave me a fruit basket for mom. I thanked her and walked out with my husband. He was driving me home. I was still mad at him. So along the way he was talking and I would only respond with "mm" "oh" "yeah" until I fell asleep on my seat...

Previously on Our love was a mission:

Alondwe seems to be shaken up by Thapelo's ex girlfriend who had just returned from London.

Thandeka is still working on a plan on how to bring Themba down and as hard as it she wants to find a way on how to help her daughter since she has found out that who is the father of her grandchild.

Life is hard for Nobuhle, being Mrs Pillay is not smooth as she thought it would be.

Themba had some serious digging to do about who sold them out while his son Uyathandwa has started doing drugs because of stress....

\*\*\*\*\*

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

During break time I really wanted to go and be with Thapelo but I couldn't. I had to ditch him just to be with my friend Nonku. I wanted to break the news about my mom's wedding vows renewal ceremony.

Thapelo: But little pudding I think we really need to talk.

Me: I know Phinadi wami but I have to be with my friend or else I will find myself with no friend.

Thapelo: I will be your friend Princess you don't have to worry about that.

Me: Really? Come on.

He made a puppy face. I shook my head and I kissed his lips softly. We were still inside our class.

Me: I love you my chocolate brownie.

He smiled and said: I love you too my white chocolate.

I blushed and left him there. I went to Nonku's class. I had to be with him and the baby

missed his voice. Yes Thapelo and I needed to talk but I couldn't focus on one side of my life and loose control of the other. And we shouldn't loose our friends over boyfriends. Friendship is more important but only if that friendship is worth it. I found Nonku sitting on his desk. He was busy on his phone.

Me: You didn't tell me that you bought a new phone cover. Why?

He looked up at me. He didn't say anything for a while. His cover was a pink rabbit. He continued doing what he was doing on his phone.

Me: Really? You just going to pull that stunt on me and the baby.

I just cried. I didn't know why but I had no control over my tears. Nkulu stood up immediately. He eld my tummy.

Nkulu: Oh baby. And you (pointing at me)

Me: I am sorry.

Nkulu: Say me and my baby misses don't just say the Baby.

Me: Why should I say my baby?

Nkulu: Because it is your baby. Say it or I won't forgive you.

Me: Uhm.... Eh.... I miss you and my.... My.... My baby misses you.

He screamed and hugged me tightly. I smiled. The baby couldn't stop kicking. It was like it was kicking someone. I laughed because it was itchy in a different way. It was the first time feeling him like that. He used to move but not kick that hard. Nkulu and I let go of each other.

Nkulu: Let's go and buy food for you two before Andiswa lay charges against me.

I laughed at that statement.

We went to buy food. I was hell excited because Nonku had stopped being dramatic. He was telling me about his boyfriends.

Nonku: I think minister of finance is suspecting that I have someone else.

Me: I think you should slow down. Who do you love the most?

Nonku: I love minister of finance the most but you know one should always insure his or heart just in case it doesn't go well.

I laughed really hard at that statement as we sat down.

Me: Damn I have missed you My friend.

Nonku: I have missed you too. How is baby bear doing?

Me: He's alright, just a little bit forward today.

Nonku: That shows life hey.

He smiled as we started eating. I just nodded.

Me: So my mom asked me to ask you to help us and plan her vows renewal ceremony.

Nonku: Say what?

He screamed and stood up. He did the gwara gwara dance. I laughed.

Me: I so wish I could join you but then my belly.

Nkulu: Don't worry mama bear, you will next year. (He sat down) I just can't wait for that planning to start.

Me: December is just around the corner.

We smiled and continued eating. We were both excited about the ceremony. I just couldn't wait though I was going to have a big tummy but who cares?!Our break time was almost over so I had to go and pee before I go back to class. We both stood up and took our bags. And walked to the toilet.

Me: Why didn't you tell me about Cassandra?

Nkulu: Oh that little bitch. Is she giving you problems?

Me: No but she has attitude. And I don't like her.

Nkulu: Don't worry if she is starting to give you problems, we will sort her out.

Me: Yeah.

We laughed and did high five as if we're not cowards. He went to the toilet and I went to the girls toilet. I went to pee and wiped myself. I walked out of the toilet fixing myself. I had taken the blazer off. No one was around so I was looking at my belly in the mirror. I just wanted to try and brush it. I placed my hands on it, someone disturbed me. "Well, Well, Miss World here is pregnant" the voice said. I quickly looked at that person and it was Cassandra. Oh dear Lord give me a whole to hide myself!

Thandeka Ndunakazi ....

I had to speak with Themba about him putting it together. I couldn't let him break down and hurt my son in the process. All that talk didn't mean I was going to let him walk free. I was going make sure that it hurts deeply and I wanted him to end up alone. Nobody will ever hurt my family and walk away with a smile. Samkelo walked in our bedroom while I was still thinking. I had just got off the phone with Themba. I looked at him and gave him a weak smile.

Samkelo: What's wrong Thandeka?

Me: Nothing, I was just talking to Themba.

Samkelo: About?

Me: His mom told me that he's still breaking because of loosing Uyabongeka. And he's shutting the kids out.

Samkelo: Poor guy. I bet it's hard on him.

I looked at him. I just didn't expect all that from him. I smiled. He looked at me with those questioning eyes.

Samkelo: What?

Me: You're a good man you know that?

I said standing up and hugging him.

Samkelo: I try. You bring out the best and the worst in me.

Me: I love you Ndunakazi.

Samkelo: I love you too Mrs Ndunakazi. I don't hate Themba. And I just want peace that's why I don't want any revenge on him. I hope you got that clear.

Me: Yes Ndunakazi I got that clear.

I kissed his cheek. I didn't want him to suspect anything. I was going to make sure that he doesn't found out about my plan for Themba. Nothing was going to stand in my way.

Samkelo: Let's go and join our boys on the dinning table.

Me: Okay baby boo.

He laughed and held my hand. We went downstairs to join the boys.

Alupheli: You guys took forever in there, what were you doing? Huh?

Us: Excuse me?

Alupheli: We are hell starving mom and dad.

Me: You're too forward Alupheli, that's your problem.

Alupheli: But –

Samkelo: Just shut up and bless the food.

He held his mouth, closed his eyes and bowed his head after signaling with his hands that we should do the same. We all did as he did. He blessed the food and we all started eating.

Kuhle: Mom, when is Alondwe coming home?

Me: Why didn't you ask her because you answered my phone.

Kuhle: Haa! Uyangiphoxa?

Samkelo: Awumbuze we Mesuli.

Me: No baby. I was just asking.

Alupheli: Eyi uyaphoxana uThandeka wena awazi. Ukuphoxa bese eyaphika.

Me: Yey! Wena who is Thandeka?

Alupheli: Ouch! I am sorry Mrs Ndunakazi.

Me: Samkelo?

I looked at their father and he wasn't even looking at me. He was busy laughing his lungs out.

Me: Samkelo, don't laugh please. Control your sons.

He laughed some more. I was getting angry because Alupheli was amused by his father laughing. Kuhle was looking at him with a side smile.

Samkelo: I am sorry baby but this is all you.

Me: What?

Samkelo: They got all this attitude from you. Don't be surprised.

Me: You're unbelievable.

The boys: Mom –

Me: Just shut up and eat your food.

The boys: Yes mam.

We all ate our food in peace and silence. After eating I washed the dishes while the boys and their father went to bath. I cleaned up and I went to help Samkelo tuck them in bed. I then went to shower and joined my husband in bed.

The next day, the kids were going to school and we were going to work as usual. I was going to make a first step on my plan for Themba. So during lunch time I booked a plane ticket. I was going to Cape Town the following day. I needed a street kid that I was going to train. As the day proceeded Muzi and were working on our cases of helping people. I asked to excuse myself because I wanted to see Sphephelo. I drove to their school and waited for him to come out. As soon as I spotted him. I walked up to him. He was surprised to see me.

Me: Hello Sphephelo.

Sphephelo: Hi Mrs Ndunakazi how are you?

Me: Not so good, how are you?

Sphephelo: I am fine mam.

Me: How was your paper?

Sphephelo: It was not that bad.

Me: Good. You and I need to talk, follow me right now.

I showed him the way using my head and we walked towards my car. I wanted to know why exactly did he hurt my daughter and I was willing to get nothing but the truth..

\*\*\*\*\*

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay

We arrived at home and Rajiv helped me with the fruit basket and other things that we bought for my mom. We walked together inside the house. Mom was watching TV on the lounge.

She stood up immediately when she saw me and hugged me.

Mom: Oh my baby look at how beautiful you're.

Me: Mom don't be silly.

She laughed and greeted my husband. Rajiv went to put the groceries in the kitchen. Mom and I sat down.

Mom: I can see that your in-laws are treating you well. You're beautiful my baby.

I smiled and looked down. I just couldn't hide it to my mom. Tears just streamed down my cheeks.

Mom: What's wrong baby?

Me: I –

Rajiv cleared his throat, I quickly wiped my tears. I looked at him. And I stood up.

Me: Let me walk you out.

He nodded and said his goodbyes to my mom. I walked out with him.

Rajiv: Are you alright baby?

Me: Yes I am fine.

Rajiv: Okay. Please call me when you want me to fetch you.

Me: You really don't want me to spend the night in my parents house?

Rajiv: But we spoke about this Precious.

Me: Mxm. Fine just go.

I walked back home, he kept on calling my name I just didn't even look back..

Alondwe Ndunakazi

I wore my shirt looking at her with an attitude. She laughed. And looked at me up and down.

Cassandra: You are in no position to look at me in that way dear. You're pregnant!?

Me: I am in a good position to look at you in Whatever way that I want. This is my body you can't control how it moves.

Cassandra: So who's the Father? Because they told me that you have a few months in this school. That means that is definitely not Thapelo's child.

Me: I can see you've made a little research about me. What? Do you feel threatened Miss London?

Cassandra: You don't even scare me. If I want Thapelo I can have him back anytime.

Me: Then try getting him back and let's see you succeeding in doing that booboo.

I wore my blazer and tapped her shoulder, giving her a silly smile. I walked out feeling very hot. I was so scared as fuck. I went to my next class knowing that I was going to be the talk of the school. I didn't mind though because I had my baby. I went to sit next to him. I was panting like I was running.

Thapelo: What is wrong little pudding?

Me: Nothing.

Thapelo: Alondwe don't play with me like that. Please.

Me: Your lost and found girlfriend saw that I am pregnant.

Thapelo: You told her the baby is mine right?

Me: The baby is not yours and she figured it out that you're not the father.

He didn't say anything, he just looked at me without a word. I could see that he was angry but I didn't mind and I didn't care at all. I was just annoyed by this Cassandra. The teacher walked in and we started our Maths practice. We were told to work in pairs. The teacher gave us equations to work on. I didn't know how I was going to work with Thapelo because he wasn't talking to me. He started doing the equations alone.

Me: I thought the Teacher said we must work in pairs Thapelo.

Thapelo: I thought since you're pregnant, you're working in pair with your baby. I mean if I work with you that won't be a pair but it will be a trio.

I blinked more than twice, I just couldn't believe what he said to me. I could feel tears burning in my eyes. I looked at my paper and started working on the equations. Tears fell on my exam pad. I wiped them. He saw that I was crying and he touched my shoulder.

Thapelo: I am sorry little pudding I didn't mean to upset you.

I removed his hand off my shoulder.

Teacher: Is everything alright there Thapelo and Alondwe?

Thapelo: Yes, everything is alright.

Cassandra walked in and went to the teacher. She explained why she was late and the teacher allowed her to join the class. She stopped walking when she approached me and she looked at me. I looked down and wiped my tears quickly.

Cassandra: Oh shame. Miss we have a problem here. Miss Alondwe is crying.

Teacher: Ndunakazi what's wrong?

The teacher came closer to us. Everyone was looking at us that moment I was getting more angrier.

Cassandra: I think it must be the hormones. Maybe the baby is hungry.

Teacher: What are you talking about?

Cassandra: Oh you don't know? She's pregnant.

Thapelo: Stop meddling in people's lives Cassandra that's so not attractive.

Cassandra: Oh really? Are you really willing to be a step daddy?

Teacher: I think you're out of line now Cassandra.

The class was making a hell lot of noise. They were gossiping and others looked really surprised to hear such news about me. I hated Cassandra for embarrassing me like that. Yes soon everyone was going to see that I was pregnant but I wanted them to see for themselves not to find out like that.

Cassandra: I was just voicing my concern.

Teacher: You come to my class late and now you're causing chaos. Please sit down.

Tomorrow we have an exam to write and not all these students are high mighty like you.

She didn't say anything. She just went to sit down on her seat. The Teacher held my shoulder.

Teacher: Don't cry dear, you're not the first girl who got pregnant in this school. What important is that you're still focused on your books and you're an A student not just in English only like other bragging students I know. Don't worry Okay?

I nodded, I felt so better after the teacher said that to me. I felt like even though I was pregnant it wasn't the end of the world. The teacher continued facilitating the maths practice. I continued doing the equations alone.

Thapelo: Little pudding can we do the equations together.

Me: No, we are fine doing them alone. We don't want to create a trio right?

Thapelo: I am sorry Alondwe.

Me: Mxm.

I did my equations alone. Maybe I wasn't supposed to date Thapelo. Maybe I was supposed to be alone. I mean who does what I did. Who date a guy while they are pregnant, the guy who isn't the baby daddy? But what was I supposed to do, I was in love with him. I am still in love with him. He was everything that I ever wanted in a guy. He was my own world of happiness. My joy, whenever I feel down and sad. It's his voice that calms me down. I loose myself in the beauty of his eyes when he looks at me. He makes me mad, yes! But I love him with every fibre of my being. So how can I just let him go? I can't!

After school I took my backpack and I walked out of the class. I made my way straight to the gate. Thapelo was running after me. He catch me at the gate. He held my arm.

Me: Yini kanti? (What is it?)

Thapelo: Don't do this Alondwe. I love you.

Me: What? You think I don't love you? You think my love for you is fake? Is that what are you trying to say Thapelo?

Thapelo: I said I was sorry.

Me: You want a medal for being sorry? Huh?

Thapelo: I didn't mean to hurt your feelings but I was just angry at the way you responded to me.

Me: Your parents don't like me. Your lost and found girlfriend is back. Maybe it's a sign that we're not good for each other so please leave me the fuck alone. Tsk!

I yanked my arm off his hold and I walked away from him with a broken heart. This little coloured bitch was messing my life up and I was letting her win. Maybe I shouldn't fight everything. Maybe I should stop trying to win everything. Yes I am Thandeka's daughter but that doesn't mean I should be strong like her. But how can I just forget about Thapelo? I love him...

Thandeka Ndunakazi

I went to a nearby restaurant and we bought drinks with Sphephelo after he called his mother

and told her that he was going to arrive late at home. At least he had some respect(nyana).  
We sat down.

Me: I want us to talk about my daughter.

Sphephelo: What about her?

Me: I believe you didn't tell me the whole truth about what happened. I am giving you the last chance to tell me nothing but the truth.

Sphephelo: I don't know what you want me to say.

Me: Just admit that you violated my daughter.

Sphephelo: Violated? That a big word Mrs Ndunakazi.

Me: Look here young man. I am not going to play with you. I don't have time for games. I know everything that you did to my daughter.

Sphephelo: I didn't do anything to your daughter.

Me: Sphephelo you better talk or else I am calling your mother right now.

Sphephelo: Okay, okay. You don't have to call my mom.

Me: Then talk.

Sphephelo: I was angry at your husband okay? I had no idea that Alondwe was going to get pregnant.

Me: Oh so you know that she's pregnant?

Sphephelo: She told me. I am sorry.

Me: You're sorry? Do you hear yourself, you're sorry?

Sphephelo: I didn't mean to hurt her but she was my only option.

This boy was making me very angry. He was talking as if he did the right thing.

Me: You were hurting my daughter, sexually violating her because you wanted to hurt her father. Did you think about the damage that you were bringing to her huh?

Sphephelo: Your husband didn't think of the damage he was bringing to my sister so I had no time to think about that.

Me: Yesses! Do you know that I can take you to court because my daughter was still 15yrs old when you took advantage of her. You're 18yrs and what you did to her is a crime.

Sphephelo: You don't have witnesses.

Me: Really? How sure are you? Because you lied to me but to find that you're the one who slept with her and you two were dating.

Sphephelo: That proves nothing.

Me: Oh well since you got attitude, I will see you tomorrow when I pay your mother a visit. I took out cash and gave it to me.

Me: That's for your cab back home.

Sphephelo:(taking the money) Mrs Ndunakazi, please don't call my mom.

Me: it's too late for that.

I took my bag and left. I was going to his mom. I felt so disrespected by that boy and I wasn't going to just let him enjoy his life while my daughter is suffering. I drove back to the centre and I wrapped up a few things before going home. The following day I was going to Cape town. Muzi walked in while I packing my bags.

Muzi: How did it go?

Me: That boy is full of himself. He's proud of what he did to my little girl. I know Samkelo was wrong too but Alondwe had nothing to do with her father's past.

Muzi: I am sorry. What are you going to do?

Me: I have to talk to his mom. There's nothing that I can do. He must take responsibility for his child.

Muzi: I understand. But what about your daughter, she doesn't want him anywhere near her.

Me: I am doing this for her and the baby. She might not realise that now but she will some day.

Muzi: Okay. Good luck for tomorrow.

Me: Thanks Muzi.

We hugged each other. I took my bags and we went our separate ways...

\*\*\*\*\*

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay

My mom had already put food on the table for me and God bless her because I was hungry. I sat down. And I took a plate and started eating.

Mom: What is wrong baby?

Me: I am not a wife there mom, I am a maid.

Mom: What's happening?

Me: His mom and his aunts are making me their slave. I go to bed tired with my back burning every night. There's nothing nice about being a wife.

Mom: Oh my Baby. They're still trying to see what kind of a person you're. But baby you and your husband should have waited and don't bring the baby. It's still early for you guys to start a family.

Me: We're not starting any family mama. I still want to study.

I took my plate and went to the kitchen. It felt a little better to be home. I just wanted to rest for the day. I was going to switch off my phone I didn't want Rajiv to come back and fetch me. I went back to the lounge my brother was sitting with mom. I smiled when I saw him. He smiled back and stood up. We hugged each other.

Me: I have missed you so much.

Sakhile: You chose to be Indian right?

We laughed and went to sit down.

Sakhile: Is it really necessary for you to wear like this?

Me: As you said I chose to be Indian.

Sakhile: (we laughed) Asiye eyadini phela sisi siyodla inyama like old times.

Me: Why not? Let's go. It will be nice to spend some quality time with my brother. Mom We will see you later.

Mom: Okay please be safe there Nobuhle. Bring the meat for me and your father.

Me: We will.

I took some cash and I gave it to my brother. I didn't want to carry any bags with me. I went to my room and changed my sari. I wore my white dress. I didn't take out my wedding necklace. I went back to the lounge.

Me: Let's go.

Mom: Why did you change?

Me: Hawu mama I can't go around emlazi looking like an Indian woman.

Mom: But –

Me: No mom!

I didn't wait for her to finish her sentence. I held my brother's arm and we left the house running. I just wanted to have fun with my brother...

\*\*\*\*\*

Uyathandwa Smith

It's been a while since I have been doing drugs. They help escape reality of life. The fact that I lost my sister, I have a father who doesn't care about me and a mother who is miles away from me. My life was just crap

Alondwe Ndunakazi

I got home and I went to my room. I took off my uniform and wore my maternity dress and sleepers. I went to the kitchen and made something to eat while listening to music. My phone rang while I was enjoying my music. I took it and it was private number. I answered.

Me: Private number hello?

Caller: Hey Alondwe it's me.

Me: You who?

It was Sphephelo I could hear his voice clearly I just didn't understand what he wanted from me.

Caller: it's Sphephelo. Can we talk if you're not busy?

Me: I am busy I am trying to feed this fatherless baby. Do you remember that my baby has no daddy?

For the first time I said "my baby" without anyone forcing me to say it. A tear escaped from my left eye. I wiped it off immediately.

Sphephelo: It's not like that Alondwe. I wish to be part of the baby but I can't.

Me: He doesn't need you just leave us alone.

Sphephelo: It's a boy?

Me: No he's gay!

I dropped the call. I had no time to entertain Sphephelo. I didn't want him anywhere near my son. We were better off without him.

Me: We're way better off without this excuse of a father you have. Tsk!

There was a knock on the door. I fixed my plate and I went to open the door. Thapelo was right at the door. I looked at him. I didn't say anything. He also didn't say anything.

Me: What do you –

He came closer to me and kissed me. I hesitated at the beginning but I gave in and kissed him back. His lips were so tender and the kiss gave me a whole zoo in my tummy. Thapelo was just perfect. We broke the kiss after some time. He looked at me and I looked at him.

Thapelo: You can't just give up on me.

Me: Thapelo I-

Thapelo: Do you remember how hard it was for us to be together. The tricks I had to play. All that ego that I had to let go just to admit that I love you and I need you in my life. Do you remember?

Me: Yes I remember.

Thapelo: You're willing to conclude by giving up on our love just because you're pregnant? Just because Cassandra told the whole world that you're pregnant?

Me: I don't want to be in competition with your ex.

Thapelo: You're not competing with her. You didn't hear me saying I want her back. I didn't say that.

Me: You're angry towards her Thapelo. You still love her, that shows that you still love her.

Thapelo: I don't want to entertain her not that I am angry towards her. If I give her my attention she will think that I want her back. I don't want her back. I have you and I love you.

Me: I need some help with geometry.

Thapelo:(smiling) Is that Your way of inviting me inside?

Me: I can take my books and we can do them right outside.

He laughed and shook his head. I laughed too. He playfully slapped my tummy times two.

Thapelo: Hey there little man.

Me: He's hungry Thapelo. He doesn't have energy to play right now.

Thapelo: I can see mommy is defending his boy.

Me: It is mommy's duty to defend her boy if daddy wants to play while he is hungry.

He smiled and looked at me for a while. I looked at him too.

Me: What?

Thapelo: You don't know how happy I am to hear you say that.

Me: If you're happy I am also happy.

Thapelo: Does that mean I am forgiven.

Me: You and I will be together forever and always.  
He kissed me briefly and I giggled in between the kisses. The baby was moving.  
Me: I think the baby likes it when you kiss me.  
Thapelo: I like it too.  
Me: Usile wena yazi.  
Thapelo: What? I am losing you.  
Me: (laughing) Look for me. You'll find me.  
He made a puppy face, I laughed and held his hand. I made more food and we ate together.  
We then went to my room. We sat on my study desk. Thapelo had his books with him. We did geometry together and other things. We studied together till late.  
Thapelo: I think that's enough little pudding. Tomorrow we going to nail this paper.  
Me: We have to!  
My aunt walked in my room.  
Melo: Oh hey guys. I heard voices so I thought –  
Me: Yeah I know aunty you don't have to explain.  
Melo: (laughing) Are you alright Thapelo?  
Thapelo: Yes I am fine and you?  
Melo: I am alright thanks. Let me leave you two.  
Me: You ain't going to ask me how I am?  
Melo: I can ask baby bear not you.  
Me: Mxm. He doesn't want to talk to you. Just go.  
She laughed and left.  
Thapelo: Jealousy Princess is too high.  
Me: Mxm uyaphapha. Let's go.  
We packed our bags and his phone rang. He took it and answered.  
Thapelo: "Mom?..... I was studying.... No.... With my girlfriend mom..... Yes that one....  
Mom please not now..... I am on my way back now... Okay"  
He dropped the call and we walked out of my room after he kissed me.  
Thapelo: I love you okay.  
Me: I love you too.  
We hugged each other for a while.  
Thapelo: Let me go before mom chops my head off.  
Me: For being with a Zulu girl.  
He gave me that "Don't start" look.  
Me: Okay I am sorry.  
He nodded. I took my phone and we left after saying goodbye to my aunt.  
We were on the road waiting for a cab when my phone rang. I took it out and it was an unsaved number. I answered.  
Me: Hello.  
Caller: Alondwe please talk to your mother. I know that what I did is wrong but please don't let her tell my foster mom about the baby.  
Me: Woah! Woah! What are you talking about?  
Sphephelo: Your mother has found out that I am the father of the baby and she wants to tell my mom about the baby. I can't lose my mom not now. Please.  
I hung up the call. I just couldn't believe my mom.  
Me: Wow? Thandeka Ndunakazi wow!  
Thapelo: What's wrong little pudding?  
Me: Please just hug me.  
He didn't ask any further questions, he just hugged me....

Thandeka Ndunakazi...

I arrived at home late, the time was way passed my knock off time. I knew that I had a lot of explaining to do. The reason I got home late was because I had to do some shopping for my trip the following day. I didn't even remember whether I told my husband about it or not. I didn't even know what was I going to say to him because I couldn't tell him the truth. He didn't want me to do any revenge on Themba so I just couldn't tell him the whole truth. I walked inside the house with the plastic bags. My sons stood up and met me halfway as I entered the room. They were watching a movie with their father. I placed my bags down. I kneeled down and hugged them both.

Alupheli: Ah man! Mesuli nekhanda lakho elikhulu uyangigqimiza! Yesses! (You knocked me off with your big head Mesuli)

Me: Aybo where did you learn to speak like that?

Alupheli: Like what mom?

Me: Yesses?

He smiled and shrugged his shoulders. Mesuli looked at him once with the look that says "Don't start with me boy"

Me: Don't mind him baby.

Kuhle: I also don't have time for kids.

I looked at him in a "really now?" look. He just walked away from us. Mesuli was the quiet kid. He didn't like talking that much. He was the definition of a noble man. He was just high-minded. He was my only child who wasn't forward and who was just down to earth. He was a true little gentleman with attitude nokuzitshela. I then looked at Alupheli after Mesuli left.

Alupheli: What? I tell you mom that kid of yours is a coward.

Me: You're cheeky and he doesn't like fighting.

Alupheli: I was just fooling around with him.

Me: Excuse me where did you learn that?

Alupheli: Heh! Ungithatha kancane wena Thandeka. I roll with the big dogs.

He folded his hands in front of his chest and left me walking like a top dog. I just didn't understand my son. I mean he was only 4yrs old but he was acting like he's way older than everyone in the house. I took my bags that they ended up not taking and I went to sit next to my husband.

Me: Sawubona mnyeni wami. (Greetings my husband)

Samkelo: Hi.

He stood up and went to the kitchen.

Alupheli: Daddy is cooking. He is angry because you didn't come home early. You didn't fetch us after school.

Me: Who told you that?

Kuhle: He was swearing all the way from school till now. You must apologize mom.

Me: Okay boys. Thank you for telling me.

Alupheli: And he said "she must forget that trip. Akayindawo ngoba uyangichwenswa" iyeyeye. Kushubile Thandeka.

Me: Alupheli! Stop calling me by my first name.

Alupheli: (raising his tiny hands up) Okay! Okay. I was just warning you that it's about to go down. And I will eavesdrop when it happens. Count me in on that action.

He went to the kitchen to his father. Mesuli was laughing his lungs out. I just didn't understand what was happening with my little boy.

Me: Don't laugh Mesuli please.

Kuhle: I am sorry mom but he's funny.

Me: Did you do what I told you to do?

Kuhle: Yes. His problem is that he have new friends who are doing grade 5. So he can't

choose from his new friends and his old friends that's why he doesn't want to go to school sometimes.

Me: That's why he's using the language that is way older than him?

Kuhle: Yes mom.

Me: Thanks baby. I will sort him out after I came back from Cape Town.

Kuhle: Alupheli was serious daddy said you're no longer going there.

Me: Tell me you're kidding baby please.

Kuhle: I wish I could.

I just sat there with my mouth opened. Looking at the blank spaces of the wall. This man was testing me Yesses!!

\*\*\*\*\*

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay

I was having a good time with my brother and I was just feeling like the time that we had was way too short. We were eating meat and looking at people dancing. A lot of people that I knew were greeting me and asking me about marriage life. I would smile and say it was fun.

Sakhile: Do you still know how to dance or you've grown tired of dancing because of marriage.

Me: (laughing) I still got my moves. I won't back down. Aybo.

We laughed some more.

Sakhile: I have missed you so much.

Me: I have missed you too. So please update me on the ekasi scoop. What is happening eroindini.

Sakhile: Do you remember Philani? The Pastor's kid who made our sister pregnant?

Me: Yes.

Sakhile: Well he's getting married next month. And the worst case scenario is that Philisiwe is coming back for a visit on that weekend of his wedding. Mom doesn't know how to tell her.

Me: Tjo that's pretty hectic hey.

Sakhile: It's really hectic.

Me: How is mom and dad doing? You know after that saga about dad's child.

Sakhile: Oh. Mom is no longer friends with that nurse. And her and dad they just tolerate each other. Dad is trying to apologize even now but mom is still angry.

Me: She'll get over it soon. Let's go home.

He nodded. We went to take the meat that we were taking home with us and we left. We took a taxi back home. It was dark outside. The time was after 7. We arrived at home and my husband's car was already there.

Sakhile: Your husband is already here what are you going to do about your outfit.

Me: Jesus! Look I will go to the toilet (the toilets are not inside the house) and you'll bring my sari to me. Put it inside the plastic bag Okay?

He nodded and took the meat. I quickly made my way to the toilet. When I was about to open the door. Someone opened it from the inside. I suspiciously looked at the person. And there was my husband looking at me from head to toe with nothing but surprised look..... Or anger I just don't know!

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

The cab came and Thapelo left. I didn't get a chance to tell him what mom said. I went back home. My aunt was eating on the lounge. I was really angry at my mom. I just didn't understand how on earth could she do this to me. I had asked her nicely to stop digging about my baby daddy but she couldn't do that. I didn't want to face Sphephelo and deal with the pain that he put me through. I was over that and I didn't want to talk about it. I wanted it

buried. Though sometimes I used to sit alone and think it over and over again but I didn't want to talk about it. My aunt saw that I wasn't alright.

Melo: What's wrong Nana?

Me: My mom. She's something else.

I sat down and threw my phone on the coffee table.

Melo: What did she do?

Me: She just can't. No she fails to take her nose off other people's business. She can't let this thing about the father of my child rest. I hate it!

Melo: But she's your mom Alondwe. It's her responsibility to look after you.

Me: Look after me? She's bringing me pain and you're saying that she's looking after me.

Melo: That's not What she's doing.

Me: I told her I don't want that guy in my life. I don't want to talk about what happened and she promised that she'll let it go but she didn't keep her promise. What kind of a mother brings her child pain that she doesn't want. Huh?

Melo: Don't cry Samkeliso.

Me: I can't stop crying because my mom is hurting my feelings.

I took my phone and I went to my room. Maybe my dad was going to understand and his wife to back off. I wasn't picturing Sphephelo as the father of my child. I didn't want him in my life. I called my father. He picked up after a few rings.

Dad: Princess.

Me: Hello King, how are you doing?

Dad: I am doing alright baby and how are two doing?

Me: We're not alright. Grandma Thandeka is hurting us.

Dad: What has she done?

Me: She's digging up information about the father of the baby. She wants to take him to court daddy.

Dad: What's wrong about that?

Me: Daddy!?

Dad: I don't see anything wrong with that. Just that I didn't know that your mom was doing that she didn't tell me.

Me: I didn't know too. I heard rumours.

Dad: I will talk to Grandma Thandeka. I also want to see this boy. We really need to sort him out.

Me: So you guys don't care about my feelings?

Dad: What feelings? We're trying to help you.

Me: Wow! Just tell your wife to mind her business!

Dad: Yeywena! I am still your father and Thandeka is your mother.

Me: Mxm. Tell me something I don't know.

I hung up the call. I was really angry. No! I was furious. I didn't mean to disrespect my father but the anger took over. He called again but I didn't answer. I just buried my face on the pillow. After a few minutes my aunt walked in with her phone.

Melo: Your father wants to talk to you.

Me: I am not talking to him.

I stood up and ran to the bathroom. I locked myself in there and I took off my clothes. I decided to take a shower. I finished up and I went back to my room to moisturised my body. I wore my pyjamas and I went to the kitchen.

Melo: My brother is angry Alondwe.

Me: I am also angry. He's siding with mom.

Melo: They are truly trying to do what's best for you.

Me: I know what's best for me and bringing Sphephelo in my baby's life is not what best for

the both of us. We don't need him.

Melo: You're not working.

Me: That means I qualify to apply for social grant.

Melo: That money is not enough.

Me: I don't care.

I took my food and I went to my room. I ate and I called My baby wishing him goodnight. I then drifted off to sleep. Later I was woken up by my phone ringing. It was my mom calling. I didn't answer the phone. I went back to sleep after putting my phone on silent.

In the morning I was late but I managed to make it in time for my granny's car. I greeted them and she drove me to school first. We arrived at my school. I thanked her and I went to my class. My baby boo was already there.

Me: I think you need to take a break now or else you'll end up breathing Maths.

Thapelo: Hey little pudding. I was just working out that equation that knocked us off yesterday.

Me: Are you getting somewhere?

I sat down and kissed his cheek.

Thapelo: I think so. How are you doing this morning Princess?

Me: I am alright baby boo and you?

Thapelo: I am fine. Are you ready for the paper?

Me: I was born ready.

Thapelo: And our competition?

Me: It's still on baby. Let's try again.

He nodded and we tried to work together again. Mpendulo came to us.

Mpendulo: This is now a partnership you guys have forgotten about me.

Me: Weren't you running after Mbali's ass these days?

Mpendulo: Come on, I needed a fix before my exams start.

Thapelo: We needed no fix so please just let us do our thing.

Mpendulo: Really? You needed no fix?

Me: What is he talking about Prince?

Thapelo: Nothing to worry yourself about Princess.

Mpendulo: You do need to worry yourself mama bear.

He laughed and left. I looked at Thapelo hoping that he will explain the "fix" but he gave that face that told me to "forget it, I won't tell you" I brushed it off because I wasn't going to beg him but I was definitely going to ask Mpendulo....

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

I stood up and I went to our room upstairs. I wasn't ready to face my husband. My phone rang it was inside my bag. It took it out, Muzi was calling. I answered.

Me: Muzi?

Muzi: I wanted to remind you that pass by the centre before you leave. You left the equipment.

Me: Oh about that, it seems like I won't be going yet. My sons told me that there's going to be a war between me and their father.

Muzi:(laughing) Why?

Me: I came home late. So he's angry. It seems like he has decided that I am no longer going to Cape Town but I will talk to him.

Muzi: Okay please let me know what happened.

Me: I will let you know whether I am going or not. Not what happened.

Muzi:(laughing) What's wrong with letting me know what happened?

Me: Excuse me? What if I tweaked my way to his heart!?

Muzi: Okay! Okay! Hold it right there!

Me:(laughing) That's what I thought. We will talk later Okay?

Muzi: Sure partner.

I giggled and hung up the call. I wasn't used to all that. Being called "partner" I was used to drawing buildings, town planning and construction sites. I must say I was enjoying my new job. I sighed heavily and I went to take a quick shower before going downstairs. I finished up everything and I went downstairs. My husband and the boys were having dinner. Do you know that awkward moment when you don't know whether to take something or leave it because the owner is mad at you? Yes! That moment. I was in that position, I didn't know whether to eat the food or not. Most of all I didn't want him to say something out of line in front of Alupheli. Alupheli was going to laugh at me and say "Yes ngishilo ngathi kuzoshuba Thandeka" This kid was just something else. I made my way to the kitchen.

Samkelo: You're not joining us for dinner?

Me: Uhm... I.... You guys have already started?

Alupheli:(laughing) Mom? Straight answer syndrome please!

They all laughed. His father came up with that term. "Straight answer syndrome please" whenever he's asking a question that needs a straight answer like "yes" or "no". They were all laughing and I felt so small and stupid. That's what guilt does to a human being. It makes you forget your position and your worth.

Samkelo: I wasn't talking to you Alupheli. I was talking to my wife.

Alupheli: I was just helping you out daddy. I am sorry.

He placed his hands on his mouth. His father shook his head and looked at me.

Me: I was going to join you.

Samkelo: We started without you because you were taking too long to come down.

Me: I was taking a shower.

Samkelo: How nice.

He was being sarcastic and I was hating it. I sat down next to him. Where my plate was and I started eating.

Alupheli: When is big sis coming back home I miss her?

Samkelo: She will come back after her exams.

Alupheli: Why did she leave again?

Samkelo: You were troubling her so she left.

He popped his eyes out and didn't answer his father. I wanted to laugh, at least his father was able to make him shut up. After dinner I washed the dishes with Mesuli.

Mesuli: I think Alupheli needs to go to a daycare. Not preschool.

Me: He's four years old Mesuli. I don't want him to go to a daycare.

Mesuli: But mom can't you see that Preschool is damaging him.

Me: His friends are damaging him not preschool. And I can't choose friends for him.

Mesuli: I will tell dad maybe he'll talk to him

Me: You can do that because he's making my life hard really.

Mesuli laughed. We finished and I cleaned up the kitchen and the dining area. I went to lounge.

Me: Bath time Thando.

Alupheli: I can bath myself now.

Me: I am not going to argue with you stand up now and get your behind in that bathroom!

He stood up quickly and climbed the stairs. I followed after him. He was crying because I shouted at him. My little spoiled brat.

Me: Your friends can laugh at you if they can see you crying right now.

He placed his hands on his mouth. I took off his clothes after mixing the water and I bathed him. After that process I put him on his pyjamas.

Me: Do you have any homework?

Alupheli: Did you have homework at school at the end of the year on your school days?  
I didn't say anything. I just looked at him with my hands on my waist.

Alupheli: I didn't think so too.

He then ran out of the bathroom. I just cleaned up after him.

I then went to my room. I didn't want to remind Mesuli about homework. Who knows what response I was going to get from him. I wore my sleepwear and waited for my husband so that we can have our action as our son had said. He was taking a shower. After a few minutes he came out of the bathroom whistling. He did everything and I was looking at him. He then joined me on the bed.

Me: Did you leave the boys watching TV alone?

Samkelo: Yes, they said they are not going to school tomorrow.

Me: Why?

Samkelo: We're going to Cape Town on Friday remember?

Me: I don't remember.

Samkelo: My half sister has inqibamasondo on Saturday and we were going to meet you at home because you were going to Cape Town tomorrow.

Me: Oh.. Wait? Am I no longer going to Cape Town?

Samkelo: No you're no longer going.

Me: Why not?

Samkelo: You're behaving like a single woman. Thandeka. You're forgetting that you have kids and a husband. Why didn't you fetch the kids?

Me: Stop shouting at me Alupheli will eavesdrop on us.

Samkelo: What? All you care about is our little boy?

Me: I know I made a mistake but I don't want him to listen to our argument.

Samkelo: You're unbelievable mfazi wami yezwa?

Me: Ngiyaxolisa Ndunakazi. I was busy today.

Samkelo: Busy? Trying to solve Alondwe's life?

Me: Excuse me?

Samkelo: Alondwe called me and told me that you are digging information about her baby daddy?

Me: What's wrong with that? Are we supposed to just sit back and wonder that who played with our daughter? Is that what you're trying to say Samkelo?

Samkelo: You didn't even tell me Thandeka. You just doing things as you please.

Me: We're in this Alondwe saga because of your past, I am trying to fix it.

Samkelo: You're always trying to fix everything and everyone. Can't you let things be!

Me: Are you hearing yourself right now? Let things be? Let things be Samkelo? Hhaybo!

Kwahle bo!

Samkelo: Yeywena! U-

We then heard a tiny voice with worry and concern.

"Mom and dad stop now. That's enough" the voice said. We both looked at the door. It was our Alupheli uThando Lwethu..

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay...

I didn't know what to say to him. He just looked at me. I went close to him.

Me: I can explain.

Rajiv: So that's why you wanted to visit your mom, so that you can wear like this?

Me: You married me wearing like this and this dress is not bad.

Rajiv: You were my girlfriend back then now you're my wife. They told that you'll wear your saris all the days of your life.

Me: You didn't tell me that I will have to wear saris everyday. I wasn't ready for that.

Rajiv: What are you trying to say now? You don't want to wear like my wife?

Me: I am not like your wife when I am wearing like this?

Rajiv: Precious I don't want to argue about how you should wear. Because you were made my wife and you were told that this is our culture and that is how Pillay wives dress. You agreed to accept my culture as my wife but now you're like this?

Me: I went to the lounge around the township. I couldn't wear a sari.

Rajiv: You owe me no explanation do as you please. Let's go.

I made my way to my mother's house. I wanted to change before I go.

Rajiv: My car is this side.

Me: I have to take my things and change.

Rajiv: No you're going home like that.

Me: What? You want your mother to make fun of me and tell me that I don't respect your culture.

Rajiv: Do you respect my culture?

Me: Yes I do.

Rajiv: You call this respecting my culture? This way you are dressed up is respecting my culture?

Me: I am sorry.

Rajiv: That's not the answer I am looking for.

Me: I don't know what you want me to say now.

Rajiv: I said let's go home.

Me: Your parents won't welcome me inside the house when I am wearing like this.

He tried to come close to me, I knew that he wanted to drag me to his car. I ran fast and went inside the house.

Mom: Kwenzenjani manje bakithi!?

I went to my room. I locked up. My sari was in my bed. I quickly changed my outfit. Mom was busy knocking.

Me: Mom please give me time.

I finished up and I took my bag. I looked at myself in the mirror. Everything was in place..I walked out of my room. Mom was on the couch.

Mom: What's wrong?

Me: He didn't want me to change back to my sari. He was angry that I changed.

Mom: I told you that what you're doing is wrong. But you didn't listen to me. Uma uzoba ihlongandlebe uzowa umshado wakho. Lalela man Nobuhle.

Me: I am sorry mama.

Mom: Go back to your house. Look after yourself mntanami.

Me: Yebo mama.

I called my brother and we shared goodbye hugs.

Sakhile: Look after yourself.

Me: You too take care. Send my love to Dad. I will see him some other time.

My brother walked me out. Rajiv was already in the car, I stepped inside and he drove off. He was quiet and I also kept quiet. I was sleepy and tired. I ended up sleeping. Rajiv woke me up when we were home. I just felt the burden again. We had to wait outside the house and our parents welcomed us.

Claudine: How are your parents?

Me: They are alright mom. Mom said I must say thank you and she sent her love.

Claudine: Okay.

I smiled faintly and I went straight to our room. I wanted to sleep. I was tired. Rajiv entered the room.

Rajiv: You're sleeping, already?

Me: I am tired.

Rajiv: What? Were you dancing where you were?

Me: No I wasn't. You said you are arguing can I sleep now. Please.

He didn't say anything. He went to the bathroom. I used that time to rest because slavery was going to begin the following day.

\*\*\*\*\*

Uyathandwa Smith

My father wanted to talk to him. I was high. I was hoping that he wasn't going to see that something was off with me. I went to his office. My head was somewhere else where I didn't care about anyone but myself. I sat down he looked at me.

Dad: Are you alright Ethan?

Me: Yes I am fine.

Dad: You don't look fine.

Me: How am I supposed to look fine when you don't care about us. How am I supposed to look fine? Huh?

Dad: Don't raise your voice when talking to me young man I am still your father.

Me: You don't act like a father.

Dad: Uyathandwa! I am warning you.

Me: You called me here so that you can shout at me. You're making my head spin with all that noise.

He stood up as an aim of slapping me. My phone rang, it was on my hands. I raised my other hand as an aim of stopping my dad.

Me: Don't try that dad. My mom is calling, I think she had something way better to say than what you have to say.

I walked out of his office and answered my phone.

Me: Mom, Hello?

Mom: Hello baby how are you doing?

Me: I am alright mom and you?

Mom: I am fine, I wanted to tell you that tomorrow I am coming that side. But I will be at Gugulethu. I want to see you before I leave.

Me: Where are you going to see me?

Mom: I will tell you on Sunday. We will meet in town. Me: Okay. That's nice because I was about to tell you about some nice shades that I saw at Markham. Mom: Really Uyathandwa? Can't you see your mom without wanting money?

Me: (laugh) You know I have to use my chances.

Mom: Poor Thandeka. I will see you Sunday baby I love you.

Me: I love you too mama.

We hung up the call. That was something to be happy about. I was getting new shades. I didn't go back to my father. I had nothing to say to him.

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

The time for us to write our paper came. I was ready to write and what I wanted the most was to ask Mpendulo about the fix. We were told to go to the exam venue. Thapelo and I were walking together. We were holding each other's hands. He was busy gossiping about the girl who was walking in front of us. That girl had an untidy hair. I was laughing because he was serious about what he was saying.

Thapelo: Don't laugh baby.

Me: But Prince her hair doesn't mean she must get played.

Thapelo: No I don't mean she must get played. All I am saying is girls blame boys when they

get played but they'll be walking around looking like that. Which guy can be proud to say that girl is my girl when she's looking like that.

I was in stitches with laughter. Thapelo was killing me and I also wondered if that girl looked at herself in the mirror.

Me: But My chocolate brownie?

Thapelo: No Little pudding, a girl must love herself. She must always look neat and representable. You must have that pride when you're walking on the street, you must know that by the way you look you're representing your kingdom. You're royalty, you're Princess. You can't tell me that this girl is a princess looking like this? Huh? No. Self respect is important in a woman. Beauty is not make up and weaves. You see I can never be ashamed to say you're my girlfriend. The way you carry yourself moves me.

I looked at him and smiled. This guy was such a decent guy. His ugly mom did raise a wonderful soul.

Me: I am proud to say you're mine. I love you Mr Moloji.

He smiled and kissed my cheek.

Thapelo: I love you too Miss Ndunakazi. Good luck on your exam.

Me: Thanks. Good luck to you too my Prince. Cassandra and her squad looked at us as we stood next to them. The venue wasn't opened yet, Mpendulo was with Mbali just close to them. Cassandra was with the twins, Londiwe and Londeka. Thapelo tapped my shoulder, I looked at him.

Thapelo: I don't like the cheeky look you have right now in your face.

Me: I just don't like her and I hate what she did yesterday.

Thapelo: Don't mind her, you got your charmer boy.

Me: Oh yeah?

Thapelo: Yeah. Can't you see him?

Me: I see him correctly.

I smiled and laid my head on his shoulder. Cassandra came to us. I just closed my eyes. I didn't have energy for because I was going mess her hair up. She was going to look like a walking dead.

Cassandra: Can I talk to you Thapelo?

Thapelo: Talk..

Cassandra: In private, please.

Thapelo: There's no privacy that is greater than this one. So just talk.

Cassandra: I don't like what you're doing. Last night you wasn't taking any of my calls and you wasn't responding to my texts. I know you didn't like how I left but we can fix this, you and I didn't break up and I still love you.

Thapelo: There's nothing that we can talk about. There's nothing left between us.

Cassandra: What's wrong now? I thought the last time we spoke we were getting somewhere. And you said you forgive me.

I opened my eyes and looked at Thapelo. He was looking at her.

Me: You two are talking Thapelo?

Thapelo: Not like that Princess, she called me and she asked for forgiveness and I forgave her.

Me: Forgiveness to what?

Thapelo: For leaving while I didn't want her to leave.

Cassandra: You don't have to explain our business to her Thapelo. Our relationship is private.

Thapelo: The thing is, there's no relationship between us please don't get this whole thing wrong. I am over you and I am happy with her. I love Alondwe.

Cassandra: I will talk to your mom, I can see that her love portion is stronger than Nonjabulo's love portion.

I laughed sarcastically, our teachers came and Cassandra left. Everyone went close. I let go of Thapelo's hand. I looked at him.

Me: I want her cellphone number out of your phone. I won't have you talking to your ex that's disrespect to me.

Thapelo: I don't want her.

Me: Yeah I hear you keep saying. But the number should be on reject list and block her on your WhatsApp.

I left him and went to Mpendulo. He was still talking to his girlfriend. They were joking around because they were both laughing.

Me: I am sorry to interrupt. Hi Mbali.

Mbali: Hi Alondwe.

Me: Mpendulo I wanted to say ubhale kahle neh?

Mpendulo: (laughing) Dankie mama bear. Ubhale kahle nawe ntwana. Relax I will explain the fix later.

Me: Really?

Mpendulo: Yes.

Me: Thank you. Hold on to him Mbali he's the keeper.

Mbali:(laughing) Thank you girl.

I smiled and went inside the venue. As soon as everyone was seated the exam started.

After writing we were supposed to go home. Mpendulo was outside the venue. He was alone.

I went to him.

Me: How was the paper?

Mpendulo: With a tutor like you I can say I passed.

Me: That's good. Before your friend come out there please explain the fix.

Mpendulo: (laughing) The fix is another way of referring to sex.

Me: Oh Lord!

Mpendulo: Yeah.

Me: But he hardly speak about it.

Mpendulo: He won't speak about it. You just have to free him. That's if you don't have a problem with that. Don't feel pressured into doing it because you heard that my girlfriend and I are doing it.

Me: Relax I don't do something I don't want to do.

"I think Miss world here wants every boy in this school" that was Cassandra talking behind me. I turned back and looked at her. She was with her girlfriends. I didn't say anything.

Mbali: Relax nothing is going on between them.

Cassandra: Don't be too sure about that. You can't trust this one with boys.

Mpendulo: Mbali let's go please. I don't have time for shit.

Mbali: Okay baby. Bye guys.

Them: Bye.

Mpendulo: Alondwe ntwana bye.

Me: Bye.

I walked away from them. Thapelo came out of the exam room. He came to me. He took my bag.

Me: How was the paper?

Thapelo: It was good and to you.

Me: It was great. Let's go home, please I need some help with something. It won't take long.

Thapelo: Okay little pudding.

I held his hand.

Me: So Phinadi I was thinking.

Thapelo: Yes.

Me: I will get the highest mark in Maths thus time around.

Thapelo;(laughing) You're dreaming.

Me: Okay he's what going on happen.

Thapelo: I am listening.

Me: If I get the highest mark than yours in Maths. Next year when I come back. You'll act as my girlfriend for the whole week and I will be your boyfriend.

Thapelo: What? Huh! But that won't happen so accept the challenge.

Me: Don't underestimate me.

Thapelo: Come on. So if I win you'll buy me lunch the whole month of February and you'll buy the Valentine gift for the both of us.

Me: What? But why my challenge has to include money?

Thapelo: Are you underestimating yourself?

Me: Okay! Okay! Challenge accepted.

We laughed and hugged each other.

Me: Let's catch a taxi.

He nodded and stopped one. I was planning on fixing him. My aunt was not around vele

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

I got off from my bed and I went to my son. I picked him up. I could see that he wanted to cry already.

Me: You shouldn't eavesdrop.

He didn't say anything. He just cried. I walked out of our room with him. I went to their room. His brother was already in bed but he was playing his PSP. I sat down with Alupheli on his bed.

Me: Stop crying Thando.

He rubbed his eyes and he didn't stop crying.

Kuhle: He's making noise mom.

Me: So what should I do?

Kuhle: I told him not to eavesdrop but he doesn't listen.

Me: Mesuli please awuthule nawe you're stressing me out.

He didn't say anything. I rocked my four years old son who wasn't saying anything beside crying. I tried to fix his bed for him.

Alupheli: I want to sleep with you and dad.

Me: But baby, your daddy and I need to talk.

Alupheli: You'll shout at each other. I want to sleep with you.

Kuhle: You're not leaving me alone. I will sleep with you too.

Me: You'll stop crying if you want to sleep with us syezwana?

He nodded quickly and wiped his tears. I took a face cloth that was on his drawer. I wiped his face. I stood up with him. I looked at Mesuli.

Me: If you want to sleep with us, you'll have to leave that PSP. Your father won't let you play it while we're sleeping.

He nodded and left it behind. I switched off the lights in their rooms and we went to my room. Their father was inside the bathroom. I tucked them in bed. I slept next to Alupheli. He touched my face. He was brushing it. He whispered.

Alupheli: Siyahamba kusasa. Siya eKapa mama. (We're going to the Cape mom tomorrow) Did dad tell you?

Me: (whispering back) Yes he told me baby.

Alupheli: There'll be a tent and sizogida. It will be nice angithi?

Kuhle: Stop whispering guys.

We didn't stop.

Me: Yes and they'll be lots and lots of food.

Alupheli: I will eat and eat. You'll wear like a Makoti with your doek on your head?

Me: Yes baby. I will. What do you want to wear?

Alupheli: My suit. And a tie.

Me: But it's not a wedding nje Ndunakazi.

Alupheli: I will wear a maskandi outfit.

Me:(laughing) Yes and you'll look handsome like your father.

He smiled and kissed my nose. We were whispering all this time. Samkelo came back from the bathroom.

Kuhle: Daddy, mom and Alupheli are gossiping.

Samkelo: Who said I want you in my bed first of all?

Kuhle: Hah! Usuyaphoxana nawe.

Alupheli: Straight answer syndrome please Mesuli.

Samkelo: I was asking both of you not Scelokuhle only.

Alupheli: Hah!

Kuhle: We wanted to sleep here.

Samkelo: That's not the answer to my question.

Alupheli: Nobody said you want us in your bed. We invited ourselves daddy.

I looked at him and he shrugged his shoulders.

Alupheli: It's a straight answer.

Samkelo: Get up and go back to your room.

They pretended like they didn't hear him and they decided to just snore. I laughed.

Me: Umsindo nina. I will kick you out of my room if you'll do that.

They stopped. Samkelo joined us in bed.

Samkelo: Niyakhahlelana ninjalo nje. I can't even hold my wife because you two are here.

Alupheli: Hold Mesuli. I will hold her for you.

He said that holding me with his tiny hands. I smiled.

Samkelo: Ngizokuphoxa wena. Who said talk.

Alupheli giggled, he closed his eyes and said: Goodnight family.

Mesuli quickly replied: Goodnight Alupheli, goodnight mom and dad.

Samkelo and I looked each other, we both sighed and said: Goodnight kids.

He then shifted close to me and he kissed my forehead.

Samkelo: Goodnight I love you.

Me: Good night baby. I love you.

We switched off the lights, leaving the bedside lamp on and we drifted off to dreamland.

In the morning I woke up and made breakfast for them. As I was busy I remembered that I had to call Muzi. I called him and he answered.

Muzi: Morning Mrs Ndunakazi.

Me: Morning Mr Zulu, how are you?

Muzi: I am fine thank you and you?

Me: I am alright. Mr Ndunakazi didn't allow me to go but we are going to Gugulethu this afternoon. I will see what I can do.

Muzi: How about I send someone, you'll direct them on the phone. Tell them what kind of a person you're looking for and where can they get that person. That way we will save time because we're running out of time.

Me: Okay, so this person will bring the boy back to KZN?

Muzi: Yes and you'll meet him when you come back. That way you won't have to sneak out because I think your husband will be watching your moves.

Me: Okay thanks partner. I will keep in touch with that person once you tell me who are you sending.

Muzi: Okay. Have a good day makoti.

Me: Thanks you too. Bye.

Muzi: Bye.

I was relieved that I wasn't going to do the sneaking out in my in-laws house. I finished up the breakfast feeling very hopeful that everything was going according to plan. I was humming a song while setting up the table.

Samkelo: Somebody is in a good mood.

Me: Morning my husband.

I smiled and kissed him. He smiled and looked at me.

Me: I am sorry about last night. I didn't mean to come home late.

Samkelo: Okay but that doesn't mean I am saying you should go.

Me: It's alright I won't. We will go together.

Samkelo: And you ain't going to leave at home to attend your business while you are supposed to be with the family.

Me: I promise I won't.

Samkelo: Okay I forgive you. By the Alondwe is angry and she's not taking my calls. I told my brother to go and fetch her so that she can also be there for her aunt's ceremony.

Me: Okay, no problem. Please eat your breakfast. Otherwise you'll be late for work.

Samkelo: Thanks baby.

He sat down and I blessed the food. I sat down with him. I didn't wake the boys because I remembered that they weren't going to school.

Samkelo: Who is this boy who impregnated Alondwe?

Me: Sphephelo. The one who asked her to be his partner.

Samkelo: Tsk! He has the nerve. We will deal with him when we come back. Alondwe won't tell us what to do and what not to do.

Me: Alright, I will call his mom on Sunday and request a meeting with her.

Samkelo: Please do that.

I nodded and we continued eating. He finished up and I walked him out. I wished a good day after kissing him and he left. My day began as the boys woke up I went upstairs to pack up our bags. Muzi e-mailed the details of the person he was sending on my behalf. Everything was going well. Alondwe wasn't taking any of my calls too. The day went by really fast because the boys and I were busy preparing for our trip. In the afternoon we were waiting for Samkelo when I decided to call Uyathandwa and tell him I want to see him as I was going to be in Cape Town. Finally my husband came home with his friend Phumlani who was going to drive us to the Airport. It was going to be a loooong weekend with me being a Makoti! And doing all the chores. Oh Lord

3rd Person Narrator

Themba was clueless about what to do next. He had no idea about who must have an agenda with him that they wanted him dead. He wanted to clear his head. He called Cikizwa. She didn't answer her phone. He thought about talking to his wife about this matter that was bothering him. He then went to their bedroom. His wife was with their daughter, Sisipho.

Themba: "Can I talk to you?"

Kimberly: "About what?"

Themba: "Sisipho baby please go and play with your brother I want to speak to your mother."

Sisipho nodded and left them. Kimberly looked at her husband. Things between them weren't going so well because Themba was distant from his family. Kimberly was beginning to connect with Josh, the lecturer from University of Cape Town. Where she was planning on studying the following year.

Themba: "I know that I haven't been a good husband lately and a good father to our kids. And

for that I am sorry”

Kimberly:”Sorry won’t fix the damage you’ve done in our hearts.”

Themba didn’t say anything. He felt defeated.

Kimberly:”Is that what you wanted to talk about?”

Themba:”No. I wanted to talk about a problem that I have”

Kimberly:”I am listening”

Themba:”There was an assignment that we had to get money from a big company in Durban but our IT guy got exposed”

Kimberly:”What? But how did that happen Themba”

Themba:”I don’t know but I spoke to him and all we could come up with is that someone on the gang must have spied on us. I just don’t know who that might be”

Kimberly:”There’s no one that you did wrong without noticing or something that you did that someone in the gang might have found out but they didn’t confront you?”

Themba:”No there’s -”

He paused and he thought about his affair with Cikizwa. It hit him that someone might have seen them and told his father. And knowing how much Cikizwa’s father didn’t like the idea of him taking over after his father died. He stood up.

Kimberly:”What? What is it?”

Themba:”I have to go. There’s some business that I need to take care of.”

Kimberly: “Themba please -”

He took his phone and left. Another thing that was worrying him was his son. He saw that something wasn’t going right with Uyathandwa. When he spoke to him he wasn’t himself but he was going to follow up on him later. He drove to Cikizwa’s flat. He bribed his way inside because Cikizwa wasn’t taking his calls. He knew his room number. He knocked a several times and Philisiwe, Cikizwa’s roommate opened the door.

Philisiwe:”How can I help you Sir”

Themba:”Where can I get Cikizwa. I have been trying to contact her but she’s not answering my calls.”

Philisiwe:”She left in the morning. I don’t know where she is. But she was going to visit her father later and come back tomorrow”

Themba:”Shit! Please tell her to call me. It’s urgent”

Philisiwe:”Okay. I will tell her”

Themba: “Thank you”

He then left. He was feeling a little bit nervous because if Cikizwa’s father knew about their affair that meant real war for him considering the fact Cikizwa’s father might be behind the shooting that killed his little girl. He was going to get to the bottom of this no matter what. He then went to the park where he sat long and hard about this. He remembered how it didn’t make sense how Thandeka accused her husband Samkelo for the death of Uyabongeka.

Themba:” This means Thandeka knows that I framed her husband”

He felt the heat right there as his mind just went blank.....

\*\*\*\*\*

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay....

The following evening Rajiv and I were on the lounge. We wanted to talk to mom and father about me going to varsity the following year.

Rajiv: My wife is going to start her degree in Education the following year. We wanted to ask for your permission.

Claudine looked at her husband. I knew that meant Claudine doesn’t approve.

Mr Pillay: You don’t have a problem with her going to Varsity Rajiv.

Rajiv: I had promised her before we get married that she will continue studying because her sister was going to pay for her studies next year. So I don’t have a problem with that.

Claudine: It hasn't been a year since you two got married and you're already sending your wife to school. I don't think that's a good idea. At least a year should pass then she can study.

Mr Pillay: I agree with my wife.

Me: I have waited two years for my sister to complete her studies so that she can pay for my studies. I can't wait another year. I want to study please.

Claudine: We can't allow that Precious. Just now we've made a sacrifice for your sister in-law to allow her to work part time. At least one of you must be home and help me.

I looked at Rajiv feeling the burn in my heart because I wanted to cry so bad. Rajiv didn't say anything for a while. He just looked down. I had to speak for myself because he wasn't going to stand up for me.

Me: I know but there's a house keeper in our home mom and I will just go to attend and come back home.

Mr Pillay: we're not against you studying. We just say fulfill your duties as a wife for a year then you can study.

I nodded and stood up. I went to our room crying. I was so heartbroken and I couldn't find a way out. I locked myself up in our bathroom. Rajiv was knocking on the door. I didn't say anything. I sat there alone and I thought about what I was going to do. I couldn't let my life just pass me by because of marriage. I was going to ask my sister to help me...

NotEdited

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

We got to my flat with Thapelo. I was quite nervous about the whole thing considering the fact that the last time he couldn't tell me that I was too loud.

Me: Are you hungry?

Thapelo: Yes, I haven't eaten since morning.

Me: Let me make something fast.

Thapelo: Okay.

Me: You do not have any allergies?

Thapelo: I am allergic to mushrooms.

Me: Okay.

I went to the kitchen. I took out the pies on the freezer and I made them on the microwave. I made juice and took out biscuits. Once they were ready I served him. We blessed the food and we ate.

Thapelo: So little pudding, what is it that you wanted me to help you with?

Me: Uhm... Baby... I will show you after this.

He nodded. I smiled and we finished up eating. I stood up and rinsed the utensils.

Me: Let's go this way.

He nodded and we went to my room. I locked the door.

Me: Please sit on my bed.

I then went to my laptop. I didn't know what to play. But I wanted a crazy song. I didn't want to be all serious. I just thought about the dance that I saw Ciara doing for her husband on his birthday. I just laughed. I laughed really hard.

Thapelo: Little pudding what's going on?

I looked at him and I was even beginning to have tears in my eyes. Thapelo tried to stand up but I stopped him using my hands. I played a crazy song by the dream team – IZASS.

Thapelo looked at me in a strange way. I went to him. I stood in front of him. I took off my Jersey.

Me: Do you know this song?

He smiled and nodded but I could tell he was damn surprised by the whole thing.

Me: I wanted to show you my own izass my Prince. I don't want you looking at other girls

izass.

He was hell laughing and I was laughing too. What I was doing was hell crazy. I was now left with my panties and bra. He eyes were so on fire.

Me: Are you ready?

Thapelo: Yes I am ready my Princess.

He smiled.

I started dancing crazy. My baby wanted to laugh. I couldn't twerk properly because of my tummy but I tried. I was laughing while doing it. He stood up and held my hand, he reached for my lips and kissed me. We kissed each other hungrily. I started undressing him. I was already naked. "I love you" he mumbled in between the kisses. I giggled softly. We were both naked and he started caressing my breasts. He showed me that he wanted us to lay on the floor. I had fluffy carpet on bedroom. He made me lay on back on the floor and he went down on me. I have never seen heaven before but I swear that day I saw heaven, the moon and the stars. My moans were soft and slow. I felt my toes curl up and I released my juices. He stopped and kissed me again.

Thapelo: Baby we don't have a condom. And we have to use it to protect the little one inside. I nodded and I asked him to assist me get up. He did and I went to my aunt's room. I quickly searched for condoms. Luckily I got them and I took two. She had loads of them. I giggled and went back to my room. I looked up and we get down to business. Believe me Thapelo was the one fixing me. It was marvelous. He knew his thing. And he took me there, to that place I can't explain. After our two rounds. We laid back on the couch and looked at the ceiling.

Me: I thought I was the one who was going to fix me but you have just fixed me.

Thapelo:(laughing) Mpendulo told you about the fix?

Me: What? No I asked my friend Nkulu. I knew that he was going to tell me.

Thapelo: You were perfect my little pudding. Thank you.

Me: Thank you.

I kissed his cheek and I rested my head on his chest. I slowly dozed off.

We both woke up as we heard my aunt banging the door. We were still on the floor. Thapelo stood up and assisted me stand up.

Me: (whispering) Shit! Let's put some books on my desk and please mess up the bed so that it can look like we were sleeping.

He nodded and did that quickly. I did my part too. I kicked the condoms and they went under the bed. We wore our uniforms. Thapelo kissed my forehead. The song was still playing.

Thapelo went to the desk and he pretended to be packing up our books. I slowly went to the door as someone who has been dead sleeping. I was yawning all the way to the door. I opened the door. My aunt was looking pissed as hell.

Melo: What's wrong with you? Your parents have been calling you. And you are not answering your phone.

Me: (Yawning) We were taking a nap after studying.

She pushed me and she made her way inside my room. Thapelo was also yawning while packing our books. I went to my laptop and switched off the music.

Thapelo: We are sorry. We didn't mean to sleep but we were writing today and we had to study a few things for our next paper. It wasn't our intentions.

My aunt smiled. She always had a soft spot for Thapelo.

Melo: It's alright as long as Alondwe will be able to explain that to her parents.

Me: I will.

Melo: Okay. Pack your things then Alondwe. Your uncle is coming to fetch you. You're going to Cape Town for the weekend.

Me: Why?

Melo: Your aunt has inqibamasondo. You have to be there.  
Me: Argh that means I have to face mom.  
Melo: Please do that now.  
I nodded. She left us. I assisted Thapelo and I walked him out.  
Thapelo: So you'll come back on Monday?  
Me: I don't know, maybe. I don't know want to go.  
Thapelo: You don't have a choice though baby.  
Me: I know.  
Thapelo: Don't worry you'll be alright.  
I nodded. He hugged me and kissed my forehead. I heard a car hooting on us. It was my father's half brother. He called my name.  
Me: I will see you baby. I love you.  
Thapelo: I love you. Be safe.  
I nodded and I crossed the streets. My uncle was now standing by the entrance of the building.  
Me: Sawubona baba.  
Uncle: Who was that boy?  
Me: He's my classmate.  
Uncle: He's the one who made you not to answer your phone. I have called you more than five times.  
Me: We dozed off while studying.  
Uncle: I hope your father will understand that better.  
Me: Please don't tell my father.  
Uncle: Why? Is he a secret? Or he's More than a classmate.  
Me: No but –  
Uncle: If no, then you have nothing to worry about. Let's go before we miss our flight.  
I nodded, feeling hot. This "fix" just brought trouble for me.

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

We arrived at my in-laws house. My sons were really happy to see their grandparents. Samkelo's father had two sons(which were Samkelo and Njabulo). And one daughter who was going to get married. Her name was Nompumelelo. They were both from Samkelo's stepmother who is married to his father. Samkelo was the only child who was born out of wedlock from another woman. All of them were working. There was a main house that belonged to their parents. Two huts. And a two rooms backroom. The backroom were two bedrooms, one room belonged to Samkelo and the other belonged to his half brother. The boys went to the main house while we went to the backroom. Samkelo unlocked it and we went inside. The room was clean. I sat on the bed. I just didn't like the vibe of being a Makoti.

Samkelo: Baby are you alright?

Me: Yes I am fine.

He sat next to me and held my hand.

Samkelo: Are you angry because I didn't allow you to go yesterday?

Me: No.

Samkelo: So what's wrong?

Me: Nothing is wrong. I am fine. Just call your brother and find out where he is now with my daughter.

Samkelo: Okay.

He stood up and took his phone. He left the room. I took a pillow and placed it on my face. I let out a scream blocking it with a pillow so that they won't hear me screaming. Mesuli

walked in our room running. He was carrying a big piece of roasted chicken.

Mesuli: Mama bayakubiza endlini. (They are calling you mom)

Me: Who is calling me?

Mesuli: Grandma. Ngisahamba siyadla endlini(Let me go. We're eating in the house)

He ran out again. My kids really loved being with their grandparents. Me and Samkelo's stepmother didn't get along sometimes. She wasn't that bad but she had her days. I stood up and I went to the mirror to fix myself. Ngafaka iphinifa and put my phone inside the pocket and I went to the main house. She was in the kitchen.

Me: Sanibona mama. (greetings)

Mrs Ndunakazi: Yebo Makoti. Ninjani?(how are you doing?)

Me: I am alright mama and how are you?

Mrs Ndunakazi: I am fine just busy. Please prepare something to eat for my son(Samkelo) I need you to help me with baking after that.

Me: Yebo mama.

She then left. I greeted other people who were in the kitchen. I prepared food for Samkelo. She always liked doing that whenever we came for a visit, telling me that I must prepare food for my husband as if I don't know that I should. She loved Samkelo like her own children. She also loved our children but she had an agenda with me that started ages ago when I refused to give them juice the time they visited my flat. Since then she never liked me that much. I finished up, my phone rang while I was busy. It was my colleague. I answered.

Me: Hello.

Him: Hello Mrs Ndunakazi how are you doing?

Me: I am alright and you?

Him: I am fine. I wanted to tell you about my progress on finding a guy for you.

Me: I am listening.

Him: I found two boys at different corners of the streets. They both know Themba and they are willing to take part in the assignment. I think I should take them back to to KZN both of them and you'll train them then choose one boy. We can decide what to do with the other boy.

Me: That's a good idea. Thanks. Please take them back and I will see you guys on Monday at the centre.

Him: Okay mam bye.

Me: Bye.

We hung up the call. I called Alupheli. He came to me running.

Me: Where's your father?

Alupheli: He's on the lounge with Grandpa and grandma.

Me: Okay.

He left. I took the tray to him. They were busy talking and laughing. I greeted my father in-law and I served my husband.

Samkelo: Thank you. Alondwe is not answering her phone.

Me: Did you get hold of your brother?

Samkelo: No.

I nodded and went back to the kitchen. I knew that my mother in-law was telling me to bake in different kind of way. She wasn't going to join me. I started baking. My phone rang while I was busy. I took it out and answered it. Njabulo was calling.

Me: Yebo.

Njabulo: Skwiza. Alondwe is not answering her phone. I have been trying for a while now. Can you please send the address of her flat?

Me: I don't know the address. Her father does. Do you have her aunt's number?

Njabulo: Which one?

Me: Melokuhle. Please call her, she lives with her.

Njabulo: Okay.

He hung up. Alondwe was just trouble. I just didn't know what was the meaning of her not answering her phone. What she was doing was making me angry. I stopped doing what I was doing and went to Samkelo. I sat next to him and told him. His father was angry.

Mr Ndunakazi: This is all your fault MaDhlomo. You should've let my granddaughter live with me. Now she's alone in the big city.

Me: She's not alone.

Mr Ndunakazi: Stop back chatting with me.

I didn't say anything. I looked at my boys. Alupheli moved his head showing his brother that they must go outside. They both stood up and made their way to the door.

Samkelo: And then? Where are you two going?

Mesuli: We want some fresh air dad.

Samkelo: Okay.

They left.

Samkelo: Alondwe is being stubborn Thandeka has nothing to do with that.

Mrs Ndunakazi: But we were going to keep a close eye on her if she was here.

Samkelo: She's fine. There's nothing wrong with her ukuth uyeyisa nje qha. Let me call my sister.

I stood up and I left them. God knows I was angry. Alondwe's behavior was making me angry. I finished up baking as angry as I was. Now everyone was worried about Alondwe. I just didn't want to think too much.

I was done baking and I was cleaning up the kitchen when Samkelo came to me. The way everyone was talking about my daughter, it was like they were blaming me for her behavior.

That alone made me angry. They didn't care whether I hear that or not. OAnti bakhona"shuthi nje imkhuba eyibona kunina le" that's all they were saying.

Samkelo: My sister said she was sleeping in her room. They were writing today. Her and her friend went back to the flat to study for the next paper.

I nodded. I didn't say anything. I wasn't convinced with that information. He saw that I wasn't alright he pulled me closer to him and he hugged me.

Samkelo: She'll be alright baby. Let's trust that she knows what is best for her future Okay? I nodded inside his embrace.

Samkelo: I am going to pay for the sheep and come back with it. I will go with the boys. I will come back late.

Me: Okay. Keep a close eye on Thando.

Samkelo: Where are they vele?

Me: Look for them outside.

He nodded and kissed my forehead. I cleaned up the kitchen. Everyone stopped talking about my daughter after my husband had spoken to me. I went to my mother in-law. The time was about 19:15.

Me: I am done with baking mama. What should I do now?

Mrs Ndunakazi: Aybo why didn't you call me. I wanted to bake with you.

Me: I thought you were busy.

Samkelo walked in.

Samkelo: I can't find the boys.

Me: what do you mean you can't find them?

Samkelo: I have looked for them everywhere.

Me: Kodwa Jehova lezi ngane. Ngenzen Nkosi yami.

I walked out of the house and went to the backroom. I just didn't know what was happening with my kids. They were just trouble. I sat in my bed. These kids were just causing chaos.

Samkelo walked in our bedroom.

Me: Samkelo Please don't say anything. Just go out there and look for our kids.  
He sighed and left. I curled up in my bed and prayed. Mesuli was more responsible, I knew that wherever they were Alupheli convinced him. I think I might have fallen asleep because Alondwe was the one who woke me up. I rubbed my eyes and looked at her.

Me: Wena ufuna ngife huh?

Alondwe: No mom. I am sorry. Alupheli and Mesuli are back.

Me: Where are they?

I stood up and I said to her: I will deal with you later.

It was time that I beat them too. I picked out a wet stick and I went inside the house. They were with their grandparents and their fathers. They had lollipops in their hands. They were standing in front of their father. I went to them.

Me: Niphumaphi Nina (Where have you two been?)

Alupheli held his father's arm tightly.

Mr Ndunakazi: Yehlisa umoya Makoti. (Calm down)

Me: Ngizobulawa yizo lezi ngane nokuhlupha. I will beat you up today.

Samkelo: Thandeka –

Me: No!

I was angry man Yesses! I beat them twice, telling them to go outside. I went to the backroom with them. They were both crying.

Me: Speak now! Where have you been?

Mesuli: Alupheli said we must go and look for Alondwe in Johannesburg.

I just got defeated by his response.

Me: Who said she was missing?

Alupheli: You and dad. I thought she didn't want to come here. And Mesuli and I were going to convince her to come if we find her in egoli.

Yazi part of me wanted to laugh but I just didn't know how.

Me: Who brought you back?

Mesuli: The taxi driver called daddy. We gave him his number and daddy fetched us at the rank.

Me: Did you even had money to go to Johannesburg to look for your sister?

Them: No.

Me: Ayi get out of my sight!..... And tell your sister to come to me.

They nodded and left.... I sighed!

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

I was nervous, I knew that he was going to tell my father and that meant trouble for me.

Me: Bab'Omncane you know my dad won't believe you if I tell him what I told you.

Njabulo: I believed you so he will.

I didn't say anything. I went to my room and packed my things. I finished up and I went to the bathroom to take a shower.

Njabulo: Are you going to take a shower?

Me: Yes.

Njabulo: Alondwe! Alondwe! We will miss our flight.

Me: I will be very quick.

I ran inside the bathroom before he could answer me. I couldn't risk not taking a shower.

What if mom smells the fix on my body. No I couldn't deal with that kind of drama. And them together with my grandparents they were going to eat me off! I finished showering and I went back to my room. I moisturised my body fast and I wore black leggings with a white maternity top. I fixed my hair and wore my flip-flops. I took my phone and bags. I went to

the lounge. My aunt was on the phone talking to my Father. She was explaining that I was sleeping. The way that she was talking it seemed like my father was angry. From that moment I had cold feet. I was waiting for her to finish. She finished and sighed.

Me: What did he say?

Njabulo: What do you expect him to say?

Me: Bab'omncane please.

Melo: He understood so you can go now.

Me: Thank you!

I hugged her tightly and whispered: "Don't do anything I wouldn't do". She laughed.

Melo: Just go. I will take care of this place.

Me: Yeah right?

Melo: Alondwe!

Me: Okay! Okay!

I took my bag that had my clothes and gave them to my uncle. He gave me that "what" look. I smiled and he took the bag.

Me: Thank you. Let's go.

He shook his hand as I led the way to the door. I don't know but I was a little happy I was going to visit my family and it was going to be a wonderful weekend. We waited for the cap. It arrived after a few minutes and it drove us to the airport.

After hours. We were finally at home. Everyone was worried when we get there. The vibe wasn't as good as I was hoping it would be. Even when I greeted them they were just cold.

My parents were not around with everyone, so as my brothers. I was hoping and praying in that moment the case wouldn't be about my parents fighting again. I went to my grandfather. I sat next to him.

Me: Mkhulu what's going on?

Grandpa: Ey mntanami. Your brothers are missing.

Me: What?

That came as a shock to me. I didn't know how to feel and what to think. I mean how on earth can they be missing while the yard is full of people. Did they just leave or someone took them?

Grandpa: Your father left. He is looking for them.

Me: And my mom?

Grandma answered: She was just saddened by the whole situation. She is sleeping. She's been crying.

Me: Can I go and see her?

Grandpa: No. Don't wake her up. It's better that she's sleeping now. You'll wake her up once your father brings them home if he finds them.

I nodded, feeling the tears burning in my eyes.

Grandma: Oh. My granddaughter come to me.

I nodded and stood up. I went to her. She made me lay my head on her thighs. She then brushed my back and my tummy. She told me to keep calm and not to think of the worst. My aunt Nompumelelo who was the one who was having inqibamasondo came inside the house.

Nompumelelo: Ibhadi lami yami yazi leli mama. (This bad luck for me)

Grandma: Don't say that.

Nompumelelo: Everyone is supposed to be happy and now my brother's kids are missing.

Grandpa: Hawu naba!

I raised my hand and daddy walked in with them. They both called out my name and ran towards me. I managed to kneel down and hug them.

Me: Where have you guys been?

Alupheli: (sighs) We worried about you. We wanted to go to Egoli and look for you.

Everyone in the house: Hheeh!

Dad sat down.

Dad: I found them on the taxi rank. They took a taxi from here to town. The taxi driver called me because they had no money to pay and still they were asking for directions that will lead them to Johannesburg.

Alupheli: I knew the directions Yoyondwe. We were going to take an aeroplane. But Mesuli said we must ask the driver to make sure that we won't get lost.

Everyone in the house was laughing instead of being angry. Even my dad was just laughing. It was indeed funny but for me it made me feel special knowing I was loved so much by my brothers and they had my back.

Mesuli: We are glad that you are here sisi.

Me: Thank you for trying to look for me. I love you guys.

Them: We love you too.

We made a group hug. It was just sweet and I was happy that they didn't get lost.

Alupheli: Why are you so fat Yoyondwe and a big stomach?

Dad: Okay. Okay. Come here both of you. Alondwe go and call your mom.

I nodded and I went to call. She was asleep so I woke her up. She was angry at me. She left me feeling otherwise. The was beating my brothers I was with daddy on my room that I shared with my aunt when I am with my grandparents.

Daddy: And my calls?

Me: Ayi papa. You're siding with mom. You guys should be on my side but anyway you're against me.

Dad: We're not against you. Every child deserves to be with his father.

Me: His father doesn't want to be in his life daddy and I don't want him too.

Dad: You can't make those decisions for your child Alondwe. That's not the way to start if you want to be a good parent.

Me: Look daddy. I know you were young and you thought you got the game but people did get hurt while you were playing. What you did affected Sphephelo, he got his revenge and I am pregnant for it. That means you're even now.

Dad: No we are not even.

Me: If you tell his foster mom, she will disown him and that will mean he will have to go back to the children's home. Or find the worst foster parents. Now you not that cruel to do that to him right?

Dad: I am not related to him.

Me: Dad! The boy lost his family.

Dad: Okay! Okay! I will speak to your mother and we will see what we can do. But my last word says he has to be part of his child's life.

Me: I may have a heart but this is my baby and I don't want Sphephelo anywhere near him or me. Please mom and dad don't.

My brothers walked in while dad wanted to answer me. They were crying.

Me: Umama akanamusu kodwa sengaze anishaye.

Mesuli: She said we must call you.

Dad: Yelele.

Me: Daddy?

Dad: What? Your mom is calling you.

He picked up Alupheli and told Mesuli to follow him. I made my way to the backroom.....

\*\*\*\*\*

Themba Smith

I was so devastated by the whole thing of not knowing who killed my daughter. But one thing for sure I knew that Thandeka was aware of what I have done to her husband and that meant

she was planning something for me as she hasn't confronted me. I was so clueless. But what I needed to do, was to have a plan just incase I get burned

Thandeka Ndunakazi...

Alondwe came inside the room. I told her to sit down. She did.

Me: Why are you so disrespectful?

Alondwe: What did I do mom?

Me: When you're angry at your parents you don't answer your phone? Did I raise you that way?

Alondwe: You said I shouldn't speak when I am angry because I will end up saying things that I don't mean.

Me: Why were you angry? Because I am trying to do the right thing for my grandson? She didn't say anything. She just looked down.

Me: Ngikhuluma nawe, awusakwazi ukukhuluma?

Alondwe: Ngiyakwazi.

Me: Then talk.

Alondwe: Sphephelo is not the right thing for him. That's all I am going to say.

Me: Who is the right thing for him? Tell me.

Alondwe: I am the right thing for him.

Me: What do you know about raising children?

Alondwe: What does Sphephelo know about raising children.

I slapped her because she was being disrespectful and cheeky. She held her cheek.

Me: You won't talk to me like that.

Alondwe: You asked me a question and I answered you. What more do you want?

I wanted to slap her again because she was making me angry but I didn't.

Me: Lalela ke sisi. As long as usahlala emzini wami, lokho kusho ukuthi awuyena umfazi.

Uyingane. And mina ke ngeke ngizwe ngawe. Ngisho ungaba nomuzi wakho ngeke nje ungitshela ukuthi ngenzeni. (You won't tell me what to do.) You're still under my hand.

She was crying and I couldn't care because she was too full of herself. She thought she could tell me to jump and I would ask how high. I wasn't going to do that. I wasn't going to let my child tell me what to do.

Me: And if you're not studying in Johannesburg and you'll come back with poor marks. I will deal with you. Because I don't know what would make you to sleep and not answer your phone while we're calling you.

Alondwe: I was tired, we were studying.

Me: Studying with who?

Alondwe: With my friend.

Me: What friend because you don't do the same subjects with Nkululeko. What friend?

She didn't say anything.

Me: I am talking to you. Answer me man!

Samkelo:(walking in) I think you need to calm down Thandeka.

Me: This is me being calm Samkelo. Alondwe Ndunakazi I am talking to you. Do you have a boyfriend in Johannesburg?

Samkelo: Thandeka!

Me: Alondwe Owami Samkeliswa Ndunakazi.

Alondwe: No I don't have a boyfriend.

Me: If I ever find out that you have a boyfriend uyobe uzikhiphile kimi syezwana?

Alondwe: Ngiyezwa.

Me: Ngzofika futhi lapho ungalindele khona. (I will come at your place unexpectedly)

Alondwe stood up. And she went to the door slowly.

Me: Ungizwe kahle? (Did you hear me correctly?)

Alondwe: Ufike phela bese uyaquleka. (Come and you will faint)

She then ran away. Her father laughed.

Me: There's nothing funny about all this Samkelo.

Samkelo: Just calm down my love.

He held my cheeks and he kissed me.

Samkelo: Let's enjoy the weekend and forget about the drama Okay?

I nodded and kissed him.....

The following day was the big day for my sister in-law. The previous night we didn't sleep we were working all night. Making sure that we got everything correctly. And in the morning we had to get ready. Her in-laws were also from Gugulethu so we weren't going to drive a long way. Around 10am. Everything was set and we were on the road. My husband and I were on caramel yellow and brown attire. My boys were on their maskandi outfit as Alupheli had said. They were all beautiful. My daughter was wearing white and brown attire. Her grandmother made it for her. We went there early because there was going to be an engagement party afterwards. Her day was beautiful and a huge success. It was beautiful to see young people in love and committing to each other. We went back home late. And before going to bed. I had to clean my mother in-law's house because in the morning I was meeting up with my son.

By 11am I was outside the mall waiting for Uyathandwa. As soon as I saw him. I met him halfway. I wasn't pleased with what I was seeing.

Me: Are you eating?

Uyathandwa: Not even a hug mom?

Me: I am sorry baby.

I hugged him and kissed his cheek. He didn't protest this time. He just smiled. I smiled too.

Me: Okay, back to my question. Are you eating. Look at you. You're slim and your pants don't fit well. Your eyes are swollen and have red shades on the eye bags. What is wrong?

Uyathandwa: Can we get the shades first and we can talk?

Me: Okay! Okay! Let's go.

He smiled. He held my hand and we walked in to mall. The way he was holding my hand it was like he was clingy. Something was not right with him. Firstly he agreed when I kissed him and he didn't have a problem with holding my hand. We were at Markham. He had taken the shades, but we were picking up a few other things that he liked.

Me: So my baby how is your relationship with your father going?

Uyathandwa: I don't want to talk about dad.

I didn't say anything. We went to pay and we made our way to his favourite restaurant.

Uyathandwa: Why didn't you come with Alondwe?

Me: I wanted to spend some time with you alone.

Uyathandwa: Thanks.

He kept making this irritating sound with his nose that a person does when they have mucus.

Me: Stop doing that with your nose you know I don't like it.

Uyathandwa: I am sorry. Can I go to the bathroom.

Me: Okay.

He stood up with his backpack. He always liked carrying it around even if it didn't have nothing.

Me: No! No! Leave the bag.

Uyathandwa: Mom?

Me: Leave it!

He nodded and left. I shook my head. I took the plastic bag with his clothes. I wanted to put it inside his bag because it had nothing obviously. I opened the bag and I saw a plastic bag with

white powder in it. A CD container and R10 note. I took the cocaine because it was clear as day light to me that my son was doing drugs. I quickly placed everything as it was and I sat still. I didn't want him to see that I saw his drugs. When he came back I told him that I have changed my mind I wanted takeaways. We got the takeaways and we drove to his father's house.

Uyathandwa: Dad is not home. It's Sunday today and they are at church.

Me: That means we will have more privacy.

We arrived at his father's house. I was really angry. No one was around. He wanted to go his room and I allowed him. I went outside to look for a strong wet stick. I was going to beat the crap out of him. I got the stick and I made my way to his room. He was busy searching for something in his bag.

Me: Looking for this?

I showed it to him and he was shocked.

Uyathandwa: Mom I can explain.

Me: You're doing drugs now huh?

I went to him and started beating him. He was crying saying he is sorry. I eventually got tired and sat down. I cried, I was hurt and it was painful to me that my sweet baby boy was doing drugs. I felt like I have let him down.

Me: I was there Uyathandwa. Just a phonecall away. If it was too much you were supposed to call me and talk to me. Me! Your mother.

Uyathandwa: I am sorry mom.

I just cried.....

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

I sat there crying, feeling helpless and regret the actions that I took years ago that made Themba to take my kids. Haven't I chested on my husband none of this would've happened. Uyabongeka was still going to be alive and Uyathandwa wasn't going to take any drugs. I had no one to blame but myself. All my life I have taken bad decisions and they are now affecting my children's future.

Me: Come here Ethan.

Uyathandwa: You'll beat me up again?

Me: No I want us to talk.

He slowly made his way to me and we both sat down on his carpet.

Me: Why did you do it?

Uyathandwa: The pain didn't want to end. It just couldn't. Nothing was helping mama. Missy is gone and I will see her again.

He cried like a baby. I held him close to me.

Me: Do you think that she'll be happy to see you like this? Doing drugs?

Uyathandwa: I know that she would be angry and disappointed in me.

Me: I am also disappointed Uyathandwa. We can never replace Uyabongeka's place. She'll always be in our hearts. I know it's more hard on you because she was more closed to you and she was your annoying playmate. (he nodded and laughed a little) but don't let her down Baby.

Uyathandwa: I don't understand dad. He doesn't care about us. We all loved our sister but he just shut us out. I tried to get through to him so that we can go through pain together but he didn't avail himself for us. Sisipho is still young. She hardly understand why God had to take Uyabongeka. And dad is emotionally and physically distant from us. We need him but he doesn't need us. How was I supposed to escape that alone?

Me: I know it's hard. I understand what you're going through because I am going through the same thing. Your grandfather and your uncle they have cut me off their lives. The last day I

saw them was when we buried your sister. Since then I have never heard from them. Even if I call them they don't answer.

Uyathandwa: What? Why mom?

Me: I don't know what I did to them to deserve the treatment I am getting from them. What your father is doing to you guys is wrong and I called him and told him. I am sorry that you went through this alone. But drugs are not a solution. They'll damage your future. And you'll be nothing in life. Just because your father and I have money that doesn't mean that wealth is yours. We also created our own wealth by working hard. It wasn't easy making it to the top specially for me because I had kids while studying. You have to work for your own wealth. Yes if we die we can leave you with a portion of our fortune but it is not easy to save the money that you didn't work for. And with drugs baby you won't make it to the top. Drugs are a bad disease that takes a lot of time to shake off.

Uyathandwa: I want to stop using mom.

Me: We will help you. Don't worry. But I have to let you know that next year you're staying with me.

Uyathandwa: But –

Me: No questions asked. I am taking you. I will let you finish your exams and I will come to take you. You'll stay with me till you are old enough to make your own decisions. I won't have a 15years old son who will die because of drugs do you understand?

Uyathandwa: Yes mom. I understand.

Me: How long have you been using?

Uyathandwa: Just a few weeks.

Me: We have to take you to the Doctor who will help you get cleaned up because it hasn't been too long you're not desperate for rehab.

Themba walked in while we were still talking. I still had the packet of cocaine in my hands.

Themba: And then? What's going on? Thandeka is that what I think it is?

Me: What do you think it is?

Themba: Don't answer a question with a question. What are you doing with that thing in my house in front of my son.

Uyathandwa held my arm tightly. Themba was taking a few steps closer to us.

Me: So now he's your son? You didn't see that when you were neglecting him.

Themba: Don't make me angry more than I am. Are you exposing my son to drugs huh? His mom and his wife came to the room because he was shouting. In that moment I had no strength to fight with Themba. Uyathandwa was scared of him and he was even shaking. I couldn't hide the fact that he was using drugs from his father because he was going to need help when I am gone. Themba was the only who could help him. I stood up Uyathandwa stood up with me.

Kimberly: Sisipho is sleeping please try to keep it down.

Mrs Smith: What's going on?

Themba: She brought drugs in my house. I am calling the police. (Taking out his phone)

His mom and wife: What!?

Me: Don't you dare call the police. I told you stop neglecting our son but you wouldn't listen. I was trying to make you see that you will make him go through what you went through when you were young but you didn't listen to me. Now he started using drugs right under your nose. Haven't I come here he was going to die because of drugs. He's only 15yrs Themba. The rage mixed with disappointment on his face was too much. He came to us with full force aiming to beat the crap out of Uyathandwa but I blocked him with double hot slap. I was hell mad!

Themba: You're defending him?

Me: What do you want to do to him? You want to kill him ngesibhakela? (With your Fist)

Themba: Let me discipline my son Thandeka.

Me: You will do no such thing! He doesn't need discipline he needs help.

Themba: You're using drugs Ethan junior huh?

He tried to get to him using his hand but he couldn't because Uyathandwa was behind me. He was crying.

Uyathandwa: I am sorry dad.

Themba: You're sorry?

Mrs Smith: This is all your fault Themba. My grandson had no one because you neglected them. How could you blame him, blame your behavior.

Themba: I guess I learned that from you mom. You did the same with me when my sister died.

Mrs Smith: So what? That means you should punish your children for our sins. Is that what you trying to say?

His mother was crying. It was painful to her I could see through her eyes. I didn't want them to fight their past battles in front of my son. His wife was just quiet.

Me: I am taking my son to the Doctor. You can resolve your issues after we have left.

Themba: I am coming with you.

Me: You should resolve your issues with your mom.

Themba: There's nothing to resolve.

Me: We're not riding with you.

Themba: I won't beat him up.

I nodded and held Uyathandwa's hand. We made our way to my father in-law's car that I was driving. Uyathandwa took the front seat. I drove to the hospital with Themba sitting at the back seat. He had his hands on his face. I knew he was thinking deeply.

Nobody said anything in the house until we made it to their family doctor. The Doctor examined him and he asked him a few questions. After that he told us that he wasn't in them deep. He gave him medication to help him with the craving for drugs and help cope.

Themba: Doctor can we take him to Rehab?

Me: No! You're not doing that to him.

Doctor: I agree with his mother. Rehabilitation is for people who are deeply rooted in drugs. All he need is your love, care and support. Or even psychological help if you're failing to help him.

We agreed with the Doctor and we left afterwards.

Me: Are you willing to see a therapist baby?

Uyathandwa: Yes mom.

Me: Oh my baby. Don't cry now.

I hugged him tightly.

Themba: You're being soft on him.

Me: Shut up Themba! And just so you know I am taking him after his exams.

Themba: That's bullshit. You will do no such thing.

Uyathandwa: I want to live with mom now.

Me: There, he said it.

Themba didn't say anything. He looked outside the window.

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

It was really brave of me to use that line on mom. "Ufike phela bese uyaquleka" like I really meant it though. After that I ran away. Like really I didn't want her to plan surprise visits on me like she's my social worker. Like who does that on their kids. I went to the backroom and laughed. I took out my phone and it had no missed calls nor texts from Thapelo. . I didn't call him too. I just made my way to the house. I bumped into my dad on my way to the main

kitchen. He looked at me and laughed. I didn't understand why he was laughing but I laughed with him.

Me: Why are you laughing?

Dad: Ukufunda kuphi ukweyisa? (Where did you learn being rude?)

Me: Dad? What did I do now?

Dad: Come and you will faint?

I looked at him and we both laughed. He held my shoulder and we laughed so hard. It was so good and I didn't expect all that from my father. I mean he was more cool than mom. Mom was on fire!

Mom: (behind us) Niyahleka kumnandi?(You're laughing. It's a good time)

Dad and I immediately stopped laughing. I tried to shift. I wasn't ready for another slap. My mom can release electric slaps and they will leave you dizzy.

Dad: No baby we are laughing at Pirate's 6 – 1 score.

That gave me a more power to laugh. Mom gave me a dead stare. I stopped immediately.

Mom: You're laughing Samkelo. Why would you laugh at your team?

Me: Our team mom? Dad and I support Sundowns not Pirates.

Dad: You are the one who likes pirate Baby.

Mom: So you're laughing at me?

Dad: What!? No! Let's go and watch the game it's almost eight o'clock baby.

Mom: No she's not doing that. She must help me with the kitchen chores.

Dad: No. She'll help you after the game. Come Nana.

You don't know how happy I was to hear dad say that. My dad and I, We are the big fans of soccer. Dad held my hand and we went inside the house. Mom called us.

Dad: I love you too Nanesh.

We went to watch soccer. It was me, granddaddy, daddy, Alupheli, Mesuli and Njabulo. The ladies in the house complained about me not helping them but my grandfather and dad protected me and told them that I will help after the game. My heart was dancing gwara gwara dance. It was so nice and refreshing to be with my family. Specially my grandfather, dad and brothers. After the game I went to clean up the kitchen and I went to bed leaving them still working. My grandmother told me to go and sleep. I checked my phone again and Thapelo didn't contact me. I didn't contact him either. I fell asleep sad.

The following day was a good day for my aunt and the day was successful.

On Sunday I woke up and checked my phone. Thapelo was online but he didn't greet me. I sent him a text.

{Me:} "You didn't forget to change your profile picture and your status message but you forgot to greet me and check up on me?!"

{Him:} "I am sorry little pudding. I thought you were busy. I didn't want to disturb you"

I read the text and I didn't respond. I logged off. He called me after a few minutes but I didn't answer. I wasn't going to settle for less than what I deserve. Who knows how he was going to treat me during December holidays if he had the nerves of not checking up on me. I should be treated like a princess nothing less than that! I was angry at him. Hebanaa. I wasn't in a part time relationship, check on me someday and don't check on me sometimes. I know it's a relationship but it's his duty to show me love, care, and protection. I left my phone ringing and I went to shower. I had breakfast with my family. Enjoying their jokes about people who were on my aunt's ceremony. My mom had left to meet up with my brother. During the day I went to the stokvel meeting with my grandmother. When we came back granddad was going out with my brothers. I joined them in the car and grandpa drove off.

Alupheli: Why do you have a big stomach Yoyondwe?

Me: There's a lot of food in my stomach.

He laughed and I laughed too. Mesuli was playing a game on his PSP. Grandpa took us to get

some MacDonald's burgers.

Mesuli: Why are you eating Alondwe because you said you have a lot of food in your stomach?

I didn't know what to say to him.

Alupheli: Yeah. Awumbuze mfethu.

Grandpa: Aniyekeni umzukulu wami Nina. (Leave my granddaughter alone)

I smiled at him. They stopped asking questions and we enjoyed our meal. My phone rang, daddy was calling. I answered.

Me: Daddy?

Daddy: Where are you, you'll be late for your flight.

Me: We're eating at McDonald with grandfather.

Daddy: Heeh! Uma senidla nidla nodwa (If you're eating, you eat alone)

Me: Sorry. Nophiko.

Daddy: Have you packed everything in your bag. I will take them, come there and drive you to the airport. You will miss your flight.

Me: Yes, everything is in there. Thanks. But I won't say goodbye to mom?

Dad: Sure. She's not back yet. I will tell her to call you.

Me: Okay.

He hung up and I told grandfather what he said. My brothers were sad that I was leaving. After that we went to wait for dad at the parking lot. He arrived after a few minutes. Mesuli couldn't keep his eyes off me.

Dad: Umbukani kanje usisi wakho Scelokuhle. (Why are you looking at your sister like that?)

Mesuli: No dad take her to the Doctor so that he can drain the food that is on her stomach. My sister is ugly now.

Alupheli: Oh damn Mesuli, you said it. Alondwe will cry. (He placed his hands on his waist and looked at dad) But dad our sister is way too ugly now. Help her.

Me: Daddy stop them.

I was crying already and my dad wanted to laugh.

Grandpa: I said leave my granddaughter alone. Get in the car and let's go.

They shook their heads and said: Bye bye.

Me: Mxm! Bye bye mkhulu.

I hugged grandpa. I took my bag and went to the car that dad was driving. Dad followed me behind. He then drove me to the airport. He saw that I wasn't in the mood for small talks so he wasn't talking. We arrived at the airport. We hugged each other.

Dad: Don't worry Nana, you're still beautiful they were just messing up your head.

I pouted. He gave me cash and my ticket. I thanked him. He kissed my forehead.

Dad: I love you. Go to school and study Okay?

Me: Yes daddy. I love you too.

We hugged once more and I left.

After hours I was in Johannesburg. I passed by the mall because I wanted a few things. While I was shopping I saw uncle Andile. He was shopping alone. I passed him by and I didn't even greet him.

Andile: Alondwe awungiboni nje ngoba ungabingeleli? (Don't you see me as you're not greeting me)

Me: Niyathandwa bo ukubingelelwa nokubonwa in public like syazana. Well angikuboni ke we andile Dhlomo. (No I don't see you)

I left him like that. He deserved no respect from me. Not after what they did to my mom.

Respect is earned! And it's a two way street.

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay.....

It's been a week since I came back from home. There was no convincing my in-laws to let me study. I was out of options. But as days went by I thought of studying at Unisa. I wasn't going to tell anyone about it. But I was going to need my sister's help to pay for my fees. I wasn't going to give up though. I wasn't feeling well, I don't know if I was sick or what but something was not right with me. Sometimes I had blurry visions and I would feel dizzy. Maybe it was because I was working hard and nobody was helping me out. I didn't tell my husband about my health. Things between me and him weren't so good. A part of me was regretting getting married. I should have studied First and think about marriage afterwards. Marriage is not a bad thing or a trap don't get me wrong but with people like Claudine as your in-laws it's very hard and there's nothing to be happy about. It's better to get married if you know that it will be you and your husband in Your house but living with in-laws like Claudine, it's hard. I was in my bedroom, I had just got off the phone with mom. I wanted her to give me my sister's new number. She sent it to me after a few minutes. I dialed it and it rang. She answered.

Philisiwe: Hlehle?

Me: Hey Philisiwe How are you?

Philisiwe: I am fine and you?

Me: I am not alright. I need to talk to you.

Philisiwe: I am listening.

Me: I need your help. You promised to pay for my fees right?

Philisiwe: Yes, before you get married I promised that. Now that you're married you're no longer my problem your husband should pay for your tuition fee.

Me: What? But Philisiwe they don't want me to study next year so I was going to ask you to pay for my tuition fee. I will apply at Unisa. It will be easier for me because I won't have classes to attend. Please.

Philisiwe: I have two kids on the way and I have to look after our parents and brother. So I can't help you. You should've thought of your education first before you rush into marriage. That Indian boy must pay for your fees.

Me: I can't spend another year without studying.

Philisiwe: Well it seems like you have to spend another year being a house wife. Sorry but you're no longer my problem. You're not a Mthembu anymore. Bye I have to go back to work.

She dropped the call on me. I just cried. It was too much and I didn't expect her to neglect me like that just because I was married. Rajiv walked in while I was crying. He came to me and held me closer to him but I yanked myself out of his embrace.

Rajiv: Precious why are you crying?

Me: It's none of your business.

Rajiv: It's my business. You're my wife.

Me: I am your wife but you can't stand up for me to your parents. I want to study.

Rajiv: I promise I will pay for your fees but you'll have to obey their decision.

Me: Am I married to them? Huh?

Rajiv: No you're not but baby, it's how things are done in our home. We can't change things.

Me: I don't want to live here anymore. Can we go back to your flat. I don't want to stay here. I am not free here.

He didn't say anything. He looked down and placed his hands on his face. I wiped my tears.

Rajiv: My father want us here.

Me: I think I made a mistake.

Rajiv: What do you mean?

Me: I shouldn't have married you. I can't stand all this. Your stepmother doesn't want me

here.

Rajiv: That's not true.

Me: You're not here during the day. I work like a slave while they are doing nothing with your aunts and your brother's wife. I can't stand that.

Rajiv: That's not true, we have a maid here. How come you say you're doing everything on your own.

Me: Why should I answer that question because you have already told me that I am lying. It's okay Rajiv stand with your family.

I stood up and left the room. I wanted to go sit on the garden and have some fresh air. I bumped into my mother in law.

Claudine: You haven't done the ironing for me, my husband and your aunts.

Me: The maid said she will do it.

Claudine: I told her to take some days off. It's almost time for the holidays so I let her go. Please do it now.

I nodded and I made my way to the laundry room. It was a load not just one load. But I had no choice nobody was going to do it for me.

By the time I was done my back was hurting. I sat down on the chair. I was catching my breath. My phone rang. My mom was calling. I answered.

Me: Mama?

Mom: Your sister told me what you said.

Me: Oh. Don't say anything else mom because I know you'll tell me to obey my in-laws. To do what they say.

Mom: You chose that life for yourself.

Me: That doesn't mean that my dreams should take a stop while I am busy Washing curtains, cleaning, ironing and cooking?

Mom: A year is nothing just be patient.

Me: Can I go back to my chores.

Mom: It's 20:30 now and you're doing chores?

Me: That's what they want.

Mom: Oh, baby don't work hard it's not good for your condition.

Me: Goodnight mom.

I don't know what condition she was talking about and I didn't care to ask. I just wanted to go and sleep. I was going to pack their things in the morning. I went to the kitchen, they had supper without me and I couldn't care less. I made my own meal. I was tired of eating spicy food. My sister walked in while I was eating.

Nadine: Hey where have you been. I looked for you everywhere inside the house and your husband had no idea where you were?

Me: I was in the laundry room.

Nadine: Okay, what are you eating there. Please share.

I laughed and removed my dish from the table. She laughed too. She sat next to me and told me about her day while eating my food.

Nadine: Why are you eating something different to what we were having?

Me: I didn't feel like it.

Nadine: Too spicy for you?

Me: Yes.

Nadine: You'll get used to it.

We laughed. She made a quick dessert snack and we ate it together.

Nadine: I don't have classes tomorrow. I want us to go shopping during the day.

Me: I will be helping you because there's nothing that I can shop.

Nadine: Come on, some lingerie.

We laughed. We had a great chat then I went to bed. I was too tired to take a shower. My husband was already asleep.

\*\*\*\*\*

3rd Person Narrator.

Themba was addressing his gang about Thandeka. They were on the warehouse.

Themba: "So as I was saying, we shouldn't underestimate my ex wife. I know that she knows that I framed her husband and she will not let me go just like that"

Cikizwa's father: "We've been here for too long to be shaken by a woman just a woman. Come on"

Others: "Yeah! Yeah!"

They made noise trying to show that they are not scared.

Themba: "Okay! Okay! All I am saying is, let's watch out for anything suspicious. And we might need new members in the gang. We need money since we lost that million rand. We will meet again to plan how we will recruit them"

They all agreed to that. And they left. Themba tried to call Cikizwa again but she wasn't taking his calls. He really needed to talk to her about his suspicions....

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

It was a Monday morning. We came back home the previous day which was Sunday. I was exhausted, I wasn't going to work. I wanted to rest just a little. I was going to see the boys from Cape Town the following day. I woke up in the morning as usual and prepared breakfast for my family. I finished up in time and I went to wake them up. I started with husband. I shook his shoulder.

Me: Baby. Wake up it's Monday.

Samkelo: No I am not going to work.

Me: Eh! Who's going to drive the boys to school? Mesuli is writing English language today.

Samkelo: They have a mother nje.

Me: But I want to sleep too.

Samkelo: I am sorry you shouldn't have allowed me to make you pregnant. Just drive them to school.

I just got defeated. My husband is something else, no wonder Alupheli is like this. He takes after him just that he is hiding himself. I dragged my feet to the boys bedroom. They were still sleeping. I didn't like these moments where I had to wake them up. But hey I had no choice. I opened the curtains and the sun rays lightened up their room.

Mesuli: Mom! Please.

Me: It's Monday please wake up.

Alupheli: There's no holiday today?

Me: No. Wake up.

I went to Alupheli and removed the blankets. Mesuli reluctantly got off his bed. I picked Alupheli up and I went to bath him. After that I dressed him up. His brother was done. He was already having breakfast. I fed Alupheli.

Mesuli: Where's dad?

Me: He's sleeping?

Alupheli: Why is he sleeping while we're awake?

Me: He took a day off. Hurry up I will drive you guys to school.

They looked at each other and nodded. We finished up. They went to take their bags. I gave them their lunch boxes and we left. We arrived by their school and I gave them pocket money.

Me: Goodbye boys. Have a good day.

Them: Bye to you too mom.

Me: Good luck on your English exam my baby.

Mesuli: Thanks mom.

Alupheli: And me?

Me: You got an English exam too?

Alupheli: Yes.

Me: Okay good luck to you too baby.

Alupheli: Thank you. Love you mommy.

Me: I love you too boy.

They walked inside the school premises. I drove back home. When I arrived at home. I made my way to my bedroom and I joined my husband in bed. He moved closer to me. He held me and kissed my neck.

Me: Baby. I am trying to sleep please hold it.

Samkelo: Just one silly lazy round to say you missed Ndunakazi this weekend.

Me: I am tired.

Samkelo: Don't speak.

He slowly removed my pyjama short while rubbing on my nipples with one hand and the other was stimulating my clitoris. My breath quickened right away and he gave me a good lazy spooning sex. It was amazing because after that I slept like a baby.

A WEEK LATER.... I told my husband about my son's behavior and he wasn't happy about it, so was I. At times I would think about what he was going through and my heart would break. I checked up on him more just to hear how he was doing. He was better and he told me that his father didn't beat him up. I also asked Themba about his progress, Themba was still angry at the whole thing but he promised me that he was keeping a close eye on him. And his grandmother too promised me to look after him. I wasn't ready to lose another child. No! My week has been very busy because I was training the boy. I wanted him to go back to Cape Town immediately. It wasn't hard to teach him how to defend himself because he was the boy from the streets he knew how this thing was done. Our plan was that he was going to walk close by the gang members of Themba's gang because they recruit randomly. If they see potential. Our IT lady Camille had done her research accurately. The boy was leaving on Tuesday. Which was the following day. I didn't want to give him too much training because they were going to be suspicious. I was with him in my office when my phone rang. It was an unsaved number. I answered.

Me: Hello.

Caller: Is this Mrs Thandeka Ndunakazi?

Me: Yes it's her.

Caller: It's Detective Mthembu handling your daughter's murder case.

Me:(I swallowed hard) uhm how can I help you?

Detective: I wanted to let you know that bail hearing for our prime suspect that we got on cells is on Monday. This coming week. I will email you the details.

Me: Uhm. Okay thanks.

Detective: my pleasure. Have a good evening.

Me: You to detective. Thanks.

We hung up. I asked the boy to give me space i wanted to be alone. He left. I caught my breath as tears voluntarily gushed out of my eyes. I didn't want to face that person who killed my child from that moment I realised what Alondwe didn't want to go through when she says she doesn't want to face Sphephelo. I called my husband and he answered. He was the only person I could call.

Samkelo: Baby? I am preparing myself for a meeting

Me: (crying) They are – they – my – daughter- Samkelo.

Samkelo: Okay. Okay. I am coming right now baby. The meeting can wait.

He hung up and I cried trying to get myself a glass of water.

\*\*\*\*\*

3rd person narrator.

On the other hand Cikizwa's father was a bit shaken by Themba's sudden concern about Thandeka. He was struggling to come up with a plan of warning Thandeka and her husband. Cikizwa's father: {speaking alone} It would be best if I call Thandeka's husband and tell him that Themba knows that they are planning revenge.

There was nothing he could do then to call Samkelo...

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay....

I woke up the following day my husband was not beside me. It was a weekend so he wasn't working. Everyone was not working on weekends that's where I had a break because Garry's wife was also helping me with chores. I wasn't doing them alone since everyone was home. I woke up and I went to the bathroom. I took a shower and I moisturised my body. I was in my bedroom looking at my body on the mirror. My nipples were a bit darker than before. I just didn't like the changes in my body. Maybe it was change in food but they were irritating. And the ass looked like it was growing bigger. Every morning when I have to wear my sari I was reminded that I won't be able to rock jeans and leggings. I won't be able to go down. Ngike ngithi ukudansa ivosho kancane. I laughed at my thoughts. I was now on my panties and bra. I looked at myself in the mirror and I did a little moves. God knows how I like dancing. I laughed and took my phone. I played the song "Imali-by black motion" I danced. I was a bad singer but a good dancer. When Philisiwe and I used to go to Eyadini I would dance while she looks at me because she couldn't dance. Those were good times of my youth. But now hey I am wife. I wasn't playing the music too loud. I was just having my own fun and laughing while doing it. I was getting up from doing ivosho when I realised that my husband was looking at me with a smile on his face. I stopped dancing and switched off the music on my phone.

Rajiv: I didn't say stop.

Me: I was finishing so there's no need for you to say that.

Rajiv: I didn't know you can dance.

Me: Yeah. I was trying to create my own fun.

Rajiv: Are you sure this is not the reason you complain about being tired?

Me: No as I was saying I was trying to create my own fun.

Rajiv: I am sorry I have been too busy that I didn't have time to spend with you.

Me: Okay.

Rajiv: But beginning of December we are going to Cape Town just the two of us.

Me: I will be happy when I see that happening.

He came closer to me and he held my hand. He saw that I wasn't too excited about what he was telling me. I didn't want to be too excited what if his parents say "No don't go" then all my happiness would be for nothing.

Rajiv: What's wrong my Queen?

Me: Ever since we got married you have changed.

Rajiv: How?

Me: You're less fun now and you're just too focused on work. You're leaving me with boredom. Is this how you plan my year without studying to be? Having a busy husband who doesn't have time to make me happy?

Rajiv: No. I am sorry my love. I was still settling in at work as a permanent employee. I don't want you to feel neglected. I am really sorry.

He hugged me tightly. For a moment that felt alright. You know those type of hugs that makes your heart be at ease. We let go after some time and he kissed my forehead.

Rajiv: Can I take you out today?

Me: I have already promised Nadine that I will go with her for shopping. But we can go when I come back. Because tomorrow we're going to the temple with mom Claudine.

Rajiv: Okay. We will go when you come back. Let me help you dress up.

I smiled and nodded. He helped dress up. We finished up and he combed my hair. He tied them up and covered them nicely.

Me: You don't have to cover them now. There's no Claudine around.

We both laughed.

Rajiv: It doesn't matter. Go and have breakfast.

Me: Who made breakfast?

Rajiv: My sister and I made breakfast this morning.

Me: How nice of you.

Rajiv: Trying to be a good husband.

Me: Oh yah.

I kissed him and I went to have breakfast after greeting everyone. After breakfast, Nadine, Priya and I did the house chores. After we were done Nadine and I took our handbags. Rajiv was driving us to gateway. On our way to the main door Claudine called Nadine.

Nadine: Mummy?

Claudine: Why are you leaving your brother's wife behind?

Nadine: But I am with my brother's wife mom.

Claudine: I am talking about Priya.

Nadine: Oh. I want to go with Precious. Let's go.

She held my hand and we left.

Nadine: If we were to stay longer, she was going to talk about how much I should bond with her. I don't know why mom doesn't want to let go of the anger of years.

Me: She'll come around.

She shook her head. Husband drove us to gateway. We arrived and we got off the car.

Rajiv: You'll take care of my wife right?

Nadine: Really? So now I am a bad sister?

We laughed.

Rajiv: I was double checking. Please come back lunch time.

Me: Just go already Rajiv we want to have fun.

Rajiv: You want to have fun without me?

Us: Just go!

We pushed him to the car. We laughed and we had fun with my sister. It's only on weekends where I had s peace of mind. Nadine was just a heavenly sent. We shopped around and it was just wonderful. Though my feet were already killing me but I didn't mind. After a while we had to go back home. We didn't call Rajiv. When we arrived at home it was already lunch time. We put our bags aside and we join the family on the table. Rajiv kept giving me nasty stares. All I did was smile. We having something that I don't know.

Mr Pillay: Did you have a good time?

Us: Yes.

Garry: Why did you leave my wife behind?

Priya: No Garry don't do that.

Nadine: I will take her with me next time.

Aunt Theresa: I am sure this girl told her to leave her behind.

Mr Pillay: Sister please.

We all kept quiet and continued eating. I don't know what was going on but my face started being itchy.

Rajiv: What is wrong Precious. (They looked at me)

Nadine: She's having a reaction. It must be the food. Mr Pillay: Take her to the Doctor Rajiv please.

He stood up and carried me. I was crying because my whole body was itching....

\*\*\*\*\*

Themba Smith....

I was really disappointed with my son. I didn't know what to say to him. I didn't know what to give him so that he can be better. I was making it my responsibility to remind him to take his medication. I went to his room to check up on him because I was meeting up with the detective. He was on his desk studying.

Me: You're writing tomorrow?

Uyathandwa: Yes, I am writing physical science paper 1.

Me: You don't need any help?

Uyathandwa: No dad I am fine.

Me: Are you serious that you want to live with your mom?

Uyathandwa: Yes, I need a chance of location and I want to be close to my mom again.

Me: It's okay. I won't stand in your way. I just want you to be better.

Uyathandwa: I will be better dad.

Me: I am sorry son. I haven't been a good father lately and I won't make any excuses for that. I just want you to know I love you.

Uyathandwa: Thanks dad.

He stood up and hugged me. It was a special moment but I am a man I don't just cry. My son was the only symbol of the good and beautiful love I had with his mother. That I will be forever be grateful for. I then went to my car and drove to detective's house. I had to do something before the guy in prison expose my gang

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

It was after school, Nkulu and I were outside the gate. We were just talking while I was waiting for my ride. He was also waiting for his.

Me: So did you tell your parents that you're going to visit my mom?

Nkulu: Not yet but I will give you their number. You will give it to your mom and she'll call just to let them know but I was going to Durban vele.

Me: You were going to visit who?

Nkulu: Andiswa and our brother. I visit them during December holidays.

Me: Your brother, who is he?

Nkulu: He's a guy from Durban. I don't think you know him. Here's your boyfriend coming should I go?

Me: Uhm... So you will be staying with us or with Andiswa and your brother?

Nkulu: I will stay with Andiswa but I will come to your parents house regularly.

Thapelo stood next to us with Mpendulo. He placed his arm on my shoulder.

Nkulu: There was no need for you to do that, you want us to see that she's your girlfriend?

Thapelo: Okay what did I do now?

Me:(laughing) Nkululeko?

Nkulu: No mama bear, he's making some of us jealous. We will end up envying your relationship.

Me: How will you envy my relationship when you have two baes. Your heart is ensured.

Nkulu: I know but still mama bear.

Thapelo:(whispering on my ear) Can we talk in private.

Me: Chomi I will see you tomorrow.

Nkulu: I am not writing tomorrow. I will come after school to pick you up with Minister of transport.

Mpendulo was in stitches with laughter. He was always amused by Nkulu's stories and life. While Thapelo didn't understand him.

Thapelo: Alondwe please.

Me: Okay bye.

Nkulu: Kwahle Thapelo. Hold your dick and it packaging. I am still talking to my friend.

Me: (laughing) Nonku please go.

Nkulu: Ukuthi iyaphapha indoda yakho sometimes. Aybo ngeke hawu.  
We hugged each other and he left. Thapelo was angry I could see his nostrils moving, that showed his anger.  
Thapelo: See you tomorrow Mpendulo.  
Mpendulo: Sho ntwana.  
He left. Thapelo and I stood where the cars that pick kids up usually park.  
Thapelo: Your friend has two boyfriends?  
Me: Oh dear Lord, there it is. There.  
Thapelo: What?  
Me: You're starting with your insecurities now. You know I don't like it when you're like that.  
Thapelo: So what if I see a behavior that I don't like. I should just shut up?  
Me: It's my friend's behavior not my behavior.  
Thapelo: Friends can be influential to their friends. So what if he influence you to have another boyfriend?  
Me: Thapelo can we please not do this insecure boyfriend thing.  
Thapelo: I am showing concern and you're saying I am insecure.  
Me: Yes, you're insecure because you're worried about my friend's life. Nkululeko will never force me to do something like that.  
Thapelo: so you're riding with his boyfriends now really?  
Me: Is it a crime if I ride with them?  
Thapelo: The next thing he'll do, he'll find a guy that will also keep you company when they are together.  
Me: You see me capable of cheating on you Thapelo? How can you even think about that.  
Thapelo: With a friend like that what can I say Alondwe?  
I looked at the time on my wrist watch.  
Me: Can my grandmother come already.  
Thapelo: Your grandmother should come because what I am talking about is not important.  
Me: What do you want me to do Thapelo? Call a girl so that you can approach her?  
Thapelo: Yes Maybe you can do that.  
Me: Okay wait here, I will go and look for her. Wait here.  
I attempted to walk away. He held my arm.  
Thapelo: You're passing me to someone else while I want you. While I have you.  
Me: Stop acting insecure. It's not attractive and please trust me.  
He looked at me without a word. I snuggled myself on his arms. He held me a little bit tight. And he kissed my forehead.  
Thapelo: I love you.  
Me: I love you too. Just stop acting crazy.  
Thapelo: I am crazy about you.  
I laughed and poked his nose. He smiled, showing his dimples. Yoh! Guys! Do you remember his ugly mother. I saw her coming towards our direction. Her outfit was on point! I could tell that it was designer clothes and the shoes were super fly.  
Thapelo: What are you looking at?  
He looked back and he saw his mom.  
Thapelo: Eish! Ayi Ayi.  
Me: Yeah hey.  
Mrs Moloi: I am busy texting you where my car is, you're not responding because you're with this pregnant elephant. Why are you this disrespectful Thapelo?  
Thapelo: I am not disrespectful mom. My phone was on silent. I didn't know you will change the spot.

Mrs Moloi: What will it take for you to leave this girl?

Thapelo: Nothing. Let's go home. And don't tell her to stay away from me please.

Mrs Moloi: I will talk to the Principal. I want to talk to her parents.

Say what!? No!

Me: Please mam I promise I will leave your son alone. Please don't call my parents. I can even delete his number now. Thapelo please do the same.

I took out my phone and I showed her that I have deleted his son's number. Thapelo took out his phone too. He gave it to his mom and she deleted the number.

Thapelo: You're really doing this?

Me: You won't call my parents right? (I ignored him)

Mrs Moloi: I won't because you are leaving my son alone. You made a very good move.

Let's go son.

He took his hand and they left. I sighed. I couldn't risk her calling my parents. Hell no! Dad and mom on my case? No?

My grandmother finally arrived. I was feeling very anxious what Thapelo's mom said really frightened me. I switched off my phone and I stepped inside the car. I greeted her and she greeted me back.

Evelyn: I am sorry for taking too long. I had to drive Christian home. Your mother asked me to be your Doctor. I am taking you to the hospital for a monthly check up.

Me: It's alright grandma.

Evelyn: Okay. Are you alright?

Me: Yes grandma I am alright. It's just the hot sun.

Evelyn: I'll buy something for you.

Me: Thank you.

We went to the hospital and she did the check up. After that she took me out. I was eating expensive dish. I love food so I wasn't limiting myself. She then drove me back to my flat. I hugged her and thanked her. I went straight to my bed. I switched on my phone and I dialed Thapelo's number. I knew it by heart. I wasn't going to let that ugly woman decide my fate with Thapelo. I love that guy and nobody. I mean NOBODY will take him away from me. His phone rang and he answered after a while.

Me: Don't tell me you've been crying because you thought I dumped you in front of your mother.

Thapelo: Little Pudding! Why would you do me like this mara huh?

Me: I couldn't risk your mother selling me off to my parents. They were going to bite my head off.

Thapelo: I was so heartbroken you know.

Me: I am sorry my Prince. We just have to be careful. Otherwise I will get roasted.

Thapelo: We will be careful. You're so clever mam. Damn.

Me: I will fight for you even if it means acting up.

Thapelo: I love you to the moon and back.

Me: I love you to Paradise and back. (we laughed) please study. I am doing that just now.

Thapelo: Okay. I will check you before I sleep.

Me: Okay. Motho waka.

He laughed and we hung. No ugly classy woman formed against us shall prosper! Hallelujah!

Themba Smith.....

I arrived at Detective's house and he let me know. My father had worked with him before so I knew that I could trust him not to rat me out. We were at his office.

Detective: How can I help you Themba. You sounded worried.

Me: I am in deep trouble and my father's gang is also threatened.

Detective: How so?

Me: The man that you got for my daughter's case. He's there to expose my gang.

Detective: How?

Me: We didn't get along when I took over so I took him out of the gang. He went back to poverty. He's angry at me. I am not sure if he's the one who killed my daughter. Someone in my gang is guilty because this goes beyond.

Detective: What do you want me to do because we have a bail hearing on Monday and I have already told your ex wife.

Me: I don't know but I am willing to pay every cent just to make sure that he doesn't take that stand.

Detective: The only way that he can't take that stand is if he dies. Because if we think of making the docket disappear. He can still talk. Do you have any ideas how we can switch him off?

Me: I have a few. Can we work on them?

Detective: Yes, please share....

We shared ideas and came up with the best plan.

---

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

After about I don't know how long my husband was in my office. I was looking at the wall not saying much or doing anything. He made the chair turn and he kneeled down before me. He held my hands. I looked at him and tears started all over.

Samkelo: What's wrong my baby? Talk to me.

Me: They are – my daughter's murder case-

I just cried, why should I suffer like this haven't I suffered enough. I have been through hell but still I just can't find a little bit of happiness maybe for a year. Just to say I had an amazing year with no pain. He brushed my back softly.

Samkelo: There's going to be a trial?

Me: There's bail hearing on Monday. I am not ready for this. I just can't face him.

Samkelo: Hey baby look, this will give you closure. You'll know the whole truth about what happened. Why did they kill her, did they really mean to kill her or what?

Me: Will I be strong enough?

Samkelo: You're strong baby. You've been through a lot and you're still here.

Me: I am here and I am so close to having a heart problem.

Samkelo: Look baby nothing wrong is going to happen to you. You'll be alright. I will be with you every step of the way.

Me: You'll go with me?

Samkelo: You're my wife. I will support you every step of the way.

Me: Thank you baby. Thank you.

Samkelo: You don't have to thank me. It's my responsibility.

He stood up and held my hand up. I stood up too. He gave me a warm hug. He kissed my forehead.

Samkelo: I am taking you home.

Me: I am alright now. I still need to finish up my work.

Samkelo: I didn't say can I take you home.

Me: That means it wasn't a request.

Samkelo: Yes it means exactly that.

He packed my handbag and my office bag. I was watching him doing all this. He carried both my bags. We then left my office.

Me: Let's pass by Muzi's office.

Samkelo: Alright.

We made to Muzi's office. My colleagues were greeting Samkelo as "Mr Ndunakazi" and he was feeling really special. I could see his face.

Me: It's hearing someone addressing you as Mr Ndunakazi hey?

Samkelo: It's not something you hear from everyone and I didn't know that almost everyone in this

place knows me.

Me: Oh so you thought you are a secret?

Samkelo: No but you know?

Me: Almost everyone in this place have been in my office so they have seen your pictures and I think it's quite obvious that you're my husband.

Samkelo: Just a few more years and we will look alike.

Me: What? That can never happen.

Samkelo: Are you saying I am ugly?

Me: No but baby you know I can't look like you. I am cuter than you.

Samkelo: Oh really?

Me: Can't you see that?

Samkelo: No I don't.

Me: Okay. The only thing I am happy about is that, next month is December. Oh Lord I can't wait for the 1st of January.

Samkelo: Yeah I also can't wait for our anniversary.

I laughed, clearly he has forgotten again about our deal. Every year I have to remind him and he'll say I am lying just to cover his ass. I mean it's not every month that one got to take the whole salary of a Chartered accountant. Like really.

Samkelo: I wonder why are you laughing.

Me: Nothing.

I smiled and knocked on the door. Muzi told us to come in. We went inside the office. He stood up and stretched out his arm for my husband. They greeted each other and we sat down.

Muzi: How can I help?

Samkelo: Can you give her the rest of the day off. She's not alright.

Muzi: What's wrong Thandeka?

Me: I am not alright but I will call you and tell you once I am comfortable to speak about it.

Muzi: Alright you can take her.

Samkelo: Thank you.

Muzi: Uhm.... Thandeka and your boy? He's leaving tomorrow right?

Me: Yeah. We'll communicate through email.

Muzi: Alright. Please be fine.

Me: I will be. Thanks.

He nodded and we left. Samkelo was driving me home. I was going to take my car the following day.

Me: Baby I will be frustrated at home. Can I at least go with you at your work place.

Samkelo: But you need to rest.

Me: I will rest on that comfortable couch of yours.

Samkelo: Okay.

He drove straight to his work place. Once we got there, I greeted his PA and he continued with his work. I sat on the couch with my laptop and I spoke to my boy through email. After a while Samkelo and his PA left for a meeting. I was alone so that gave me enough privacy to make phonecalls and communicate with my task team. We doing final touch ups for our plan. Once it was time for my husband's meeting to be almost, I got off the phone with them and rested on his couch. I was almost there to dreamland, then my husband's phone rang. I thought of answering it but I was too lazy to get up. The person gave up. I smiled. They called again. I reluctantly stood up and I went to his desk. I answered his cellphone. It was a private number.

Me: Private number hello?

Caller: Hello (it was a man) Can I speak to Mr Ndunakazi?

Me: He's in the meeting for now. This his wife I can pass the message.

Caller: Oh. Thandeka I am glad I got you. I wanted to let you know that Themba knows that you're aware of what happened with your husband.

Me: Wait who are you? And what are you talking about? And how do I know if you're not trying to

search me?

Caller: He knows that you know that he framed your husband. I warned your husband before and I thought I should let you know that now he's planning in every way to make sure that your plan doesn't proper. I took this number on your son's phone.

Me: How is he planning that?

Caller: He's recruiting new members. He's really preparing himself for war. Look I have said enough. Goodbye.

Me: Wait! Wait. Please don't call this number again. I don't want my husband to be involved in the middle of all this mess.

Caller: Alright. Bye.

Me: Wait –

He hung up on me before i could ask for his number. I quickly deleted the call log and I sighed.

Me: God is on my side. Nothing is going to stop me now. Jesus have just saved my ass. Thank you Lord.

I couldn't imagine what would've happened if my husband had answered that call.... God work in mysterious ways

Chapter : 8

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

TWO WEEKS LATER.....

It's been two weeks since our exams had began. We only had three weeks to write them and finish up. These weeks have been stressful for everyone, especially for me. I was working very hard to make it to the top and the baby was keeping me very tired. At times I would sleep while I had to study. But with Thapelo, my parents and my aunt by my side. I managed to stay awake and study till the end of exams. I was highly positive that I was going to beat Thapelo. The end of exams meant that I had to go back home. Thapelo and I managed to make sure that his mother doesn't see us. After school, we didn't go together. I was really sad that I was leaving my boyfriend behind. I couldn't imagine the whole month without him. I was with Thapelo and Mpendulo after writing our last paper. We were eating. They were convincing me to come to Mbali's party. Thapelo was invited so he wanted to take me as his plus one. She was celebrating her birthday and the fact that we had finished writing.

Me: Cassandra will be there and I don't want to be in the same room with her.

Thapelo: Are you that jealous of her?

Me: Don't start with those questions. You know you'll make me angry.

Mpendulo: But really Alondwe there's nothing to be jealous of. I also think you're jealous of her.

Me: Why because she's coloured? Do you think I am jealous because of that? Because her hair is curly and mine is not? Do you think I am jealous because she has been to London and I haven't been there?

They both looked at each other and then back at me.

Them: We don't know, are you?

Me: Goodness me! Are you for real?

Mpendulo: Look at the things you just counted and think if you're not jealous?

Me: I am not jealous of her! Geez!

Mpendulo: Then come to the party.

Thapelo: Who am I supposed to skeem with, while Mpendulo is busy with his girlfriend. And tomorrow you're leaving.

Me: You'll see me tomorrow before I leave.

Mpendulo: Wow! Dude she's clearly pushing her to you.

Me: What does that suppose to mean?

Mpendulo: If you're not there, Cassandra will be all over Thapelo. She'll be whining and seeking for his attention. And she'll do anything to get it and rub it on your face.

Me: Oh so you want me to go because of insecurity?

Mpendulo: No but I am trying to make you see what you're doing.

Thapelo: She doesn't care about me.

Me: So you can't hold yourself around Cassandra? Is that what you're trying to say?

Thapelo: You didn't hear me saying that.

Me: Mxm!

I took my piece of wing and left to search for my friend. I was angry. Thapelo and I argued a lot. It was simply because we were just of one state of mind but we loved each other. I finally found my friend. He was on Skype. I saw that because he was on his laptop laughing and acting out using his face. He quickly closed the laptop when he saw me. I sat down next to him.

Me: Why are you closing your Skype session?

Nkulu: I didn't want you to see my bae naked.

Me:(laughing) You did the right thing. I am alright with Thapelo's nakedness. Can I get my chips and lollipop. I just had lunch.

He took them out and gave them to me.

Nkulu: So when are we going to shop for baby bear?

Me: Argh. I am only five months. It's still early but we will definitely go.

Nkulu: Alright. I am more than ready for baby shopping.

Me: Chill. You know Thapelo want me to go with him to Mbali's party.

Nkulu: So what's the problem?

Me: Cassandra is the problem. She'll be there too. She's pretty and I am an ugly pregnant girl. She'll mock me obviously.

Nkulu: Don't be intimidated by that coloured girl. She's nothing. Nekhala elide nemilenze eyomile.

Me: (laughing) Aweyisi!

Nkulu: I am telling the truth come on.

Me: So you think I should go?

Nkulu: Go and be with your bae. While at it ask for a room and poom poom him. Make sure that she sees that.

Me:(laughing) really?

Nkulu: I am serious. But baby you need a good goodbye sex and this is your chance to get it because tomorrow you won't have time. You'll be leaving.

Me: Yazi you're right. Thanks mpintshi yami.

We did high five. I took out my phone and I texted letting him know that he must pick me up I am going with him to the party. He was more than happy to hear that I am going with him. Nonku was a bae. After lunch time. We went our separate ways because the school was out. I passed by the mall because I need a new pitch dress and white sandals. That was the colour.

Nkulu was with me. I called my aunt and told her about the party. She had no problem.

By 17:30 I was ready. I was in a pitch dress and white sandals. My dress was above the knee. I wasn't a tight dress. I had a messy bun. Nkulu did my make up to make me look a little bit beautiful.

Melo: You look beautiful. Please don't sleep at the party. You're leaving tomorrow.

Me: I won't.

Nkulu:(coming in) Bae is here.

I smiled and went to the door. He was also looking cute in pitch short and white golf T-shirt.

He kissed my cheek.

Thapelo: You look beautiful.

Me: Thanks my prince.  
Thapelo: Thanks aunty.  
Melo: Look after her.  
He nodded. I thanked my friend and we left. We arrived at Mbali's home. It was beautiful. I had my gift for her. The house was full. We looked for Mbali and we found her with Mpendulo. They really looked good together.  
Me: Hey love birds.  
Them: Hey.  
Me: From me, Happy birthday Mbali.  
Mbali:(Taking the gift) Thanks Alondwe. Please make yourself comfortable.  
Voice:(at the back) I should have told my friend to write on the invitation card that no pregnant partners allowed.  
I closed my eyes and Thapelo tightened my hand.  
Mpendulo: Please don't ruin my girlfriend's party.  
Cassandra: It was much better when it was just the four of us. Don't you think Thapelo. She said rubbing his cheek. He clicked his tongue.  
Thapelo: Happy Birthday Mbali.  
He gave her the gift and pulled me out of the house leaving Cassandra saying whatever she was saying. Thapelo and I were outside. I was just quiet.  
Thapelo: I am sorry baby. Let's go. We weren't going to stay till the party end. I had some other plans for us.  
Me: What plans? I just want to go home.  
Thapelo: Please.  
I nodded and we left. It was a walkable distance. We were just talking about anything and everything. We finally. It was his cousin's flat.  
Thapelo: I just wanted us to spend the last few hours together before you go.  
Me: You're the best.  
I said while kissing him. We kissed each other and we spent the night together. It was the best night ever! We decided to take a few minutes nap. We woke up when my phone was ringing.  
It was my mom. I answered.  
Me: Mama?  
Mom: Mama my bloody hell! I am outside your flat knocking, amaqupha ami abuhlungu manje. Your aunt is not answering her phone. WHERE THE FUCK ARE YOU!??  
Me: A

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay.....

TWO WEEKS BACK

Rajiv drove me straight to the family doctor. My whole body was itching. I was crying.

Rajiv: Baby please don't cry. It's hurting me to hear you cry like that.

Me: How on earth can I not cry? It's painful. Even my ears are burning.

Rajiv: I am sorry.

Me: I am never! I mean I am never eating that food again do you understand?

Rajiv: Baby-

Me: Do you understand me?

Rajiv: Yes I understand.

Me: You're going to buy my own groceries and I will cook my own food. I won't eat something will kill me in the end.

Rajiv: Calm down.

Me: Don't tell me to calm down!!!

I was furious with anger. I hated scratching my body but I had no choice. I kept on scratching

until he made it to the Doctor. He went inside with me. We took the emergency route. We entered her office. It was an Indian Doctor obviously. I Suppose they were being choosy.

Doc: What is wrong with your wife?

Rajiv: I think she's having an allergy.

Doc: Alright. Please sit down mam.

I sat down and she examined me while she asked my husband questions about the food that I ate. Rajiv told her everything and she did a few tests. She then gave me medication.

Doc: If you take this medication and apply that lotion on your body you'll be alright Mrs Pillay.

Me: Thank you.

Doc: My pleasure. Is there anything else that you'll like to ask or need?

Rajiv: No Thank you.

Me: Actually, yes.

This was my chance to tell her about my constant fatigue who knows when will I get the opportunity to see this Doctor.

Me: I always go to bed feeling very tired and my back hurts so bad. And I have minor headaches sometimes.

Rajiv: How come I don't know this?

Me: You don't know because you don't listen.

The Doctor laughed and told me to sit on that small bed. Niyayibona leyo? Ehe leyo mbhede ke.

Doc: I will check if you are pregnant before I give you pills for that because they can be harmful to the baby if you're pregnant.

Me: No I am not pregnant. I would have felt it right?

Doc: Do you have kids?

Me: No I don't.

Doc: (smile) You can't be certain that you would have felt it if you haven't been pregnant before.

I sighed and nodded. I was saying a silent prayer inside that I mustn't be pregnant. Rajiv was standing there looking all worried. The Doctor applied that cold jelly and did her thing.

Doc: There's your baby.

Me: What?

Doc: You're pregnant mam.

Me: No!

Doc: Congratulations to you two.

We both didn't say anything, I suppose Rajiv was surprised as I was.

Me: How many weeks?

Doc: You're five weeks.

Me: It's a single baby not twins right?

Doc: Yes. It's a single baby. You have history-

Me: My mom is a twin, I am a twin but my twin brother died and my sister is carrying a twin.

Doc: Oh. You're carrying one baby. I am sorry about your twin brother.

Me: Thanks.

I cleaned myself up. Rajiv hardly breathed a word. I didn't say anything too. I couldn't be mad for being pregnant though I didn't expect it thus soon. But I was grateful for it.

We said our goodbyes to the Doctor and we went to the car. Before he started the car, I held his hand.

Me: I don't know why are you this quiet.

Rajiv: I didn't expect a baby! I am not ready to be a father. I just started with work and you want your own groceries now we gonna have a child? No.

Me: You think I was ready for this baby? Huh?

Rajiv: I don't know.

Me: This is my first child and no one can ever be ready to be a parent. If you don't want this baby, fine mind your own business. I will be fine. We will be fine. But you will not tell your family that I am pregnant.

Rajiv: What?

Me: You heard me. It's no secret that your stepmother and your aunts don't like me. I don't want them to kill my child through poison that I can't risk.

Rajiv: What must I say when they ask about what the Doctor said.

Me: It was an allergy only. This is my first trimester and I don't want anything to go wrong to my child. If you tell them I will divorce your ass and leave with my child because it seems like you hate this baby already.

Rajiv: I didn't say that.

Me: Just drive I want to go home.

He didn't say anything. He drove the car. I was just angry at him for not accepting the fact that the baby is here and there's nothing we can do about it. I was going to protect my child. As soon as we arrived at home, we went to our parents and in deed he told them that it was just an allergy. Claudine wasn't satisfied with that. She thought it was more. Or maybe I was dying. This was more reason for me not to tell them until I start showing. I went to bed leaving them still talking but I wasn't the topic anymore. I prayed and thanked God about the gift that he gave me....

\*\*\*\*\*

3rd Person Narrator....

Claudine wasn't too convinced about what Rajiv told them. She saw how Rajiv was sad and she thought "Rajiv can't be sad over any allergy. Something big happened. Maybe she has HIV" she quickly dialed the Doctor's number. She wanted to milk information from her. The Doctor answered.

Doc:"Mrs Pillay good afternoon"

Claudine: "Afternoon dear how are you doing"

Doc:"I am alright thanks and you?"

Claudine:"I am fine. I would like to thank you for helping my daughter in-law"

Doc;"I was just doing my job mam, there's no need to thank me. But I must congratulate you on being a grandmother"

Claudine:"What? Me a grandmother?"

Doc:(laughing)" Yes. With Rajiv's wife being pregnant that means you will be a grandmother soon. I know you don't want to get old but you have to embrace it."

Claudine:(faking laughter) "Yes, yes Doctor. Thanks"

She immediately hung up the phone and wondered why they didn't tell them. These news were not pleasant to her.

She thought:"I will not let that black girl and shameful child give my husband his first grandchild. My son will give him the first Pillay grandchild. That child must disappear before he even learns about it's existence"

She clicked her tongue in anger and went to plan on how to make Nobuhle's child

TWO WEEKS BACK....

My husband and I went to fetch our kids from school. We were singing along with the "West life – flying without wings".

Us: ..... You know how much that means, you find that special thing. You flying without wings"

It was all fun until my husband sang the wrong lyrics. I stopped and looked at him.

Samkelo: – What? Why are you stopping?

Me: Uyabhimba nje. How can I continue?

Samkelo: Hawu mkami you're lying.

Me: Continue alone.

He laughed and he continued. I liked how he looked at me when he sang “- to know that I can say I love you in any given time or place” and when he sang”Those are the things that make you mine” I just smiled and thought about how blessed I was. How much Samkelo loved me even at my worse point. He never gave up on. I wouldn't say that I want my daughter to end up like me but I really wish she can also find someone who is going to love her for who she is not what she has and her status. Experience makes people to be cruel and not to care about love but when you are given a chance at true love you must embrace it while it last. My husband turned the volume down and I looked at him.

Samkelo: What are you thinking about?

Me: Agh nothing much.

Samkelo: Alright. What are we going to do about Alondwe? Are we going to the boy's mother.

Me: I don't know, what do you think we should do?

Samkelo: If his mother kicks him out. It will be difficult for him to be available to be available for their child. I think we should talk to him and ask him how he plans on supporting the baby.

Me: Alright. We will do that. I will call him and set up a meeting with him. We should do it before Alondwe comes back.

Samkelo: Alright.

We arrived at the boys school and they were already waiting for us. Samkelo went to get them. I opened the door for them. Alupheli wasn't on his usual mood. He was quiet. They greeted me and their father started driving.

Me: How was school my babies?

Mesuli: It was alright.

Alupheli didn't say anything.

Me: Thando how was school?

He didn't say anything. He didn't even look at me. My son has issues. I don't know because he was just a 4year old but he had issues. I looked at his father.

Samkelo: Alupheli can't you hear that your mom is talking to you?

Alupheli: I heard her dad.

Samkelo: So why aren't you answering?

Alupheli: But mom just saw our school. She saw that the school is a stairs that is built by red bricks. Why should I answer that dad.

I was beyond shocked. It wasn't even funny. I don't know what to call it. Samkelo and I didn't say anything. We just looked at each other.

Me: Uhm... What happened at school Thando?

Alupheli: Teaching and learning happened.

Mesuli: Musa ukweyisa wena (don't be rude)

Alupheli: Awungyeke wena (Leave me alone)

We didn't say anything after that. It was all silent until we made it home.

Samkelo: Alupheli you're not going home. Stay behind.

Alupheli: Why?

Samkelo: You will not talk to me like that. Just do as I say.

He didn't step out of the car. Samkelo drove off with him.

Mesuli: Where is dad taking him?

Me: I don't know baby.

Mesuli: What is wrong with him?

Me: I am clueless Mesuli.

He nodded. We went inside the house. He went to his room and I also went to mine. I changed my clothes and I went to do my chores. I made a snack for Mesuli. He wasn't coming out of his room so I went to him. I knocked.

Mesuli: Come in.

He was on his desk studying. I placed the sandwich and juice on the table.

Me: Ain't you hungry?

Mesuli: I will eat because the food is here now.

Me: Alright. What are you writing tomorrow?

Mesuli: Maths.

Me: Alright. Shout if you need help.

Mesuli: Thanks.

I left him. My mind was all over the place. I just didn't know what was wrong with Alupheli. He was worrying me. In the process of cooking I called both Alondwe and Uyathandwa. I was checking up on them and asking how they were coping with their exams. They were alright.

When I was done cooking I went to my room. Samkelo wasn't back yet. I continued working on my other case. I was hoping and praying that things do well with Themba. Samkelo walked in while I was still working. He took off his clothes.

Me: Where is Thando?

Samkelo: He's sleeping on his bed.

Me: What did you do to him?

Samkelo: That's between me and him. Don't worry yourself about it.

He stood up and went to the bathroom. I sighed heavily. I went to downstairs to dish up. And to my surprise Olwethu was sitting on my couch in my lounge. I quickly called my husband.

Olwethu: Thandeka.

I didn't say anything to her. Samkelo came downstairs.

Samkelo: Ouch! I am so sorry. I forgot to tell you that you have a visitor. Her car was just outside and you weren't answering.

Me: I was working, I didn't hear ringing.

Samkelo: It's alright let me leave you two.

I nodded and he left. I sat down and looked at Olwethu.

Me: What can I do for you?

Olwethu: I need your help. I want to find my mom.

Me: Excuse me?

Olwethu: I really need your help. My mom was married to your father and now she just disappeared. Nobody tried to look for her.

Me: Look dear I am not a police and my house is not a police station so leave my house. And go to the police.

I stood up and showed her that she must do the same. She stood up but reluctantly.

Olwethu: Thandeka this is affecting my marriage life. I can't cope without my mom and my kids need to see their grandmother.

Me: Call her husband and leave me out of your business. I am not willing to help you with anything. I don't know where she is.

I walked her to the door. I opened the gate for her and she left crying. I closed the door and sighed. Does this mean trouble for me and my husband? Why is she asking questions all of the sudden? A lot was going on in my life and I didn't know where to if I can think about fixing it.....

3rd Person Narrator....

Olwethu drove to her house. She arrived at home and went to her husband. She told him that Thandeka didn't offer her help.

Bheki: "Let's call Themba and let him know."

She nodded and they called Themba. Olwethu going to Thandeka's house was all part of Themba's plan. Themba was on speaker.

Themba: "How did it go?"

Olwethu: "She chased me out of her house and told me that I must ask her father."

Themba: "Shit! You're trying to tell me that she no longer has a soft spot for you?"

Olwethu: "Obviously not. But I will talk to my sister charity. We were supposed to look for our Mom long time when she disappeared."

Bheki: "That might help"

Themba: "Please do try it because I really need someone who will be close to her so that I will know what is her plan"

Olwethu: "I will do my best"

Themba: "Thanks"

They said their goodbyes and hung up.....

\*\*\*\*\*

Thandeka Ndunakazi

STILL TWO WEEKS BACK...

I stood there not knowing how I was going to deal with Olwethu. How was I going to explain to the police her mom's disappearance. It was clear to everyone that I didn't like Maud. I was probably going to be the first suspect. I sighed. My phone rang, it was in my pocket. I took it out and the unsaved number was calling me. I answered.

Me: Thandeka Ndunakazi speaking how can I help you?

Caller: Hi Thandeka, it's Andile speaking.

What the fuck? Huh! Andile Dhlomo. I was more than surprised. After a while I responded.

Me: Andile who?

Andile: Andile Dhlomo, your brother.

Me: Oh.

Andile: Are you busy? I need to talk to you about something.

Me: Talk.

Andile: I saw Alondwe at the mall and I didn't like the way she spoke with me.

Me: What did she say?

Andile: She passed me by like she doesn't know me. She didn't even greet me. When I asked her why she didn't greet me. She said she doesn't know me.

Me: So what do you want me to do about that?

Andile: She's your daughter, teach her some manners. She go around disrespecting adults. I am his uncle. That's not the way she must carry herself. Me: You're her uncle did I hear that correctly? Lalela Andile maybe you have forgotten. You chased my child out of your house. You didn't avail yourself when she needed you as an uncle. Now you want her respect?

Andile: Oh so you're the one who is teaching her to be rude and to be disrespectful?

Me: Yes, she saw that from me. Ukhamba lufuze imbiza angithi? Please hhoya indaba zakho Andile.

Andile: This is not the way to carry yourself as a mother.

Me: My daughter got pregnant, you and your father deserted me. You dropped me like a hot potato. Now you want my respect and my child's respect? Ngikuthume kuphi washeshe wabuya? You're forgetting one thing that my daughter is the only eldest child that is almost there. Anything can happen to you and your wife. Your father can die anytime. Your kids are young. Who will take them when everything vanish? They will go to Mozambique?

Awucabangise okomuntu omdala. And don't be fooled by dad. Anytime he'll leave you. And once again musa ukunaka ingane yami. Leave her alone and let her do what she wants. Tsk!

I hung up the phone and clicked my tongue. I turned around and Samkelo was watching me.

Samkelo: What was that about?

Me: Andile called to complain about Alondwe not greeting him at the mall.

Samkelo: Really?

Me: Yes.

Samkelo: Alondwe was wrong. She was supposed to greet him. No matter what happened, he's still older than her.

Me: You're joking right?

Samkelo: No I am not. She must respect elders

Me: Respect is earned not demanded.

Samkelo: Just because he didn't want her in his that doesn't mean he was disrespecting her. Alondwe is a child and she should know her place.

Me: Wow! At least now I know that you're happy with what they are doing to me.

Samkelo: That has nothing to do with Alondwe being rude to her uncle.

Me: Well to me it has everything to do with it. And judging from her actions it seems like she feels the same way.

Samkelo: So you're happy with her being disrespectful? When she starts disrespecting you don't you dare come to me.

Me: I will not Samkelo relax. You've made your feelings clear.

I attempted to walk away but he held my hand.

Samkelo: I didn't mean it like that. I am not with what they are doing to you.

I yanked my hand out of his. I went to the kitchen and I dished up the food. I had to tell Muzi about his sister. I finished up with my husband following me around trying to explain how he meant "it". I was hurt by his words. From the dinning table I called Mesuli. We waited for them.

Samkelo: Thandeka?

Me: Samkelo, please. I heard you.

Samkelo: Uhm... Oh... What was that girl looking for?

Me: She was looking for her mother, Maud.

Samkelo: What? What did you say to her.

Me: I don't know where is her mom.

Mesuli came downstairs alone.

Me: Where's Thando?

Mesuli: He's sleeping. I tried to wake him up but he's dead sleeping.

I nodded. Mesuli prayed and we ate in silence.

Mesuli: Mom and dad are you alright?

Us: Yes.

He nodded.

Samkelo: How was your paper?

Mesuli: I think I will pass it but I am nervous about tomorrow. I am writing maths.

Samkelo: You'll be alright. I will be with you after dinner to see how you're doing.

Mesuli: Thanks dad.

We finished up and I washed the dishes while they went upstairs to do Maths practice. After that I went to check on Alupheli. He was sleeping on his school uniform. I changed him and I wiped his hands and face. I put him on his pyjamas. I kissed his forehead and covered him.

Me: Good night Mesuli baby.

Mesuli: Good night mom.

I left them. I went to shower and I went straight to bed after showering.

In the morning I made sure that I was at the office early. I had to see my boy off. I took a cab because my husband and the boys were still eating. Alupheli was still not telling me what was his problem. But I figured that it was one of his moods because in the morning he was back to being himself. Muzi and Xolani (the boy) were already waiting for me.

Me: I am sorry I am late.

Muzi: It's alright. He's ready to go.

Me: How are you feeling?

Xolani: I am a little bit nervous but I want to do this right. You took me out of the streets so I am not willing to disappoint you.

I smiled and opened my arms for him. We hugged each other.

Me: Thanks. And good luck. Go and put on a show.

They laughed. He nodded.

Me: Once you get recruited don't be too afraid because he will chase you out. But don't be too confident.

Xolani: You have already told me that.

I laughed and said: Alright then, I am driving you to the airport. Mr Zulu sokubona.

Muzi: Bye.

We left. I was really praying that when he gets to Cape Town, he won't turn his back on me. And I was lucky that he wasn't on drugs. He only used weed otherwise if I didn't find someone like him I was going to have a problem of cleaning him up first. Weed is not a problem that much. I saw him off at the airport. And I went back to the centre.

TWO WEEKS LATER

Samkelo and I decided to talk to Sphephelo after his exams. I called him and told him that I won't tell his mom just yet. I didn't want him to be stressed considering the fact he was doing his metric. We were going to meet him at the restaurant because by then Alondwe would be home. I didn't go to Cape Town for bail hearing, the detective called and told me that their suspect was very ill. He was admitted to the hospital. They suspected food poisoning but they were still investigating. That wasn't good for me because I really needed the trial to start so that I can know what happened to my daughter. My kids have done writing their exams and I was going to fetch them both but on separate days. Samkelo was against me showing up at Alondwe's place unannounced. But I was going to anyway. I told Muzi about his sister and we decided that we will deal with the matter once she has reported it to the police. And there was no prove that I killed her mother. Saturday morning I was in Johannesburg fetching my daughter, that's where I stood for hours outside her flat with no one opening the door for me....

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

I quickly hung up the phone and placed it on aeroplane mode. I didn't want her to keep calling me. I didn't understand why on earth did she come to Johannesburg without TELLING me first. I shook Thapelo awake. He rubbed his eyes.

Me: I wasn't supposed to sleep here Thapelo. It's in the morning now. How could you let this happen? I wasn't supposed to sleepover.

Thapelo: Eish I am sorry.

Me: My mom is at my place now. I don't how will I explain not sleeping in the house.

Thapelo: It's 10am now so you'll just tell her that you were at the mall buying a few things for your brothers.

Me: Toobad, she heard that I was sleeping.

Thapelo: It's seems like Nkulu will be the only person who can help.

Me: She said my aunt is not in the house too. Can we please call her. Please baby.

He took his phone and gave it to me. I dialed my aunt's number. It rang with no answer. I

tried more than twice and she answered.

Melo:(sleepy voice) This better be good. Whoever you're. It's a Saturday morning for goodness sake.

Me: Well this one is a mess. Mom is outside our flat. She's been there I don't know since when. I slept out and we are both not home.

Melo: What the fuck? Are you serious?

Me: We better have a good explanation. Please come up with a plan.

Melo: The truth is, I saw you not coming back home and I went to my boyfriend.

Me: What? Do you want me hanged?

Melo: Of course not! Call your friend and tell him to back up our story when we say we were at his party and we slept over. Send me your address and I will come get you. We will go home together.

Me: You're a life saver. Thank you. I could kiss you right now.

Melo: Yeah. Whatever!

She hung up, I texted her the address and I called Nkulu. I did that while getting up from the bed. Thapelo was dressing up.

Nkulu: Where the hell is Alondwe?

Me: This is her, you have my boyfriend's number?

Nkulu: Yes. He was my crush remember. Where are you? I have been calling you. I am almost ready for our trip.

Me: I need you to (I told him everything)

He laughed at me instead. I didn't understand why he was laughing while I needed help.

Me: This is not the right time to laugh.

Thapelo started dressing me up while I was on the phone. I wasn't going to shower. I wanted to get there in time.

Nkulu: I am sorry but how hard was the sex really? You overslept?(laughing)

Me: Are you helping me or not?!?!?

Nkulu: Hheyi sfetshana ndini (you little bitch) don't shout at me.

Me: Ey sfebe esikhulu sasebhabiloni. I need your help!

Nkulu:(laughing) I will help you.

Me: Thank you.

I hung up the call. I was even sweating. I was waiting for my aunt's text.

Thapelo: Don't worry too much.

Me: I was supposed to set an alarm.

Thapelo: She's no longer calling maybe she's calm now.

Me: My phone is on aeroplane mode.

Thapelo: What? Are you insane! She'll be more mad at you. Alondwe use your brains man!

Me: Don't shout at me. Just don't!

Thapelo: Give me my phone back. I want to leave.

Me: Excuse me?

Thapelo: You heard me.

Me: Mxm here.

I gave him his phone and I took my sling bag. I was in no mood for stupid fights. I went to the door and left him behind. I went to wait for my aunt outside the building. I saw a cab but my aunt wasn't there. I was getting impatient. Thapelo came out of the building and went straight to the cab without saying a word to me. The cab left.

After a long while my aunt came and we left.

Me: I can't imagine how she's feeling right now.

Melo: Don't even think about it.

Me: It's impossible. But I told her not to come without telling me now I have to lie to her. Ey

Mom.

Melo: Thapelo was good I suppose.

Me: So was your boyfriend I think.

We looked at each other and laughed. In no time we were at the alleviator heading to our room. Mom was outside the flat pacing up and down. She was talking to my father because I heard her talking about how my father didn't want her to come to Johannesburg kanti I am living life like a girl with no direction. I cleared my throat and she turned back.

Mom: She's here. I will call you later..... She better.

She hung up the phone and gave me a loong cold eye. I looked down.

Mom: What is the meaning of this Alondwe huh?

Me: Mom I can explain. Let's go inside.

My aunt opened the door and we went inside. My aunt and I sat on the couch while mom decided to stand.

Me: Nkululeko had a party and we were invited.

Mom: And you didn't tell me about that party because?

Me: Because I knew that you were going to shout at me.

Mom: Skwiza (sister in-law) why didn't you tell her not to go?

Melo: Her friend asked me in person to come with her so that I can keep an eye on her so I went to the party with her. We're sorry for not telling you but please don't tell my brother.

Mom: That won't happen. Owami if you ever get poor results pray to God that he makes you disappear.

Me:(mumbling) Oh dear God this woman, what has gotten over her.

Mom: What did you say?

Me:(standing up) I said let me stand up so that I can pack my clothes

Mom: You didn't even pack your clothes. Kanti unjani nje Alondwe?

Me: Mom please calm down.

I went to my room and she followed me. I closed my eyes and sighed because she didn't stop shouting at me. I packed my clothes and she was helping me. She was even complaining about how I don't wash my clothes properly.

Mom: Where are the rest of your comfort shoes?

Me: They are under the bed.

Mom: I always tell you not to put your shoes under the bed. You hardly listen! I bet you don't even clean under your bed.

I didn't say anything. She called my aunt to help her move the bed. I took off my clothes because I wanted to go and shower. My aunt came and they moved the bed. My mom started shouting about how dusty it was under the bed.

Mom: Good Lord! Do you see this Melokuhle?

Melo: Ummm... Yes Skwiza.

Me: What is it?

I looked back and oh boy! The used condoms. I looked at my aunt hoping she will cover up for me. But she just shrugged her shoulders. My mom looked at me.

Mom: Who is responsible for this you two?

Melo: I don't know.

Me: I think I need to take a shower.

Mom: YOU'RE GOING NOWHERE YOUNG LADY!

What did I get myself into??

Nobuhle Mthembu....

Still Two weeks back.

The following day was a Sunday. We were supposed to go to the temple. Rajiv was still

awfully quiet. He didn't want to talk about the baby nor show some emotions. This was killing me. How was I going to survive with a husband who didn't like the fact we were going to have a baby. Rajiv was the one who woke me up. I sat up straight on the bed. I yawned.

Rajiv: Good morning.

Me: Good morning.

Rajiv: I woke you up so that you can write your grocery list. I am going to the mall. I was going to go with you but you're going to temple with Claudine.

Me: Alright.

I got off the bed. I looked for the pen and paper. I wrote my grocery list. I finished up and I made the bed and opened the windows. Rajiv came back and took the paper. I undressed.

Rajiv: You want all these things Precious?

Me: Yes all of them.

Rajiv: Are you forgetting that we going to have a baby soon?

Me: So?

Rajiv: I need to start saving up for the baby.

Me: We wouldn't be going so much trouble because soon I was going to start helping you out if your parents allowed me to go to school.

Rajiv: Well now that there is a baby on the way. You have more reason to go to Varsity.

Me: Excuse me?

Rajiv: How do you think I will manage, your tuition fee, your grocery, our other needs, the baby and the contribution we make here for the family needs. How do you think I will manage. If you go to school we will have to hire a nanny which I will have to pay.

Me: Mom can look after my baby. If she decides to retire next year.

Rajiv: And if she doesn't?

Me: I will apply for Nsfas, students loans. I don't know! Okay I don't know. I just want to study.

Rajiv: Well you can't leave a baby alone. It's either your studies or the baby?

Me: Are you making me choose? Huh? If I choose my studies how am I supposed to care for the baby?

Rajiv: You're asking me?

I looked at him without a word. He clicked his tongue and left. I sat down and cried. After a while I called my mom. I needed someone to talk to. I didn't know what to do. I was supposed to take contraceptives right away. My mind didn't even go there. But how was I supposed to think about that when they were stressing me out and making me a slave. My mom answered the phone.

Mom: My daughter.

Me: Hello mama how are you?

Mom: I am fine and you?

Me: Mom I am pregnant and my husband says I won't go and study because of the baby.

Mom he doesn't want this baby. He says he wasn't ready for it. What must I do?

Mom: Calm down. What did the rest of the family say about that?

Me: We haven't told them. I wanted to wait until I finish my first trimester. They hate me and I can't risk them knowing that I am pregnant. What if they poison me?

Mom: You have a point. Baby please be careful don't just eat anything. But don't make them see that you're suspecting that they might do something bad to your child.

Me: I will try and be careful mom.

Mom: I am going to retire next year. I can look after the baby. If they allow you to go school.

Me: They said I won't. I don't know what to do. Even Philisiwe she's not willing to help me.

Mom: It's just one year Nobuhle. Stop acting like a baby and accept your situation. There's

nothing you can do about it.

Me: You're not helping me by saying that mom.

I hung up the phone and I went to take a shower. Maybe if I needed peace I was supposed to accept that I will stay at home and take care of my baby. I sighed and finished up. I dressed up and I went to join Priya in the kitchen. I greeted her and we worked together.

Priya: are you feeling better now?

Me: Yes. Thanks.

Priya: You'll get used to it.

I just nodded. Claudine walked inside the kitchen looking angry.

Claudine: What is it that I hear about my stepson buying grocery for you huh?

Me: I can't continue eating the food that you eat because it's making me sick. I will stick to what I am used to.

Aunt Theresa: (joining in) You think he grows money from the trees huh? You came here to make life difficult for him or to be his wife? You think he works in the bank?

Me: No, that's not what I think. I just don't think I must continue to eat while I get sick.

Priya: But it will be costly to your husband.

Me: Well call him and tell him to stop. I will see what I can do. But I am not eating that food again.

I left everything and I went outside. I was really angry. I don't know my hormones and emotions were all over the place. I have never stood up to them like that. I sat there alone and cried. I held my stomach. I was hungry already. I knew they were going to call and he was going to listen to them. Nadine sat next to me.

Nadine: I heard that back there.

Me: I know.

Nadine: I think my brother should do that for you. He's your husband and he vowed to take care of you.

Me: He'll do what pleases him.

She sighed and gave me a side hug. I smiled.

Nadine: If he doesn't do it, I will feed from my pocket.

I looked at her and she shrugged her shoulders. We then laughed. She held my hand and we went back inside. They were having breakfast and I made soft porridge for myself and the baby. I didn't eat at the dining table with them. I ate alone. Nadine came inside.

Me: Is it time for us to go to the temple?

Nadine: No we're no longer going. Mom and aunt Tashrika have to go somewhere. It's important.

I nodded and continued eating. She left. After a while Rajiv came back. I heard them arguing on the lounge. I went there too.

Mr Pillay: You went a wrong way about this.

Claudine: Tell him.

Rajiv: She's my wife, if I don't look after her who will?

It was heartwarming to hear him say that.

Rajiv: I took her and made her my wife. It's my responsibility to see what to do if she can't eat our food. This is my money and I am looking after her.

He left and I stood there Looking at them giving me an evil eye leaving the room one by one.

Rajiv packed the food in our room. I followed him.

Me: Why are you packing the food here?

Rajiv: Nadine called me after they told me not to continue with buying food. She spoke sense into my head and she made me realise that you're the only good and right thing that happened in my fucked up life so I won't do anything to that will destroy what we have. And I realised that even if I was born out of wedlock. Our baby won't be and she or he'll be a blessing to us.

I love you.

Me: I love you too my love.

Rajiv: I even bought a mid sized fridge that will be here for things you need in the freezer or refrigerator. It will come. So you have to keep this door locked all the time even if you're sleeping. I don't want anything that will happen to our child and I don't trust them. Specially Claudine and Tashrika.

I smiled and nodded.

Me: I have accepted that I will stay at home and look after our baby. I will study after he or she is at least a year old. I have all the time in the world.

He smiled and hugged me.

\*\*\*\*\*

3rd person narrator

Meanwhile Claudine and Tashrika went to look for pill or powder tat was going to kill the unborn baby. Claudine trusted Tashrika because she knew that she felt the Same way about Rajiv and his wife unlike Theresa who had a soft spot for Rajiv....

3rd Person Narrator....

TWO WEEKS LATER...

Xolani, Thandeka's boy who went to Cape Town had settled in very well. He was living in the informal settlements. (imkhukhu) It was going to be hard for him to be recruited if he had the luxury lifestyle. Themba's gang had people who are less privileged. People who had nothing, it was for to help them put food on the table since the government can't provide jobs for everyone at once. It was also going to be hard if Xolani was to go back to being a street kid. In these two weeks, he was succeeding in making a relationship with a few people from the gang. Some had him on their minds because he was always complaining about not having a job. It was during the day. Xolani had just got off the phone with Muzi. He was updating him about how things were since he couldn't get hold of Thandeka. The guy named Mthunzi from Themba's gang paid Xolani a visit. Xolani was a tall dark chocolate skinned man. He had darker lips from smoking weed. He was a little bit shady but Thandeka cleaned him well because he was looking much better. His shack was just like any other shacks. He had his own weapons that he bought in Cape Town and they were on the trunk under the bed. Mthunzi knocked on the door and he let him in. They greeted each other in tsotsi Taal. They were both Zulus. He offered him a seat on his chair. The only chair that he had. He then sat on the bed.

Mthunzi:"Were you serious when said you'll do any job?"

Xolani:"Yes I was dead serious ndoda. I can't go keep on living on piece jobs'

Mthunzi:"Okay then, I will introduce you to my gents. Do you know the late Mr Smith?"

Xolani:(whispering)" You mean the gang leader?"

Mthunzi:"Yes, how would you like to be on the gang. We don't force people to join us it will be your choice"

Xolani:"There's no danger out there?"

Mthunzi:"There is but you will be trained"

Xolani:"Where do I sign up? I need this, I need money. My mom back home in KZN needs food man"

Mthunzi:"Sho asvaye"

Xolani nodded and asked if Mthunzi can wait for him outside while he changes his clothes. He changed his clothes and wore black clothes. He took a pocket knife and he left with

Mthunzi. They headed to the warehouse. When they arrived there. There were about 8 boys who were new recruits. The gang had no women. They all waited for Themba.

After a short while Themba walked in looking casual on his black and white Adidas

tracksuits. And he addressed the whole crew. They showed him the boys. As procedure he asked the person who brought a person to stand with them. He then reminded the recruiters the rules of how they are responsible for their recruits. After that they asked the boys to introduce themselves. They all did. Xolani got his chance and got interrupted by someone on gang.

Gang member: "Ain't you the street kid? That begs on the street?"

Xolani: "Yes I was"

Themba: "Oh. So how did you get out of the streets?"

Xolani started getting a little bit nervous. He didn't expect that question but lying is his thing. A quick story came up in his mind.

Xolani: "My uncle who I was living with on the shacks before, told me to come back and start looking for a job because my mom is seriously ill back in KZN. She needs food to take her medication. I took his offer and looked for piece jobs. He then left Cape Town because he found a better job in Johannesburg. I live alone in his shack"

Themba: "Why did you leave the shack in the first place?"

Xolani: "He became a drunkard when things didn't go well. I came here to help him do gardens in the Northern suburbs. He was abusive so I ran away and went to the streets because I had no money to go back to KZN."

Themba asked if anyone knows him, the others who have had encounter with him confirmed that he seems like a good kid now.

Themba: "Sho. We hope you'll work hard to assist your mom"

Xolani: "Yes boss"

Themba: "So that's all for vandag, we will meet mōre to start with training"

The Gang: "Sure boss"

They bid farewell in their style and went their separate ways. Xolani felt like a weight on his shoulders had been lifted because clearly Themba didn't suspect anything. He couldn't wait to report the news to his real boss Thandeka....

---

After the meeting with the gang Themba was at the cinema with son watching the movie Ride Along 2. They were having a quality time together because Ethan Junior was going to leave in a few days. He was going back to his mom. After the movies he had to drive Ethan Junior home because he was finally going to meet up with Cikizwa. Ethan Junior had recovered very well and Themba was also maintaining a good relationship between his two kids and himself. After he dropped off Ethan Junior, he headed to the hotel. Within no minutes he was there talking to Cikizwa.

Themba: "Why were you not answering my calls?"

Cikizwa: "That's because I was at home and my dad knows about us. I heard him talking on the phone, I think he was talking to my aunt that I was sleeping with a married man. He doesn't know how to handle me. What am I going to do? He's all I got and now I have lost his trust. He can't even look at me in the eyes when talking to me. He's ashamed of me."

Themba didn't answer her. It all made sense to him that Cikizwa's father is the one who killed his daughter and from that moment all he could think about were cruel different ways that he was going to use to kill Cikizwa's father.

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

I just froze, I didn't know what to do. Her voice had too much authority yet it was breaking. I looked at her and she had tears in her eyes. I quickly looked down. I didn't know what to say. How can I be so stupid, I was supposed to dispose the condoms the very same day that we used them. Now I am in trouble, what if she tells my dad? Dad was starting to have a little faith in me. Now this? I was going to have parents who are angry at me.

Mom: Speak Alondwe What is this?

Me: I am sorry mom.

Mom: What did I say to you? When I spoke to you at your grandparents house?

Me: You said if I ever have a boyfriend ngobe ngizikhiphile kuwe.

Mom: It's better because you heard that right. From now on you must know that uzikhiphile kimi yezwa?

Me: Mom I am sorry. (I was crying)

Melo: Skwiza, she made a mistake. Don't do that to her. She's just a child.

Mom: Just a child? After what that boy did to her, she was supposed to distance herself from boys but No she's sleeping with them. You trust that boy that much that you can sleep with him huh?

I didn't say anything. How was I supposed to answer that question.

Mom: I am talking to you Alondwe. You can't speak now?

Me: I can speak.

Mom: Answer my question.

Me: I don't know what to say.

Mom: Skwiza did you know about this boyfriend?

Melo: No. I didn't. I think he came here when I was at work.

Mom: Alright. Your father should know about this.

Me:(I cried more) Mama please don't tell daddy. I will change mom I promise. I will break up with him please don't tell daddy.

There was a knock on the front door. My aunt went to get it. I was really hoping that it wasn't Thapelo.

Mom: Uyanginyanyisa khipha lento. (Dispose this thing)

I wiped my tears and took a toilet tissue. I took it with a toilet tissue. My aunt walked in with Nkululeko.

Nkulu: You are not ready yet mama bear, did you see the time.

My mom turned back and looked at him.

Me: I will get ready just now.

Nkulu: Oh my God where are my manners. Good morning Mrs Ndunakazi.

Mom: Good morning, you're Nkululeko?

Nkulu: Yes, I am sorry mam for taking Alondwe last night. I didn't want to have a party without my friend. I am really sorry.

Mom: It's alright. Next time let me know though.

Nkulu: I promise I will.

Mom: You were going to fly down together?

Nkulu: Yes, I am visiting my siblings but I will come to your house to start planning your ceremony.

Mom: Alright, thanks dear. (she looked at me) wena go and shower. I will call your father now.

Me: But mom-

Mom: Just go!

I nodded quickly and I left them. I went to shower my mom was really disappointed in me.

She didn't even have the strength to beat me or shout like she usually do. I finished up taking a shower and I went to moisturise my body. My mom was sweeping the floor in my room.

They had put my bed in it position.

Me: Mom What did dad say?

Mom: I didn't tell him about your filthy ways. I told him that I am going to Cape Town now. You'll come back with your friend. I tell him when I get home.

Me: What are you going to do in Cape Town?

Mom: Your brother will stay with me full time now.

Me: Oh. Mom please don't tell daddy.

Mom: Finish up there, Nkululeko is waiting for you.

I nodded blinking tears away. Thapelo and I just had a fight and now it's going to be my parents. What did I do to deserve all this? I finished up and wiped my tears. I took my suitcase and my bags. I went to the living room. They were having tea and cakes with Nkululeko entertaining them. They were laughing at his jokes.

Me: I am done, let's go Nkulu.

Nkulu: Sit down chomee we're still waiting for a cab.

I nodded and sat down. My mom kept on giving me a cold eye. I also wanted to eat the cakes but I decided against. Who knew what she was going to say. I sat there and played with my fingers.

Nkulu: Eat chomee. Feed the baby I know you love food.

I smiled a little and I ate too. I didn't even look at mom because her eye was going to make me put the cake down. Nkululeko's phone beeped and he took it out.

Nkulu: That is the cab. Asambe mngani.

I nodded and stood up. Mom and my aunt assisted us with our bags. We spotted the cab outside and the driver assisted us with packing our bags. We finished and I went to my aunt. She smiled.

Melo: I am sorry about what happened back there.

Me: It's alright. I just have to accept that my parents will cut me off their lives soon.

Melo: It won't go that far.

Me: They can still look after me but we won't have the same relationship. Do you know how hard will that be?

Melo: Don't cry baby.

She gave me a hug and she wiped my tears. I smiled. She kissed my forehead. I giggled.

Melo: I will miss you.

Me: I will miss you too.

I then went to the cab, mom was paying the driver. Nkulu and I stepped in at the back.

Mom: Travel safe then.

Us: Thank you.

She then left. No I love you or anything. The driver drove off.

Nkulu: What happened back there?

Me: I will tell you on the plane.

He nodded we listened to his music. He gave me the other earphone. Then we sang along until we made it to the airport.

We went the whole process and finally the plane took off. I started telling Nkululeko everything that happened.

Nkulu: I am sorry chomee don't cry please. Your mom will come around.

Me: Not if she tells my father.

He made me lay on his lap and he brushed my back.

Nkulu: You see being a girl is hard because now you're alone in this mess while you weren't alone when you did the fix.

I didn't say anything because he was right. But anyways I was going to wait and see how my father was going to react. I ended up falling asleep. I woke up when we were in Durban. We took our bags and we went to separate cabs. We hugged each other.

Me: I will see you right?

Nkulu: Yes I will call you tomorrow. We can have lunch with Andiswa at gateway mall.

Me: Alright bye.

We did the cheek kiss. The cab then drove me home. When I arrived, I paid and took my

bags. I had my remote so I opened the gate. I dragged my suitcase and carried my bag. I opened the door. My brothers were watching TV. Mesuli saw me first.

Mesuli: Look who's here Alupheli!

Alupheli looked at my direction and screamed.

Alupheli: Whoa! Our ugly sister is home daddy. Daddy.

I laughed and they came to hugged me. Daddy came downstairs. He hugged me.

Dad: My princess.

Me: Daddy. How are you doing?

Dad: Now that you're home. I am alright.

Alupheli: Now we can go out that Yoyondwe is here.

Dad: Yes. We are going out now.

I smiled and they helped me with my bags. We then went to dad's car.

Dad: You don't look too excited are you alright?

Me: I am fine daddy. Let's go.

He nodded and we left. At least I was going to enjoy the last few hours before mom comes back...

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

When Samkelo and I were told that the bail hearing for Uyabongeka's killer was suspended. I was disappointed and hurt. I didn't understand why they had to suspend it. Then we were told that the man was found unconscious in his cell. He was then admitted to the hospital. The trial was going to start as soon as he recover. That if he recover because his condition was critical. I was hoping that he does recover because I was really looking forward to finding answers to why my daughter was killed. I was really disappointed in my daughter, with how Samkelo and I had handled Alondwe I thought she was going to be a better person. Yes in my past I did things that I am not proud of and I told my daughter that I don't expect her to turn out like I did. I wanted her to do better, for herself. But knowing that she's sleeping with a certain boy out there I wasn't expecting that. She is only 16yrs old and pregnant with a child that she didn't plan. What if that boy her little heart. Does he even love her or they are just having sex where she thinks that he loves her. But he does not he just want to sleep with her. What was I supposed to think as a mother? That they love each other and I am happy for her? Was I supposed to think just because I did it too she must do it? I wasn't 16yrs that time. I didn't know what to think, the only thing in my heart and mind was worry. For sure she was dating a boy. I didn't want her to be heartbroken again. I've seen her like that and I ended up in the hospital. I wasn't going to hide this from Samkelo. I was going to tell him so that if anything happens to our daughter he won't say I didn't tell him. After they had left.

Melokuhle and I went back to the flat.

Melo: you're going to Cape Town now?

Me: Yes I have to. Being a mom is just something that one can think it's easy.

Melo: I am sorry that I didn't keep a close eye on her.

Me: No dear it's not your fault. Already you're doing enough by staying with her. I know you also like to have your own space since you're an adult now and now you have her to look after. We don't expect you to keep her from doing bad things. She should be responsible for her actions and we are grateful for what you're doing for us.

Melo: I am glad I could help. Alondwe is a great kid. I am sure this was just a mistake.

I shook my head and took my bag.

Me: Are you going home for December holidays?

Melo: Yes.

Me: Alright. I don't know where will we spend our holidays. Your brother and I haven't decided yet. But I am sure we will come to visit. I will see you there.

Melo: Alright, travel safely.

Me: Thanks bye.

Melo: Bye.

I left. My cab also arrived and it drove me to the airport. That's where I started all the process because I didn't know which flight I was going to take. As soon as I got my flight. We left. From the airport in Cape Town, a cab drove me to Themba's house. I paid and went to ring a bell. It was about 15:30. They let me in. I went inside. Uyathandwa was watching TV. He stood up when he saw me and he hugged.

Uyathandwa: Mom, I didn't know you're coming today. I thought it was tomorrow.

Me: I changed my plans, last minute. I am sorry.

Uyathandwa: You don't need to be sorry. Thank God my grandma annoyed me about packing early until I did it.

Grandma: Ethan Junior I can hear you from here.

We laughed and went to her on the couch. I greeted them.

Me: Hello Sisipho.

Sisi: Hello.

Me: How are you baby?

Sisi: I am fine, why are you taking my brother?

Me:(I sighed) I am not taking him. He will come and visit you.

She nodded and looked down. I looked at Uyathandwa.

Uyathandwa: She cried when dad told her that I am leaving.

Me: I am sorry hey.

Uyathandwa: It's alright mom. Are we leaving tonight?

Me: Yes I have to be home by tomorrow. I have already booked our tickets. Where's your mother and father?

Uyathandwa: Dad is upstairs.

Just then Themba came downstairs wearing all black. He was surprised to see me.

Themba: MaDhlomo.

Me: Hey Themba.

I stood up and we hugged each other. He sat down and I did the same.

Themba: I thought you were coming tomorrow.

Me: I know. I am sorry I had to change my plans fast. There's something that needs me to be home by tomorrow morning. It's quite urgent.

Themba: What time is your flight?

Me: 6pm.

Themba: Alright. I will be back by then. There's somewhere I have to be.

Me: Alright. Can you drop the three of us at the mall. You'll pick us up when you come back.

He nodded. Sisipho was excited that we were going out. She asked her father to change her.

He did and we left.

\*\*\*\*\*

3rd person narrator

Meanwhile after the training Xolani was eavesdropping at Themba and one of his trusted guys.

Themba: "I need you to help me on a secret mission. I know who killed my daughter here on the crew. I want them dead before December holidays ends."

The guy:" How did this happen boss?"

Themba:" He was trying to kill me but my daughter took the bullet. And I want that guy who is in prison not to survive because he will sell us out. And Thandeka -"

Cikizwa's father asked Xolani what he was doing outside Themba's office.

Xolani:"I wanted to talk to him but he is still busy inside"

Cikizwa's father: "When you have something to say to him tell your recruiter and he will tell him. That's protocol."

Xolani:" Oh I didn't know. I will leave now. Ta."

He walked away and Cikizwa's father looked at him until he disappeared...

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

It was great spending time with my dad and brothers though they were roasting me on the table.

Alupheli: I thought you'll come back looking better than before Yoyondwe. Awushintshi wena?

Me: Dad please.

Dad: What?

Me: You not going to help me. Tell him to back off.

Dad: Alupheli and Mesuli?

Mesuli: Dad?

Alupheli: You're not going to tell me to hold it. What's wrong mama's baby?

Dad laughed and I was just irritated. Why they were so on my case? Mesuli was looking at me.

Me: How am I supposed to spend the rest of my holidays with these kids?

Dad: They are your brothers and they are worried about you. They should worry if you have changed.

Me: Can they finish already I want to go home and watch TV.

Mesuli: She's back with watching chick flicks movies.

I stuck my tongue out for him and he shook his head. Dad settled the bill and he drove us back home. I was too tired to watch TV.

Dad: Y'all are going to sleep with me tonight.

Us: Yes!

We all ran to our rooms and changed our clothes to pyjamas. I took my phone and I had a missed call from Nkulu. I called him back. He answered.

Nkulu: Bitchy! Just because you're home you don't answer my calls?

Me: No daddy and I went out with our brothers.

Nkulu: yhu! The way you say daddy! You sound like a cartoon.

Me: Really?

Nkulu:(laughing) I will text you Andiswa's address. Tomorrow lunchtime please be here. We will go together.

Me: Alright baby. I will come. I want to sleep now. Goodnight.

Nkulu: Goodnight sweetness.

I smiled and hung up. I logged in on WhatsApp. I had a text message from Thapelo.

Thapelo:\*Did you arrive safe?\*

I responded with a "Yes" and I logged out. I left my phone in my room and I went to join the boys on the bed. We had a great chat just the four of us until I fell asleep. Dad didn't even ask me about where I was when mom called. He was just happy to see me.

In the morning we woke up when mom arrived. My brothers and dad were happy to see her. I on the other hand I was scared. They went to her and hugged her.

Mom: I have missed you.

Them: We missed you too.

Alupheli: Where is big brother?

Mom: He's in his room unpacking his clothes.

They both left the room running. They were happy that Uyathandwa was going to stay with us permanently. I greeted mom and she greeted me back.

Mom: Please excuse us. I want to speak to your father.

Me: Oh, okay.

I stood up slowly and I left the room. I knew that she was going to tell him. I went to Uyathandwa's room. I didn't even know how he was going to react when he see that I am pregnant. I knocked on the door.

Uyathandwa: Come in.

I opened the door and he raised his head.

Uyathandwa: What The Fuck!!?

Me: Uhm... Hi.

He was **astonished** I don't know how to describe the look on his face. He stopped packing and looked at me. Mesuli and Alupheli looked at him.

Alupheli: She has changed right?

Uyathandwa: Owami what is this that I am seeing with my eyes?

Me: What?

Uyathandwa: Jy swanger is (you are pregnant)

Me: It wasn't my plan to get. It's more complicated than you think.

Uyathandwa: What? You're going to tell me that you had a dream and woke up like this?

Before I could answer him. I heard my father calling my name.

Alupheli and Mesuli: Uyabizwa Alondwe/

Yoyondwe!

I left the room and went to my room because dad was there. He was with my mom who telling her not to beat me up. I started crying.

Dad: Your tears won't fool me. Come here.

My father was furious.

Me: Daddy I am sorry.

Mom: Calm down Samkelo.

Dad: We Thandeka ngeke ngihlale nengane esizobona iwumfazi. (I won't stay with a child who carries herself as a woman.) You're not studying in Johannesburg you're busy opening your legs for boys?

Me: Daddy-

Dad: Daddy wamasimba! Tsk! I need you to take your things and go back to Johannesburg. Where you can continue to carry yourself as an adult.

Mom: You don't mean that Samkelo.

Dad: If she wants peace, she will do as I say. I can't even stand her. I am ashamed Alondwe. When did you choose to grow up and do things that are bigger than you huh? When?

Me: I am sorry.

Dad: I understood that you felt pregnant by a mistake that you didn't even do nor ask for. But you're big enough to have sex? Uyanginyanyisa man! You're sleeping with boys in that apartment that I pay for?

Me: I didn't mean to do it.

Dad: I said take your bags that you came with and go back to Johannesburg. Ngeke ngihlale nengane esizobona iwumfazi emzini wami.

Me: Who will look after me dad? I don't work.

Dad: You should've thought about that before you opened your legs for that boy. If I finish bathing you should be gone.

He clicked his tongue and left. My mom followed him trying to tell him that he mustn't do what her dad did to her but wasn't listening to what she was saying. I locked my door and went to take a shower after calling the cab. I wasn't going to go back to Johannesburg. I was going to go to my grandmother's house Empangeni. I knew that dad meant every word and I had no strength to beg. I don't know why but I just stopped crying. It wasn't going to help

me. I finished up and wore my clothes. When I arrived I didn't unpack my clothes. I just took my bags and suitcase as they were. I took my phone. And I went downstairs. Mom and dad were arguing in their room. I was down I didn't even go to say goodbye to my brothers. The cab arrived and I left my father's house. As a child I wasn't to leave my father's house but I know my dad he was going to make my life hard. I didn't want to be uncomfortable in his house and give my baby stress. How was I supposed to enjoy my holidays with dad and mom giving me creepy cold looks. I wasn't even going to eat freely. I asked the cab to drop me off by Andiswa's house first. As soon as we arrived I left my bags and I asked him to wait for me because he was going to drive me to Durban station. I ringed the bell and explained myself to the maid. She let me in. And she had already opened the front door for me. And to my biggest surprise of all times! Andiswa, and Nkululeko were having a good time with Sphephelo. Nkululeko saw me first and stood up in shock.

Nkulu: Mama bear you're early!

Me: Screw you Nkululeko! Screw all of you! Tsk!

I left them. Nkulu tried to run after me but I swear at him. I stepped in the cab and he drove off to Durban station with me.....

Thandeka Ndunakazi...

We had a lot of fun with Themba's daughter. Uyathandwa was just there with us. He didn't like the fact that we were talking about little girls stuff. Spending time with Sisipho made me wish my little Uyabongeka was still alive. I was still looking forward to playing those doll house with her before she grows older and start doing things that I don't want her to do.

Looking at Sisipho made me wish that my baby boys won't grow up. When kids grow up they are come with greater responsibility. We shopped a little after eating. Uyathandwa kept on looking at me. He was giving me strange looks.

Me: What is it Uyathandwa?

Uyathandwa: Nothing mom.

Me: I can see you have something to say.

Uyathandwa: You miss her?

Me: Who?

Uyathandwa: Missy? You're buying her style for Sisipho.

Me: Uhm- I didn't realise. Eh- Sisipho take what you want I will pay. One dress and shoes.

Sisipho: Really?

Me: Yes.

Sisipho: Thanks aunty.

She hugged me. I smiled and put away the clothes that I had picked out for her. I don't know maybe I was trying to close the gap. She fitted her dress and shoes. They were alright and we went to pay.

Uyathandwa: You're not buying something for me?

Me: No I am not.

He laughed and nodded. Themba sent a text and we went to his car.

Me: Please try to hurry up.

Sisipho: Why don't you sleep with me in my bed?

Me: I would love to baby but I have big bums and curves your bed will be broken. And we must leave tonight.

She giggled and nodded. Her giggle was just too sweet. She was beautiful.

Uyathandwa: Mom?

Me: What?

Uyathandwa: Don't do that.

I didn't say anything. I just looked outside.

Themba: What is she doing Ethan?

Uyathandwa: She's seeing Missy in Sisipho.

Themba didn't say anything. He just kept on driving. I wiped my tears as they streamed down my cheeks. Uyathandwa opened my handbag and gave me face wipes. I thanked him and wiped my face. There was total silence in the car. We arrived at the his house and I stepped out of car. Themba did too and the kids went inside the house.

Themba: I am sorry alright.

Me: It's okay. I was just-

Themba: You don't have to explain I understand.

I nodded. He gave me a hug. I felt much better. He wiped my tears and kissed my forehead. I smiled.

Me: Thank you. I will wait here because you're driving us to the airport.

Themba: You don't want to come inside?

Me: No just help Uyathandwa with the bags and we will leave.

He nodded and left. I leaned by the car. After a while the whole family came out of the house accompanying my son. The assisted him pack the bags and they hugged and shared goodbyes. His grandmother cried. And his little sister.

Uyathandwa: I will come and visit you guys.

Mrs Smith: Please don't give your mom trouble..

Uyathandwa: I won't grandma.

Themba: Can we talk in private Uyathandwa.

He nodded and they walked away from us. We had small talks with Mrs smith until they came back. They took their time I wondered what he was saying to him. We then said our goodbyes and left. At the airport Themba assisted us with the bags.

Me: Thanks Themba. Goodbye.

Themba: Alright. Let me know when you lend.

I nodded. He hugged his son and he left.

When we arrived in my house in Durban. Uyathandwa went to his room and I went to mine. Samkelo and the kids were sleeping there so I went to sleep in the guest room. When I woke I told Uyathandwa to unpack his clothes and I went to wake my family up. I was happy to see them as they were. I asked Alondwe to excuse us and I was left with Samkelo.

Sam: What is wrong?

Me: You didn't want me to go to Johannesburg and it turns out that I was sensing something.

Samkelo: What is it?

Me: Your daughter's room was a mess, Alondwe can't even keep the environment that she lives in clean. And worse I found used condoms under her bed.

Samkelo: What do you mean used condoms?

Me: I mean there's a boy that she's sleeping with. Her aunt didn't know about the condoms and she knew them.

Samkelo: Are you trying to tell me that there is a boy who is sleeping with my little girl and she's letting him sleep with her.

Me: Yes. I had to tell you because I don't want you to say I am hiding things from you.

He clicked his tongue and stood up. He went to his belts shelf and took one belt.

Me: Samkelo You're not going to beat her up she's pregnant.

Samkelo: You're in no position to tell me what to do.

He called her and spoke to her. When he told her to leave I just couldn't let that happen. I followed him to our room.

Me: You can't chase our daughter out. She's already pregnant for goodness sake.

Samkelo: I am trying to make this easy. I can't stay with her because if I look her I will think of the filthy things that she's doing. How am I supposed to live with that?

Me: The solution is to send her back to that boy?

Samkelo: Maybe that's better.

Me: Samkelo are you hearing yourself right now? You're selling our daughter. Our only daughter. It's easy for you to ship her off huh?

Samkelo: Thandeka please. Unomsindo.

Me: (I cried) You're hurting me Samkelo not only her. How am I supposed to have a good festive season without my child's presence. My father did the same thing to me and you know that.

Samkelo: Okay. I will go. I will come back when she's gone.

Me: What?

Samkelo: That's the only solution I have.

Me: Alright fine, leave.

I wiped my tears and went to the door because the kids were knocking. I opened.

Uyathandwa: What is going on mom?

Me: Nothing to worry yourself about. Where's Alondwe?

Alupheli: He's not inside her room.

I went to her room and her bags were gone. I went back to my room. I told the boys to go back to their room and they did. I took my phone. Samkelo was sitting on the bed.

Me: Alondwe is gone.

Samkelo: You see how disrespectful she is? A child doesn't behave like her.

I called her and she didn't answer her phone. I tried a several times and she didn't answer.

Me: You see what you have done?

Samkelo: I did her a favour, obviously she wanted to go to her boyfriend she didn't waste time. She just left. She's disrespecting us and I won't tolerate it.

I clicked my tongue and left the bedroom. I didn't know what to do. My phone rang while I was drinking milk by the counter. It was Xolani.

Me: Xolani?

Xolani: Sis'Thandeka I don't have much time. Themba is planning on killing me guy who is prison for killing Uyabongeka. Apparently he's not the one who killed your daughter. He went there with an I'm to expose the gang and Themba.

Me: So he's taking a fall for something he didn't do

Xolani: Yes the only thing you need to with Muzi. Is to save the guy who is in prison. He can help you build a case against Themba.

Me: Yes that's right.

Xolani: Oh and Themba knows who killed your daughter. That person wanted to kill him but Uyabongeka took his bullet. I didn't get the name of that person because he didn't say it.

Me; No Xolani. You're not serious.

Xolani: I am dead serious I wouldn't lie to you about this.

Me: Please call me back later.

I hung up the phone and I ran to the bathroom that was downstairs. I sat on the toilet seat. I cried.

Me: How can Themba involve my children in his mess!?! That son of the bitch!

What must I do now!

Alondwe Ndunakazi...

I arrived at Richards bay and I took a taxi to my grandmother's house Emthunzini. That's where they were living. I didn't know if she was going to accept me or what but I was going to tell her the truth. A taxi dropped me off by the gate because I asked the driver. I paid him extra and thanked him. I went inside the premises. It was not the remote control gate. I knocked on the door. My grandmother opened the door. She smiled when she saw me.

Granny: Oh umzukulu wami.

I laughed and she hugged me tightly. I giggled. She then played with my tummy my baby started kicking.

Me: Gogo you're making him jump.

Granny: He must feel that his Khulu (great grandmother) is playing with him now.

Me: Ah uyathokoza gogo.

Granny: Come inside. You don't even warn us if you are coming here. Or send a hint. (We went inside with my bags. We sat down)

Me: Actually I didn't leave home because I wanted to. I did something wrong.

Granny: What happened baby tell me?

Me: My mom found (I told her everything)

Granny: Your father chased you out because of that?

Me: Yes gogo.

Granny: Uyahlanya USamkelo. Ithi ngimfonele.

Me: No gogo. Don't call him. I just want to be here and have a peaceful holidays with you, grandpa and my aunts. Because you'll call dad and shout at him. Then he will drive all the way from Durban to Richards bay and take me back home. I don't want him sending me back and forth like a toy.

Granny: I am sorry mntanami. I understand what you're going through even if it wasn't your intentions to sleep with that boy you can't control your hormones when you're pregnant. At least you're being responsible and don't do unprotected sex it might harm the baby because you don't know how many diseases are out there.

Me: Yebo gogo. Please don't tell grandpa that I –

Granny: The hidden agenda for your visit is between me and you. Your grandfather and aunts won't even know about it.

Me: Thank you gogo.

Granny: You did well by coming here and not going to Johannesburg. A grandmother's house is a place where you should run to whenever you are tired of your parents.

I laughed and she laughed together with me.

Granny: So tell me, do you love this boy or?

Me: (smiling) Awu gogo.

Granny: I am your grandmother, you can talk to me. I won't judge you.

Me: I love him gogo and I am pretty sure that he loves me. But we're still young so we don't know what the future holds for us.

Granny: You know your grandfather Ndunakazi and I started dated when we were doing grade 10. Then my first year in varsity I fell pregnant with your father. We didn't break up until I finished varsity. He had to go to work so that he can be able to take care of your father. His parents forced him to stop and my parents they didn't want me to leave school because of the baby. He had to come with a plan. Luckily he got a job and my mom looked after my baby while I was studying then your grandfather paid for everything. When I finished my studies I went to work and told him to go back to varsity. I told him I was going to tell my parents that he's maintaining the baby while I was doing that alone. He chose to study back home in Cape Town. That's where he met your step grandmother. But I found this wonderful man I am married to now. I got over your grandfather. What I am trying to say is if your love is pure and it's not just lust. It doesn't matter how young you're. This boy can love you till the end of your days. Look at your parents, they were also driving us crazy and we never thought that they will end up together.

Me: But grandma Thapelo and I are just two bulls in one kraal.

Granny: (laughing) Ningakwebhana all you want but at the end of the day if you love each other non of that matters. And he'll accept you as you're.

I smiled and stood up. I opened my arms for her. She laughed and stood up. She hugged me.

Me: Thank you gogo. I love you.

Granny: I love you too my baby. Now go put your bags in your room and come eat.

I nodded and went to the room that I share with my aunt Simthande. I checked my phone and I had missed calls from mom and Nkululeko. I left my phone and I went to eat with Grandma.

My aunt and grandpa were at work. After eating she told me to go and rest. I washed the dishes and I went to sleep.

I woke up when my phone was ringing. Nkululeko was calling me. I answered.

Me: What do you want?

Nkulu: Alondwe look we need to talk please meet me at gateway my friend please.

Me: Don't call me your friend because clearly you don't know the meaning of the word.

Nkulu: Look Sphephelo is my brother and he asked me to look after you and the baby.

Me: Hehehe look after me and the baby? Who's baby? My baby?

Nkulu: Come on Alondwe it's not like you love that baby.

Me: Excuse me? You don't know what I went through because of that brother of yours. The nerve. Tsk!

Nkulu: What was he supposed to do if you're not letting him be part of his child?

Me: His child? Which child because when I told him that I am pregnant. He told me to abort the baby. Which child is he talking about huh?

Nkulu: He was scared.

Me: Ey lalela wena Nkulu ungakhulumi into ongayazi. And please naka izindaba zakho girl. Tsk!

I hung up the phone. I just felt really betrayed by Nkululeko. I trusted him kanti he was just putting a front just to please his so called brother. I was missing my Phinadi so I swallowed my pride and called him. I just wanted to act up and see what he was going to do. I called him and he answered.

Thapelo: Alondwe.

Me: You're not calling me because I am no longer there now. I see you Thapelo. Now that You're not tapping my ass so you've stopped calling. Mhm!

I hung up the phone and smiled. I stared at my phone hoping that he will call me back. A few minutes passed I started being regretful. Then he called when I was about to cry. I answered and started acting up as a little girl who is heartbroken. But happiness bafwethu. I was really happy that he called back.

Me: What Thapelo What?

Thapelo: Pelo ae ka (my heart)

I smiled as my tummy felt the whole zoo going on. I knew what that meant. He had told me before.

Me: Huh?

Thapelo: What is wrong now?

Me: Phinadi you're not talking to me. Who am I supposed to talk to?

Thapelo: But little pudding the last time I checked you were mad at me.

Me: Yes and you were mad at me too. But you don't miss me if you angry?

Thapelo: I miss you every second of the day my Princess. I am sorry alright.

Me: I am sorry too my Prince I was being the crazy Alondwe.

Thapelo: I love you even when you are like that.

Me: I love you too. My chocolate brownie?

Thapelo: Yes my white chocolate.

Me: My parents (I told him the whole story and I told him what happened with Nkululeko)

Thapelo: I am really sorry my Princess. I am glad that you went to your grandmother. You did the right thing but they will come around. Don't worry. As for Nkululeko I am lost for

words. Wow?

Me: I trusted him.

Thapelo: I know my love but don't worry you have me. If you need a friend to gossip with and do everything that you want to do with just call your baby.

Me: You're my all in one right?

Thapelo: I am your all in one little pudding (we laughed) So if I want to marry you, your father will chase me out?

Me: Thapelo man stop talking about marriage.

He laughed and said: I love you okay wifey?

Me: You're too forward! Bye. I want to go and eat.

Thapelo: Alright bye.

He made the kiss sounds and I made them back. We laughed and hung up. Ah? Thapelo my all in one

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

At the dinner table everyone was quiet. The only sound that was loud was plates. My mind was wondering where was my daughter.

Alupheli: Why did Yoyondwe leave mom?

Me: Ask your father. I don't know.

Alupheli looked at him and he didn't say anything.

Mesuli: Dad you're not going to answer him?

Samkelo: I don't know why did she leave.

They looked at each other and shook their heads. I looked at Samkelo, he was looking at them. He then looked at Uyathandwa.

Samkelo: How was school this Ethan?

Uyathandwa: School was challenging because I was doing new subjects different from those we did in grade 8 and 9.

Samkelo: Which stream did you take?

Uyathandwa: I took the commerce stream. I want to study business science after metric.

Samkelo: That's good. I can help you apply for bursaries after metric because I know a few companies who fund students who wants to pursue a career in business science. What you need is good grades.

Uyathandwa: I will try my best. Thank you.

He nodded. I finished up eating and I left them still talking about business. When I came back from the kitchen I noticed Alupheli was no longer eating he was just drooling over them like he wanted to join the conversation but he didn't know what they were talking about.

Me: I am sorry to disturb your conversation but Uyathandwa since you'll be here with the boys during the day do you want me to tell Mam'Nancy to come or you'll be fine with them?

Uyathandwa: Please tell her to come because Alondwe is not here.

Me: Alright. Alupheli and Mesuli please brush your teeth before bed.

Alupheli: I am sleeping with you tonight.

Me: Really? I don't need you.

Alupheli: Sadly that's not your call to make.

He quickly faced his plate and pretended like he didn't just say that to me. I went closer to him. I pinched his ear. He cried and looked at me.

Me: You will mind your tongue when speaking to me Alright?

Alupheli: What did I say mom?

Me: I said do you understand?

Alupheli: Yes I understand. I am sorry, I am sorry.

Uyathandwa and Mesuli giggled avoiding to laugh at him. I left him crying and went upstairs.

I took my phone and called Alondwe but her phone was off. I figured I should call her aunt. She answered after a few rings.

Melo: Mfazi kaMfowethu.

Me: (laughing) How are you Skwiza?

Melo: I am alright and you?

Me: I am fine. Did Alondwe arrive safe there?

Melo: Alondwe? But she left on Saturday.

Me: Yes. She was supposed to go back to Johannesburg. Her father chased her out because of the condoms issue.

Melo: Ah! Skwiza why did you tell my brother. You know how he is. You wasn't supposed to tell him.

Me: Alondwe is not there Melokuhle?

I didn't want to go there, I just wanted to know where she was.

Melo: No. She's not.

Me: Maybe she went to your mom.

Melo: But mom was going to tell me if she was there. I was speaking to her just a few minutes ago.

Me: Dear Lord. Where is my daughter? Can you please send her friend's number.

Melo: Alright. I will.

Me: Thanks.

I hung up. I didn't want to panic. I tried to keep calm as possible. The number came through and I called Nkululeko right away. He answered.

Nkulu: Hello?

Me: Nkululeko it's Alondwe's mother. I want to ask is Alondwe with you?

Nkulu: No. She came here in the morning and she left. Is everything alright mem?

Me: Do you have her boyfriend's number?

Nkulu: Boyfriend?

Me: Come on I know that she has a boyfriend just give me his number please.

Nkulu: Alright. I will try and find it for you. If I get it I will send it to you.

Me: Alright thanks.

I stood up and started pacing up and down. I was really worried. Samkelo walked in with Alupheli. He was holding him.

Samkelo: What's wrong Thandeka?

I didn't answer him. I just took my phone and I went to the balcony. I sat on the chair there and stamped my foot out of worry. Samkelo told Alupheli to go to his room he will call him later. He didn't fight him, he just left. Samkelo came to me.

Samkelo: What is wrong?

Me: I don't know where my daughter is.

Samkelo: Isn't she supposed to be with her aunt? Me: She's not there and she's not with your mom either.

He took his phone and called his father. His father said Alondwe wasn't with them. He wanted to know what happened but Samkelo didn't tell him the whole story.

Samkelo: Do you think she really went to her boyfriend?

Me: I don't know, how am I supposed to know. Her phone is off. What if –

Samkelo: Don't think like Thandeka please.

My phone beeped. I checked it quickly. It was the name and the number of the boy.

Samkelo: Who is it?

Me: The name and the number of her boyfriend.

Samkelo: Let me speak to him.

Me: Samkelo-

He snatched my phone from my hand and called the boy putting him on loud speaker. His phone rang until he answered.

Thapelo: Thapelo Moloji speaking Hello.

Samkelo: She's dating a Sotho boy?

Me: Samkelo please!

Thapelo: Excuse me who am I talking to?

Samkelo: Hheyi you're speaking to Alondwe's dad. Where is my daughter boy?

Thapelo: Sir how am I supposed to know?

Samkelo: How? Huh! Do you hear yourself. You sleep with my daughter but you don't know where she is? Do you even love her? Do you even know what love is boy?

Thapelo: Sir I love your daughter with all my heart.

Samkelo: You love her? Sleeping with her while she's 16 is love. You love her?

Me: Samkelo this is not the right time to talk about love. I want my daughter.... Eh Thapelo baby didn't she call you?

Samkelo: You're calling him baby now. Are you friends with him. Iyakujabulisa le ngane?

Me: Samkelo please man! .... Thapelo?

Thapelo: She did call me but she didn't tell me that she left your house.

Samkelo: You know exactly where my daughter is. You're hiding her there huh?

Thapelo: No I am not.

Me: Samkelo please!

Samkelo: He's lying. Look boy stay away from my child. Or I will break your bones. Do you hear me?

Before he could answer Samkelo's phone rang. His dad was calling so he excused himself.

Me: Look dear if she calls again please ask where she is and call me.

Thapelo: Okay I will mam.

Me: Thanks.

Thapelo: I am really sorry about what happened but I really love your daughter mam.

Me: Look boy. I don't want to talk about that tonight.

I hung up the call and waited for my husband. He came back after a while.

Samkelo: My father said she's with my mom Empangeni.

Me: Oh Thank God. He called your mom?

Samkelo: Yes. At least she didn't go to that boy. There's some respect left in her after all.

Me: You owe that boy an apology.

Samkelo: An apology for what? For sleeping with my daughter? Huh. I won't do that.

Me: He sounded like a good boy.

He gave me one ugly and cold stare then he left the room. I made my way to bed thinking about the fact that I should try to bring her back home. Samkelo came back with Alupheli and we slept.

The following day. I left the boys with Nancy. I went to work. The first thing I did when I arrived at work was to go to Muzi. I told him everything that Xolani had told me.

Muzi: What should we do? Do you have something in mind?

Me: I do have a plan.

Muzi: Let's meet at the planning room with the team in 5minutes. We don't have time on our side. This is a rescue task. We need to be fast.

I nodded and left his office. I went where everyone was and I shouted.

Me: Camille and the planning team be in the planning room in five minutes. We have some work to do!

They all started moving responding to my request. This was the real beginning of my plan of action...

Nobuhle Mthembu.....

The following day was a Monday. My husband was going to work. I had to wake up and prepare breakfast for him. I had to make his lunch if he requested for it. At the kitchen Gary was there with his wife. I greeted them and they greeted me back.

Garry: I have been meaning to speak to you.

Me: About?

Garry: I heard my brother bought groceries for you.

Me: Yes, so?

Garry: Why would you give him such a burden? Money doesn't fall from trees Precious.

Me: I know that. And it's his money not yours. Why are you bothered?

Garry: He's my brother and I should look out for him if his gold digging wife is misusing his money.

I didn't even expect that from him. I just looked at him for a few seconds.

Garry: You ruined our relationship by failing to walk away if you saw that we both wanted you but that doesn't mean I won't protect him from you.

Me: That's nice of you. At least he has more than one fake guard in this house.

Priya: I don't appreciate the way you're speaking with my husband. Where's your respect. He's your brother in law.

I didn't say anything to her. I started doing what I came to do in the kitchen.

Garry: So you'll tell him to stop buying you groceries?

Me: The day I will be ready to die. I think that's when I will tell him to stop buying them. He looked at me, clicked his tongue and left with his wife. I sighed and continued making breakfast for him. I served him in our room because he was already late.

Me: Please hurry up. You're late.

Rajiv: I am not feeling alright. I think I have a stomach bug.

Me: What?

I went to him and I felt his temperature. It was alright but he was sweating. I went to get a towel and I wiped him.

Me: You need to see a Doctor if you are not getting better after breakfast.

Rajiv: Don't worry I will go and see the Doctor.

I nodded and I watched him have breakfast.

Rajiv: Don't you want a taste?

Me: No I am alright.

Rajiv: Eat something then so that it won't be awkward that you're just looking at me.

Me: You're my husband I should gaze at you.

Rajiv: Alright feed me then.

I laughed and fed him. He was so cute.

Rajiv: I love you Mrs Pillay.

I smiled and kissed him on his cheek.

Me: I love you too my love.

He finished up and he stood up. He took his bags. He kissed my forehead and my tummy. I giggled.

Rajiv: Daddy will see you both after work. Take care of our Pride.

I smiled and said: I will.

He nodded and left. I went to shower after he left. I made cereals for myself. I then took the dishes and went to the kitchen. Aunts and Claudine were having breakfast. I greeted them.

Claudine: You eat in the bedroom now?

Me: No my husband was.

Claudine: So where is that grocery your husband bought?

Me: What grocery, I was tricking him . I just wanted him to buy food for my parents.

I smiled and headed to the kitchen. I wasn't going to let them walk over me. I had an itchy skin because of their food. I wasn't going to let them walk over me just like that. I started cleaning the kitchen. I was planning on visiting my mom during the day. I was going to make up something to Claudine. I was missing her. I did my chores and the maid was helping me this time around. Garry's wife was not home. After doing a part of my chores I was hungry. I went to my room. I bumped into Claudine on my way there.

Claudine: Why is your room locked? I was installing a fragrance oils in every room.

Me: Thanks but I have problem with fragrance oils. The smell doesn't do justice on my chest.

Claudine: Oh. So why is your room locked?

Me: It's just orders from my husband. But if you need something in my room. You can talk to me first.

She shook her head and left. I went inside and locked myself up. I ate yoghurt. I had texted my mom telling her to prepare my favourite meal because I was going to visit her. I didn't want to eat food. I finished up and I took my bag. I locked the fridge and the cupboard. I then locked my room and went to Claudine. She looked at me.

Me: Mummy I am going out.

Claudine: Where are you going?

Me: I have an appointment with the Doctor for a follow up.

Claudine: You mean check up?

Me: No I mean follow up. But I have something I want to buy for my sister's twins.

Claudine: Your sister is having twins?

The surprised look she had was just priceless. I even got suspicious that maybe she was jealous but why?

Me: Yes I am a twin myself. Is there something wrong?

Claudine: No dear.... Uhm you can go.

I nodded and left. I took a cab that drove me to West Street. That's where I made my way to the taxi eya emlazi.

I arrived at home and I entered the house. My mom was having tea on the lounge. She smiled when she saw me. We greeted each other. I sat down.

Me: Did you see how hot it is outside?

Mom: Don't start Hlehle.

I laughed and I went to the kitchen. I dished up the food and I went to the lounge. I sat down and started eating.

Mom: They are not feeding you huh?

Me: I don't eat with them anymore. My husband bought groceries for me.

Mom: That's wonderful but even if he did. You must be careful. Don't leave your pots lone while cooking.

Me: This is not life at all, so I must always be at watch for my child's life.

Mom: There's nothing you can do baby. Mothers protect their children it's their jobs. This is your first step to motherhood. You do anything to protect your children and you make them your first priority even if it means going against your in-laws.

Me: Yes mom I will always remember that.

Mom: Another thing you must pray. Take a half day fasting prayer. Wake up midnight go to the bathroom and pray. You'll see Jesus working wonders. They can plan against you but you'll sit back and watch Jesus Christ dealing with them.

Me: Thanks mom. I am glad that I came here.

She smiled and we spoke about random things. My mother was a blessing. I wish I could grow up to be a even better mom. My phone rang while we were talking. I answered my husband's call.

Me: Honey.

Rajiv: Where are you? I am home now I brought you lunch but you're not here. You didn't tell me you'll go out.

Me: I am with my mom at home.

Rajiv: What? How can you go there without my permission? You're putting the baby's life in danger. That township is not safe.

Me: Oh please stop being a coward. I grew up here and nothing happened to me.

Rajiv: Please come back home. I can't fetch you now I am going back to work.

Me:(pretending that I am crying) But our baby wants to stay with mom just a few hours. The baby loves my mom a lot and if I go back home I will cry if I don't see her.

Rajiv: Okay, Okay, don't cry alright. Stay with your mom I will fetch you after work.

Me: Thank you baby.

Rajiv: Take care.

Me: Will do.

I hung up the call and wiped my tears. They came out for real. Mom looked at me and we both laughed.

\*\*\*\*\*

3rd person narrator.

Meanwhile Claudine was having a conversation with Tashrika. They were changing their plans.

Claudine:"She might be caring twins. All we need is a witch doctor. The pills won't be enough because she can be pregnant again. We need something that will make her not to have kids. That is necessary she must pay for the pain I felt when my husband came back with that bastard child."

Tashrika:"Yes that's true. I know one"

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

We were at the planning room. I was sharing my idea with the team.

Me: So guys I have an idea as Muzi has briefed you all about our situation. I think I have an idea.

A member from the team raised her hand. I pointed her.

Member: If I may ask Miss?

Me: Firstly I am not Miss, secondly quit the chicky attitude. We're working here.

Member: Oh mam. Why is this project so important to us? To me this looks like a personal matter. Your personal matter. Now you're making it out business? How is that fair to us?

Me: This is not a personal matter.

Member2: Oh please some of us know that this thug is your ex husband. Now you want to pay revenge using us? That's ridiculous! Muzi?

Muzi did say anything. He just looked at me. These people were getting on my nerves. They were pressing the last button. The others agreed using their heads as gestures.

Me: Look here people. If this was a personal matter I wouldn't be here. I know how to deal with my personal matters on my own. I have done that before and nothing can stop me now.

Member: We won't buy that talk.

Me: Themba is my ex husband, that is no secret. According to Muzi's plan of projects. He was going to be our first project because of his gangsterism. Now we need to take him down. And yes I personally want this to be done because my daughter is dead because of him. So what do I call this on my terms. I call it hitting two birds with one stone because the team will win and I will win. So whoever don't want to be in this team take your things and leave now. Because I Thandeka Ndunakazi for those who don't know me. I will not work with people who have a stinky attitude. Do you understand me?

Them: Yes.

I sighed and looked at Muzi.

Muzi: Thanks Mrs Ndunakazi for that. People I wasn't going to allow a go ahead on this task if it was a private matter only. Not because we don't care about your private matters but if someone has a private matter and they need our assistance. We can only help them partly not fully. So Themba was going to be our first assignment and Thandeka will be of great help because he knows him better. She'll also benefit from this.

Them: We understand.

Muzi: Let's here your plan.

Me: This might take a lot of our time.

Muzi: And we do not have time Thandeka because remember that Themba is in Cape Town and he can get to the guy very fast. We must rescue that guy by Wednesday. He is our only hope. But please share.

Me: I understand. I think we need to go there as officials who are going to move the guy from that prison hospital to another. Then on the way we can switch up and bring him back to KZN.

Member3: And what type of transportation we will be using when bringing him back to KZN?

Me: The plane is not convenient because of the procedure and all those things so clearly we will be driving.

Member 4: That means we need a mini van that will cater for a sick person.

Me: Yes and we will need costumes and some make over. Not necessarily masks but different make ups and hairstyles or cut. Basically we need to dress the part.

Member 2: That will take a lot of time Mrs Ndunakazi-

Me: please call me Thandeka.

Member 2: Alright. We won't be able to do the rescue on Wednesday if we go with that plan. We need to contact some people who will help us get the government ambulance for prisoners. And not just any prisoners Cape Town prisoners. Yes we have connection all over but it will take time. And make overs? And costumes. We need a plan that will make us to be ready by Tuesday midnight. Because first thing on Wednesday we must be on the gates.

Muzi: He has a point Thandeka.

Me: But this was going to be more convenient to the officials in Cape Town.

Member 1: Yes that's true but can we come with other ideas if they don't sound more convenient we can go with your plan and try to perform miracles.

We allowed them to discuss together while Muzi and I accessed them. The first pair had an idea but it was too complicated and it had more illegal dealings. We were out of clues.

Member: I have a plan but we also have to break the law a little.

Us: We are listening.

Member: What we need is to go there as KZN officers who have found our missing "most wanted" for a number of crimes. Crimes which are greater than that one he is suspected of.

Me: How can we convince them to give us him.

Member: Simple. We will fake the docket of his criminal offences. We will fake his identity and the prison number.

Me: They'll need to confirm this.

Camille(IT lady): I can do something about that. You'll give them the Westville prison telephone codes. And once they direct the lines to Westville I will come along and trick it back to our office. So someone will answer here and confirm that the guy you want is our most wanted. I can even offer them emails if they need more information.

Me: And when you say that clearly he'll say "No mam or Sir. Your word was enough. We will send the prisoner"?

Camille: Exactly Thandeka.

Me: What do others think?

Them: It's brilliant.

Me: Alright. So it's time to draw up the whole plan. Entrances of the building, security system and everything. Let's start working people.

They wasted no time. We started jotting down every detail of the plan. Once we were done, Camille summed up everything and installed the plan on our work devices. It was lunch time already and we were done with planning.

Muzi: Thank you everyone. Now we will need the task team for the second phase.

We clapped hands and shook hands with each other. They then left. We then went to our lunch time. I called my husband. He answered.

Samkelo: Mam?

Me: Hey, I wanted to let you that I will arrive late at home. We have an important project and it should be carried out by Wednesday. Time is not on our side. Please buy dinner for you and the kids.

Samkelo: Alright.

Me: Thanks.

I hung up the call. I was still mad at him for chasing Alondwe out. And he knew that. I checked up on my boys and let them know that I was going to come home late. After that I had my lunch.

After lunch we went back to the room with the task team now. We showed them everything on the projector. Muzi did the presentation and we then divided the work on who was going to do what and what. Then we took our vehicles as pairs and we went to collect the material that we needed. Muzi and I went to our police who were going to help us with the vehicle. Someone was going to drive it down that night for it to be there on Wednesday. It was a very long day because by 16:00 I was tired and the headache was killing me. But I grabbed something on our way back to the centre. I took painkillers. I felt much better. We arrived with our materials and we placed everything in order for everyone who was going to Cape Town.

Muzi: So people Tomorrow night. We're leaving for Cape Town. We will meet our make up artists there. We hope everything will go according to plan.

Team: We hope so too.

Me: So we will meet tomorrow night.

Team: Yes.

We clapped hands and someone suggested we pray. So we did and I went to my office for my things. My phone rang Samkelo was calling.

Me: I am almost done. I will be home with in 30 minutes.

Samkelo: There are police here who are looking for you. So please come home.

Me: What? Police?

Samkelo: Yes.

I hung up the phone and made my way to my car very quick....

\*\*\*\*\*

3rd Person Narrator

And in Cape Town. Themba, the detective and his team were ready to kill the prisoner on Wednesday

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay...

I was having a good time with my mom, my brother and father when my husband called letting me know that he was outside the gate. I took my bag.

Me: It's time for me to go.

Dad: Thank you Hlehle for coming to visit us and for giving us the news about our

grandchild.

Sakhile: Yes, that means soon I will be an uncle to three beautiful babies.

We all laughed at that.

Me: I turn to miss you a lot guys.

Mom: Don't be like that mntanami. Enjoy your time with your in-laws. Just don't think about us too much and don't worry too much.

Dad: It has been two months since she got married it's still early she's bound to miss us. I shed some tears. They stood up and hugged me. Then they all walked me out.

Me: Mom why didn't you tell my sister that the father of her kids is getting married same weekend that she'll be here?

Mom: I don't know how to tell her. Will you please come to the wedding. That weekend is just this coming week.

Me: I will tell my husband maybe we will come together.

Mom: No problem baby. Go well.

Me: Stay well family.

They waved goodbye and I went to my husband's car. He opened the door for me and he went on his side and drove off.

Rajiv: How was spending time with your parents?

Me: It was very good. I am sorry that I lied to Claudine.

Rajiv: it's alright. I understand. I don't know if they will.

I sighed and he gave me a takeaway from steers. I smiled and thanked him.

Rajiv: I ate the one I bought for you at lunch time.

Me: Thank you baby. I will eat now. Did you go and see the Doctor?

Rajiv: I was feeling better during the day so I didn't go.

Me: Are you better now?

Rajiv: Yes I am much better. Thanks.

I nodded and continued eating while having small talks with him.

After a long drive we were finally home. The family was on the lounge watching TV. It was clear that they had eaten supper. My father in-law called us. We sat down and they turned down the volume.

Mr Pillay: Precious my wife tells me that you left saying you're going to the mall but you just came back. Where were you?

Me: I bumped into my mother. So I went home with her.

Aunt Theresa: What was your mother doing at Chatsworth?

Me: Uhm... She was buying fabric for her dress that she'll be wearing on the wedding of our pastor's son. So I helped her.

Aunt Tashrika: Why didn't you call your mother in-law and tell her that?

Me: I am sorry it slipped my mind.

Aunt Tashrika: We don't allow wives of this house to do as they please. I don't know why would you visit your mother's house like you still live there. Tell us if you want to go back there.

Me: I am sorry it won't happen again.

Claudine: It's alright. Dish up food for your husband and eat something too. We don't want your parents to think that we are not giving you food.

Me: Yes mummy.

I stood up and held my husband's hand. We went to the kitchen together. I dished up food for him and I watched him eat. I wasn't hungry so I didn't eat anything. After he ate his food we went to shower together.

Rajiv: I liked the way you handled them earlier.

Me: I just didn't want them to bite my head off.

Rajiv: I love you. Now how about we give our baby an ear.

Me: What?

Rajiv: Come on.

He giggled and I did too. We then gave our baby an ear.

#### WEEKEND OF THE WEDDING

The whole week was great for me and my husband. We are just bonding with our child. And bonding as a couple too. I was in love with him inside and out. As my mom said I didn't stop praying, every morning, during the day at 12 and midnight. Claudine was acting really strange around me. She was suddenly too sweet. I didn't know what she was up to but something wasn't adding up. Though it was hard to convince our parents to let me go to the wedding. Rajiv tried hard to convince them and they agreed. We were wearing our Indian matching colours attire. My husband looked really cute and I was beautiful too. An African dark skinned curvy woman in a gold and red sari? Just a perfect view. We started by going to my parents house. Rajiv stayed behind while I went inside. My mom was with my sister who was sitting on the couch crying. It seemed as if she had broke the news about Philani getting married. I sat down with them. She looked at me and cried even more shaking her head.

Me: I am sorry sisi.

Philisiwe: Why is he doing this to me?

Me: Maybe his father forced him to it.

I hugged her tightly until she was calm.

Me: Now you'll wipe your tears and go to that wedding.

Philisiwe: What? With me looking like this?

Me: You're beautiful my sister.

Mom: Yes you're beautiful.

She smiled and nodded. We then went to her room to dress her up. She was beautiful and busy mocking my Indian look. It was fun to have her around. I even got over the fact that she didn't want to pay for my studies. After we were all ready my husband drove us to church. My mom and sister were giving him a whole lot of questions. It was funny. The way he was behaving around them. I just loved him. We arrived at the church and a lot of people were surprised to see my sister. They were giving her nasty looks. And gossiping. You know township gossipers.

It was a beautiful wedding but heartbreaking for my sister. I could see it in her eyes. But she tried to be strong. After the holy matrimony we went to the wedding reception. Then it was traditional wedding. We were at pastor's home. At the tent we were eating. The pastor's wife came to where we were with my sister, my husband and I.

Pastor's wife: Oh Philisiwe! You're here.

Philisiwe: Yes, my family was invited so I came.

Pastor's wife: Don't you think it's a bad idea for you to be here.

Me: Honestly mamfundisi you should have asked how your grandchildren that she's carrying are doing instead of worrying about your reputation.

Pastor's wife: What? She's carrying more than one baby?

Before I could answer her a little girl came looking for the pastor's wife. Then Philani came too following the girl. He wasn't aware that my sister was at his wedding. The shock on his face when he saw her.

Philani: Philisiwe? You're here.

Pastor's wife: Philani baby don't mind her. Let's go please. You'll attract people's eyes.

Philisiwe was crying already. She stood up and I followed her. We went at the back of the building. I hugged her.

Philisiwe: I shouldn't have come here. Did you see how beautiful his wife is? He moved on in just six months?

Me: I am sorry sisi.

Philisiwe: I came back because I thought maybe there was a chance for us to be together with our children. I thought maybe I was dramatic and now I have lost him.

I didn't know what to say. I just hugged her. After she was calm, she told me that she wanted to go. I told my husband. Mom stayed behind and we left. Philani was not around when we left. I was feeling sorry for my sister...

\*\*\*\*\*

3rd person narrator

That night of the wedding, Rajiv and his wife came back home. They were sleeping in their room when Tashrika and Claudine poured the powder outside the door of Rajiv and Nobuhle's bedroom. If Nobuhle crossed the line of the powder she was going to loose her pregnancy and never have kids again. They went back to their room feeling good about their deed

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

I drove my car straight to my house. I was wondering what were the police doing in my house and what did they want from me. I was flying on the road. My mind was all over until I made it home. Their car was still in my house. I drove through my garage and went inside. They were in my lounge with my husband. They were asking him questions. I joined them. I sat next to my husband.

Samkelo: This is my wife officers.

Police 1: Hello Mrs Ndunakazi.

Me: Officers how can I help?

Police 2: We're here to ask you about your stepmother's disappearance.

Me: Oh what about it?

Police 2: Do you know anything about her disappearance?

Me: How should I know? She wasn't my wife.

Police 2: Her daughter told us about your relationship with her. And according to what she told us and what your father told us, you two didn't get along.

Me: Oh you spoke to my father?

Police 2: Yes.

Me: You should be questioning him because Maud was his wife. Yes we didn't get along because she tried to make my father bankrupt and she killed my mom.

Police: And you have proof that she killed your mom?

Me: I overheard her talking to her daughter about it. They were planning on killing me too because I didn't like her. As a result I even went to the hospital because of shock. That's no secret that we didn't get along.

Police 1: Where do you work? If I may ask.

I didn't know how to answer that question. But I quickly answered him.

Me: I have retired from work. I was an architect.

Police 1: So where are you working now? You're a wife who comes back home after 7?

Me: Sorry officers how does that concerns you?

Police 1: We need to know where do you work now?

Me: Please answer them. Because I don't know how on earth is that their problem.

I looked at Samkelo because I didn't know what lie I was going to say. I couldn't expose our team.

Samkelo: My wife is working on the company that I tried to start when I was suspended from work. When I was reinstated I told her to continue with it because she had already resigned. That is why she came back late.

Police 1: The company is up and running?

Samkelo: Is this about Maud or my wife's workplace?

Police 1: I was just concerned.

I started getting suspicious of this police man who was interested in my work life than the case. I didn't even trust both of them now. I stood up.

Me: You know what officers I will come down to the station to make my statement. Because clearly you're not interested in this case. Please stand up and leave my house.

Police 2: We didn't say come to the police station.

Me: But I will anyway.

I didn't even give them a chance to speak. I stood up and I opened the door for them. They tried to protest but I gave them no choice. They left. I sighed and closed the door. I went back to the couch.

Samkelo: Why didn't you tell me that Olwethu wanted to know her mom's whereabouts?

Me: I didn't tell you? A.a I told you.

Samkelo: No you didn't Thandeka.

Me: Oh I thought I did. I am sorry. But there's no proof that we had a hand to Maud's disappearance. They can't arrest me.

Samkelo: Yes they don't have proof.

Me: Uhm so you're starting a company?

Samkelo: I wasn't going to tell you yet but you have seen me before doing something with Candice.

Me: Oh you two are business partners?

Samkelo: Yes, what were you thinking?

Me: I don't know. She was busy bringing my kids to the hospital while you didn't want to see me. What was I supposed to think.

Samkelo: So you were jealous?

Me:(standing up) Me? Jealous of that woman? The candy crush owner? No I wasn't.

He looked at me and laughed. I pouted and left him. I was jealous when that Candice woman was busy nursing my kids though she had a ring on her finger that meant nothing but I trust that nothing happened between them because Samkelo came back home to his mama. .

I took a shower. I sent an email to muzi telling him everything about his sister and I went to join my family for dinner. I greeted my boys. They greeted back.

Alupheli: Why did you arrive late mom I was waiting for you all day.

Me: Waiting for me? Why?

Alupheli: I missed you. I will sleep with you tonight.

Me: Alright baby.

Samkelo: You're not sleeping in my bed.

He looked at him once and he looked at me. He didn't say anything at all but I could see that he didn't like what his father said to him but he didn't argue his point. I didn't say anything too, clearly they had their hidden agenda. I had a conversation with my boys. Uyathandwa seemed more relaxed. We were having a good conversation. We washed the dishes after dinner and try stayed behind watching Tv. I called my daughter. She didn't answer her phone. I called her grandmother. She answered and I asked to speak to her. She gave her the phone.

Me: Why aren't you answering my calls?

Alondwe: I didn't see them.

Me: Hheywena! I am still your mother. No matter what happened I deserve your respect and you will respect me. (She didn't say anything) I didn't tell your father so that he can act like that. I didn't expect it from him. I am really sorry. I should've known better.

Alondwe: Mom I need to go to the toilet.

Me: Alondwe I am still speaking to you –

She hung up on me. I clicked my tongue and called again. Her grandmother answered.

Her granny: Please give her time she's still hurting because of what her father did. Thandeka you should have known better than to tell my son what you saw. If it was one of the boys maybe you must have told him. But a girl? Those kind of things are between you and her not Samkelo. Fathers are overprotective of their baby girls.

Me: I am sorry mama. I should have acted differently.

Her: It's alright. Nobody will ever be too old to learn. Try to speak to her when she's more calm.

Me: I will come on Saturday there.

Her: Alright Goodnight. Bring the boys with you. The three of them.

Me: Goodnight. I will bring them.

We hung up. I then called her baby daddy. He answered quickly.

Sphephelo: Mrs Ndunakazi.

Me: Look boy tomorrow lunchtime meet me and my husband at Broadway. We need to speak to you.

Sphephelo: Yes mam I will be there.

Me: Thanks.

I hung up and I gave myself time to think about all my problems.....

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay....

I didn't feel like going back to my in-laws house and leave my sister feeling heartbroken and not well. I stayed with her until she was asleep. That's where my husband and I went back home. We were both tired so after everything we went to bed. I slept through out the night I woke up panting because of the bad dream I had. I looked at the time beside my bed. The time was 3am. I looked at my husband and he was dead sleeping. I rubbed my eyes and I went to the bathroom. I kneeled down and prayed to my Jesus. I asked him to protect me and my little family. I was trusting him not to forsake me. I was trusting him to carry me through my hard times in my marriage. Carry me through my pregnancy and protect my little baby. I had no one else to trust but him. Yes I had parents but they couldn't protect me from where they were. Only Jesus the son of God was going to do that. One thing for sure I knew that "blessed are those who trust in the Lord" I finished praying and I went back to bed feeling much better but my spirit was down. I finally fall back to sleep.

In the morning I woke up first. My husband was still sleeping. Do you know that feeling when you feel like someone is sucking your blood straight from the veins? I was really down my mind was like it was on a slow motion mode. I sighed.

"Oh God please help me get through this day"

I said and got up from the bed. I went to the bathroom to freshen up before I went to fix breakfast for my husband. I finished up and I dressed up. My husband was already awake, he was making the bed.

Me: Good morning my love.

Rajiv: Morning Mrs Pillay how are you?

Me: I am alright my husband and you?

Rajiv: I am good. Did you sleep well?

Me: No I had bad dreams baby. I don't know I just feel down this morning. Like someone is going to die. I don't know the feeling.

He gave me a worried look with a frown. He then gave me a tight hug and told me not to worry. I nodded. I remembered something mom told us when she was carrying my little brother. Whenever our father was working night shift and mom wanted to go to the toilet. She'll tell us to go outside the house first and she'll follow after us.

Me: Baby please leave the room first and I will follow after you.

Rajiv: Why? You know I have to shower now.

Me: I don't know Okay. Mom used to say a pregnant woman shouldn't be the first person to exit the house in the morning.

Rajiv: Why?

Me: I don't know, she said if there are bad spirits in the yard they'll go for her first because she's carrying fresh blood and the spirits get her first.

Rajiv: So are you trying to say we have bad spirits in my home. Or my family has bad spirits?

Me: No that's not what I am trying to say.

Rajiv: What exactly are you trying to say Precious?

Me: I just don't feel like –

Rajiv: Is it my religion maybe? Are you trying to say my religion is bad spirits? Because you and I have different religions and beliefs.

Me: This has nothing to do with religion. Why are you being difficult. This is about our child's safety and my safety. I have no problem with your religion.

Rajiv: You think there might be danger out there?

Me: It's something I grew up knowing but if you're willing to risk our lives because you don't believe what I am telling you. It's alright I will go. Maybe I am being paranoid anyway. I don't know.

He held my hand because he saw that I was serious. I don't know why but I didn't want to go out of our first. It's like something was holding me back.

Rajiv: Alright my love. From now on every morning I will leave our room first just make sure that you and the baby won't be affected by any spirits.

Me: Thank you my love.

We kissed each other briefly and he went to the door. He opened the door. I was behind him. He exited our room and I followed after him.

Rajiv: See? Nothing happened. Want me to walk you to the kitchen.

Me: I will gladly like that.

I smiled and he held my hand. We walked together before we reach the kitchen his grip tightened up in my hand. He groaned. I looked at him.

Me: What's wrong Rajiv?

Rajiv: I don't know something is not right with my waist.

Me: What do you mean?

I started panicking. I looked closely and he was sweating and groaning like he was experiencing great pain. He let go of my hand and fell on the floor. I started crying because I didn't know what was happening. I kneeled down and screamed for help.

Me: What's wrong my love? What's wrong?

His nose started bleeding. I screamed again and almost everyone was on the lounge with us. They were all asking what was wrong but I couldn't answer them. I didn't know what to say looking at my husband rolling on the floor because of pain he was feeling was too much for me.

Mr Pillay: We need to take him to the Doctor now. Garry help me carry him to the car. I stood up and followed them as they carried him.

Mr Pillay: I think you need to go back inside the house Precious.

Me: No I can't stay home. I want to be with my husband.

Garry: Let her go with you dad.

They allowed me to go. I stepped in at the back with him. He wasn't unconscious but he wasn't talking. He was just groaning in pain. All I did was pray and cry. What was happening to the father of my child?

Thandeka Ndunakazi.....

In the morning I woke up and I went to shower. I finished up and fixed the water for my

husband. I then went to wake Samkelo up. He was not a morning person. Some mornings he would attempt to take a day off because he wanted to sleep.

Me: Good morning. Please wake up and take a shower.

He frowned and looked at me. I kept my face straight. I didn't have time to wait for him. He then rubbed his eyes, got off the bed, kissed my cheek and went to the bathroom. I fixed our bed and I went to open the windows. I wore my gown and went to prepare breakfast for him. I made extra breakfast and left the rest in the warmer for the boys. I sat down and prayed. My husband joined me afterwards. He was already dressed up.

Me: Please don't forget that we're meeting Sphephelo lunch time.

Samkelo: Oh do I have to be there?

Me: Really? Now you're going to leave me alone to deal with him because you're mad at Alondwe?

Samkelo: I was just asking.

Me: That's an unnecessary question because you know that you were going to go with me to talk to him.

Samkelo: You don't have to fight to make your point.

I gave him the look and he shrugged his shoulders.

Me: Are you coming with me or not Samkelo?

Samkelo: Pass by my workplace and take me. We'll drive together and you'll take me back.

Me: Alright thanks. I have a request.

Samkelo: What is it?

Me: We have an assignment that we need to carry out and it requires me to go Cape Town tonight and I will come back tomorrow.

He didn't say anything at all. He continued eating his breakfast like I didn't say anything to him. I looked at him and he avoided eye contact. I continued eating my breakfast too. He finished up and stood up. He went upstairs. I sighed. I didn't know what his silence meant? Does it mean he doesn't want me to go? Maybe he's had enough of me going to Cape Town. And coming home late. I just didn't know. If he didn't want me to go that meant I wasn't going to see everything for myself.

Samkelo: Does this new job of yours means that we will see less of you?

I looked up and swallowed hard. He was standing by my side looking down at me. I couldn't really tell if he was angry or not.

Me: What do you mean?

Samkelo: Should I explain my question?

Me: No it doesn't.

Samkelo: Why were you asking me what do I mean if you knew what I meant? Do you take me as a cartoon?

Me: Samkelo please don't start.

Samkelo: Maybe I made a mistake by agreeing to this whole thing. Tsk!

He took his bag and left. I sighed maybe I should trust the team to do their job without me being there. But no I should be there. I will also have to go to Cape Town for trial when they arrest Themba so maybe I shouldn't go. I sighed and went to my bedroom to dress up. I finished and I went to check on the boys. They were still sleeping. I closed the door and I went to my car straight. I drove to my workplace.

As soon as I arrived at work. I went through the outstanding tasks that we had to complete. I jotted them down and I went to complete them because the team was only going to come in after lunch to complete everything. I was going to tell them to go back home if I did complete everything before lunch time. I took my keys and I left. I did everything bit by bit until I was done. I was doing this because I was going to tell them that I am not going with them to Cape Town. I finished in time and I drove straight to Samkelo's workplace. I was feeling tired

already. I didn't go inside the building I just texted him that I was already outside. After a few minutes, he came out and we left for Broadway. Sphephelo was already there waiting for us. As we approached him I could see that he was starting to get a little bit nervous. I didn't even remember whether I told him that my husband was going to be with me or what. I greeted him, Samkelo didn't, he just sat down and called the waiter. Sphephelo greeted us back.

Me: Just relax we are not here to bite your head off.

Samkelo: Please speak for yourself.

Me: Samkelo please give him a break because I think both of you are wrong here.

Samkelo: Hee

Me: How was your exams?

Samkelo: I don't think we came here to talk about that Thandeka stop being nice and just get straight to the point.

I didn't take note of that I looked at Sphephelo waiting for my answer. Samkelo ordered lunch. Sphephelo and I did after him.

Sphephelo: The exams weren't that bad. I am quite confident that I will make it.

Me: You're going to university?

Sphephelo: Yes. DUT Steve biko campus I got a firm offer. I am just waiting for my final results now.

Me: That's good.

Samkelo: What were you hoping to achieve after hurting my daughter boy?

I looked at him and he didn't even look at me.

Sphephelo: I only had revenge and I didn't think of the outcome. I was just mad at you for what you did to my sister.

Samkelo: There you said it. You were mad at me. Where does Alondwe fit in to this mess?

Sphephelo: She was the only person I could use to hurt you like you did.

Samkelo: I didn't hurt you. I hurt your sister not you. What you did was so low of you and I don't even know why we are thinking of involving him in my daughter's son.

Me: Samkelo please calm down. The baby won't be a baby forever. He will grow up and ask questions about his father. What will we say to him?

Samkelo: We will tell him that his father was a dog who didn't deserve to be in his life.

Me: We can't make those decisions for our grandchild. Yes we don't like the fact that our daughter is pregnant and it wasn't her intentions to be pregnant but that doesn't mean that we should not treat her child as our own.

Samkelo: Yazi Thandeka you're talking as if you want this boy to be your son in-law.

Me: No I am just trying to make things right. Make you both see that you need to forgive each other.

Sphephelo: Mr and Mrs Ndunakazi I am really sorry. What I did was wrong. It was wrong in all sides of wrong. I don't know how to say it but I was just blinded by hatred and pain. I didn't think this whole thing through. I know that I don't deserve to be part of the baby because of how he was conceived. But please don't shut me out of his life because of my mistakes. I did Alondwe wrong and I am sorry. And I would like you to give me time so that I can finish my studies then I can tell my foster mother. If I can tell her now about the baby. She will disown me and the government will throw me back into the system and it might be difficult for me to get such a supportive parent. I really need to complete my studies for both my kids. I didn't plan them both but I love my daughter and I am willing to love my son too. Please give me a chance.

I sighed and looked at my husband. He was looking at Sphephelo. He then looked at me, I gave him a begging eye. For a 18 year old that boy spoke really brave and courageous. It occurred to me that not everyone gets maturity with age. The experiences and hardships that

we face daily in life prepares us for the future. Our past really doesn't determine our future.

Samkelo: How are you planning on supporting the baby if you don't want to tell your mom?

Sphephelo: I have already started saving up money for the baby. She gives me allowance every month. So I save from that money.

Samkelo: Who's taking care of your daughter?

Sphephelo: She does everything for her. My daughter lives with us. She has a nanny.

Me: Hearing that there's another baby can make her angry seriously if she does everything for your daughter and you.

Samkelo: I will only agree because I have been a teen dad before. I was doing my first year when Alondwe arrived and as much as my parents were supportive it was hard because sometimes I would ask something from them and they will tell me that "awume kancane Samkelo sikondlela ingane wena" so I know that it's hard. And as a parent myself I wouldn't be pleased if a year or two from now Alondwe can have another child. Or if my stepson can make a girl pregnant. But with time I would accept it. So taking into account that this woman is not your biological mother. We won't gamble with your future and tell her and expect her to understand. So we won't tell her. (Sphephelo sighed) You can be part of the baby because he will be living with us. His mother will be in Johannesburg and you'll be here in Durban but you should know that my daughter doesn't want you in the child's life. That means her mother has a lot of work to do because she must tell her what we have decided for the baby. And we don't expect you to disappoint us and your son when you see the bling of varsity life.

Sphephelo: Thank you so much Mr and Mrs Ndunakazi.

Samkelo: And as a kind of guy that I am it's hard for me to say this but I will swallow my pride. I am sorry for what happened to your sister. I was stupid, hurt, young and I think I got the game but I didn't know what I was doing. I am really sorry and I hope that you can become something great so your kids, parents and sister will be proud of you. Please forgive me boy.

Sphephelo: I forgive you Sir. Thank you.

They did hand shake. I stood up and opened my arms for Sphephelo. We hugged each other. I wiped his tears and he laughed and looked down. I laughed too and we sat down. We ate our food and Samkelo paid for the food and drinks. We said our goodbyes.

Sphephelo: Thanks again.

Samkelo: It's alright. But just because we are friendly people don't get a wrong idea and think that you're our son in-law. Or that you'll ever be our son in-law. Our daughter won't get married.

Sphephelo and I laughed. I took hold of his hand.

Me: Leave the boy alone Ndunakazi.

Samkelo: What I-

Me: Hhayi hhayi let's go. Bye bye Sphephelo.

Sphephelo: Bye mam.

Samkelo kept on mumbling words I didn't hear. I just didn't give him attention. I felt some inner peace after that lunch with the both of them. I was hoping that Alondwe can come around too....

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

Living with my grandparents was all things fun. I was really enjoying my holidays. I was free and I had no stress. All I did was to wake up, clean, wash the dishes and watch TV. My grandmother was the one who cooked and aunt Simthande. I wasn't a great cook so they didn't let me cook. Aunt Simthande went to visit her grandparents at the rural areas KwaNongoma. So it was me, my grandmother and grandfather. But aunt Melokuhle was coming back later that day. I was in our room listening to music. I was alone in the house.

Grandma had went to visit her friends. She was no longer working only my grandfather was working and my aunts. I was missing my little brothers. Just then my brother Uyathandwa called. I answered.

Me: Hello Uyathandwa.

Uyathandwa: Hi, Alondwe how are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Uyathandwa: I am fine. Why did you leave?

Me: Because my dad told me to.

Uyathandwa: Why are you pregnant? You're 16 and pregnant.

Me: I am pregnant because I was raped by my boyfriend. Another question?

Uyathandwa: What? Who's that guy? Did you lay the charges against him? Where does he live?

Me: I didn't lay any charges. I don't have the strength for court cases.

Uyathandwa: How did he do it? Does mom knows?

Me: He drugged me and had sex with me while I was out of it. Look don't worry about this I am through with it and I am alright now.

Uyathandwa: I need to see this guy. We need to talk just me and him.

Me: Don't do that. Look just calm down. You don't have to talk to him. You'll be wasting your time.

Uyathandwa: I won't argue with you. When are you coming back?

Me: I don't know. Dad doesn't want me there so I think I will come back when I have to go back to school.

Uyathandwa: You won't spend Christmas with us?

Me: No.

Uyathandwa: Eish. Can't you just apologise for whatever that you did and come back home I miss you.

Me: I did apologies but dad won't listen to me. But we will meet. I will come there to see you guys.

Uyathandwa: Alright. Be alright hey, I love you.

Me: I love you too. Thanks. Uhm hey.

Uyathandwa: Yeah.

Me: How is dad anyway?

Uyathandwa: How is he how?

Me: I mean like is he alright. I miss him. Did he watch the game last night?

Uyathandwa: Oh. Yes he seem fine to me but I may never know hey. And yes we watched the game with him yesterday.

Me: Alright. Bye then.

Uyathandwa: Why didn't you ask about mom?

Me: I know she's fine. Please remind dad to go to my school for my report. Second last day before the school close for holidays.

Uyathandwa: Alright.

Me: Thank you.

He hung up. I was relieved that I could talk about what happened without crying like the last time. That meant I was healing. I really missed my father but hey there was nothing I could do. I took a short nap.

I woke up when my aunt was home. She was waking me up because my phone was ringing. I rubbed my eyes.

Melo: Uyafona umuntu wakho vuka bo!

I sat up straight and answered the phone.

Me: (yawning) Chocolate brownie.

Thapelo: Little pudding are you sleeping?

Me: Yes but I am awake now. How are you Mr Moloi?

Thapelo: I am alright Miss Ndunakazi and yourself?

Me: Now that I am hearing your voice I can say I am alright.

Thapelo: I am happy to hear that. I have been meaning to call you and tell you something. I didn't want to tell you on WhatsApp.

Me: What is it?

Thapelo: Your mother called me.

Me: What? What did she want and where did she get your number?

Thapelo: I don't know but I spoke to both of them.

Me: You spoke to my dad? Jesus!

Thapelo: Yes, they wanted to ask if I was with you. I told them I wasn't. And I didn't know where you were. Babe your father doesn't play.

Me: What did he say to you?

Thapelo: He scares me Alondwe. I mean how on earth will I marry you if he's so difficult.

Me: Ah man! Thapelo I told you not to speak about marriage.

Thapelo: What? Don't you want to get married? Because I do. I want to marry you and we will have beautiful babies. Brothers and sisters for baby bear.

Me: We're still young to talk about marriage.

Thapelo: What? Young? Come on, my father got married when he was 21years old and my mom was 16years old. There's nothing wrong with getting married early. Haven't you seen how most of the white people get married at 18years and even black people do get married early.

Me: Thapelo are you planning on marrying me? Why are you so interested in marriage topic all of the sudden?

Thapelo: Because I love you and I want to spend the rest of my life with you. I don't have time to be a player. I just want to live a straight life.

Me: You can live that life without getting married. And you know what today is the last day that you will speak about marriage. Don't scare me off please.

Thapelo: Okay. Whatever you want but I just hope by the time I want to marry you, your dad can be a little bit more relaxed.

Me: Mxm!

I hung up the call. He was really making me feel uncomfortable because I didn't want to get married. I didn't want to have a man to report to whenever I want to go somewhere. Clean for him, cook for him, make sure that he's alright, take care of him, satisfy his desires. All those things that come with marriage I didn't want it. To live with that man for the rest of my life. Share the same bed every night. What if he snores and I don't like that. What if there are those little things that I don't like about him? I will have to suck it up and get married. What if down the line we grow tired of each other and we get divorced? Will I cope with that? Marriage was too much for me and I didn't want it. Even having a baby I wasn't going to have kids but I got one now. All I want is to become a Doctor specifically a heart surgeon. I want to travel across the world. There's no Island in the world that I don't want to visit. I want to visit more than twenty cities in different countries. That's the life I want not marriage and family. That's not in my plans. I didn't want to hurt Thapelo but I just wish we could want the same things but I couldn't force it down to him. I sighed.

Melo: What's wrong baby?

Me: Thapelo is scaring me, the way he talks about marriage it's frustrating.

Melo: Don't you want to get married some time?

Me: No. I just don't want to get married. It's enough that I am going to have a baby that I didn't want.

Melo: It's still early maybe you'll change your mind about marriage.  
I shrugged my shoulders and we spoke about beautiful things that she did with her boyfriend. It was really fun to be there with her. Just having fun together. Later that evening aunt Melokuhle offered to take us out for dinner. Grandpa drove us to Richards bay and we had a great time together. I wasn't limiting myself. I ate everything that I wanted. I was really enjoying myself.

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay.....

I was very hurt, I didn't know what was going to happen to my husband. Mr Pillay and I waited for the Doctor to tell us what was wrong with my husband.

Mr Pillay: What happened Precious?

Me: I don't know, I asked him to go out of our room first and suddenly he just started getting sick.

Mr Pillay: Why did you ask him to do that?

Me: I – I am pregnant father and we decided not to tell anyone in the family about it. We were going to tell everyone after my first trimester.

Mr Pillay: What? Why on earth would you do that? I am pretty sure that this was your idea because my would've never hide such a thing from me.

Me: Yes it was my idea but we took the decision together.

Mr Pillay: He was going to support you.

Me: Father you have to understand that your wife and aunts at home they don't like me. And Aunt Tashrika and your wife doesn't like my husband. They would do anything to stand in his way of happiness and pretend to you like they have accepted how Rajiv was brought into this world. All I was trying to do was to protect my baby.

Mr Pillay: My wife can be all things but she can never do something to hurt the little baby. And through this I don't understand how did my sin get hurt.

Me: I was told that a pregnant woman shouldn't leave the room first because they might be evil spirits that can affect her and the baby. Even things like witchcraft. That's why I told him to exit the room first in order to protect me and the baby.

Mr Pillay: So you're trying to tell me that my son might have been the victim of witchcraft or evil spirits?

Me: Yes Sir I think so.

He gave me a loong ass cold eye. I even felt my intestines getting cold. I looked down.

Mr Pillay: Then we shouldn't be here. I will take him to the priest. Meanwhile you go back home take all your things and leave my house.

Me: What? Why? Rajiv is my husband.

Mr Pillay: Nobody knew that you're pregnant at home. So clearly you did this to my son and you're here playing the victim. What were you hoping to achieve if you kill him?

Me: What? I would never do that I love my husband.

Mr Pillay: I trusted you little girl. But you broke my trust. Get out of my face now!

I quickly stood up and I left the building. I felt so alone and heartbroken. Why was all this happening to me? What did I do to deserve all this I'll treatment? Is God punishing me for something I did wrong? But what could that be?

I took a taxi back to the house. As soon as I arrived there. I went straight to my room. I didn't pack anything because all I had here were my saris. I sat in my bed and cried. Claudine kept knocking on my door but I didn't open it for her. I didn't even lock the room when I left but it didn't matter anyway because I was leaving. I wasn't going stay with these people knowing that my husband won't be with me. I didn't even know if he was going to come back from that Priest. I started praying. I didn't know what else to do. After a while there louder bangs on the door.

Garry: Precious my father called and he said I must see to it that you leave this house immediately.

Claudine: How could you do this to your husband and try to kill him. Are you even carrying his child.

Aunt Tashrika: Clearly it's not his baby.

Aunt Theresa: I thought you loved him for real.

I stood up and took my handbag. I wasn't going to listen to them insult me for something I didn't do. I don't know how but Claudine was behind all this mess. I was 100% sure of it. I opened the door because they busy banging it and calling me names. I took with me my important documents and I headed to the main door. Nadine wasn't home.

Claudine: Why are you leaving your belongings behind?

Me: I know you did this mother in-law. I hope your gods can see to it that you suffer. Dirty women hiding behind religion. Tsk!

I banged the door behind me leaving her defending herself by shaming my name. I was really hoping it makes her sleep better at night.

When I arrived at home. Nobody was there. I went to my old room and locked myself up. I fell asleep between my tears. My phone rang waking me up. Nadine was calling. I answered.

Me: Hello –

Nadine: Is it true? (She sounded like she is crying)

Me: What do you believe?

Nadine: I know that you love him and you would do anything to make him happy. You wouldn't wish any harm upon him. But it all sounds convincing.

Me: It may sound convincing but my love for him covers all things.

Nadine: Oh Precious I am sorry that you are going through this pain. How is the baby?

Me: I don't know maybe the baby is alright. I don't feel anything wrong. Where is my husband?

Nadine: He's in your room. He's much better now but he can't speak. And his lower body is numb and he can't move it. He's been searching for you with his eyes but they told him that you left.

Me: Oh my dear God. Please look after him Nadine.

Nadine: Don't worry the Priest said that only dad can enter his room. Nobody else is allowed. We only went there once to see him. The Priest will work on healing him. He said that the damage is not too much he will be alright soon.

Me: Thank you Nadine please keep on updating me.

Nadine: I will. Please go for check up tomorrow. Just go to the family doctor.

Me: She's too far for me.

Nadine: Alright I will come and fetch you.

Me: Thanks. Goodnight.

Nadine; Goodnight.

I thank God for Nadine. I stood up and went to join my family because my mom was already shouting asking who was talking in my room. They were all eating. Philisiwe was also with them. I wasn't going to tell everyone what happened. I was only going to tell my mom. The family was surprised but happy to see me. I tried by all means not look miserable.

Dad: Hhaybo Hlehle. When did you arrive?

Me: During the day baba. I managed to trick my husband into allowing me to stay with my sister for a while.

Philisiwe: Ah my little sister thank you.

She kissed my cheek. They all laughed except for my mom who kept giving me that "I wonder what you did" look....

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

On our way back to my husband's work place, we were both quiet. I suppose he was still mad because I asked to go to Cape Town. I decided to break the silence.

Me: I think that went well.

Samkelo: I suppose.

He didn't even look at me. I chose to keep quiet too. We were quiet until we made it to his workplace. He kissed my cheek after I have parked my car and he stepped out of the car. I sighed and drove off. I was flying on the road because I was already late. Lucky for me no metro police were around. I Arrived at work and I went straight to the meeting. Their faces loosened up as soon as they saw me.

Me: I am really sorry for being late I got held up somewhere.

Muzi: We thank the Lord that you're already here. We have been waiting for hours.

I looked at the time and everyone just laughed.

Muzi: I am kidding. Sit down madam.

I sat down.

Member 1: Every outstanding task has been completed by an angel that we don't know.

Everyone laughed.

Me: I suppose I am that angel.

Muzi: You did everything on your own?

Me: Yes. I did everything on my own.

Muzi: Okay. What's the catch?

Me: The catch is my husband.

Muzi: Tjo Thandeka I swear you're married to Shaka Zulu.

Everyone laughed.

Member 2: He doesn't want you to go.

Me: I told him that I have to go and he didn't say anything guys. He just looked at me and said absolutely nothing.

Member 3: You're kidding right? That soft guy who is on your pictures in your office is a difficult man?

Me: He is.

Muzi: I think you shouldn't go then because you've been going home late the past few days. He's probably still mad because of that. Just surprise him, go home cook his favourite meal and be with him and the kids.

Member 1: And be a little bit sexy when the kids are sleeping.

Everyone: mmmm

I just laughed and said: You guys seriously got no problem if I don't come with you?

Camille: We want to see you and your family happy. Not getting divorced in a month or two. So trust the team and me to do the great job..

Muzi: Yes don't worry. You'll go next time.

Everyone: Yes.

Me: Thank you so much guys. I really appreciate it. I think everyone can go back home and rest. Then y'all can come when you are leaving for the airport. If that's okay with you partner. (I looked at Muzi)

Muzi: That's a great idea.

Me: You'll pass by my office and take your tickets there.

Everyone: Okay/alright..... Thanks/bye.

They all left. Muzi and I stayed behind.

Me: You got my email?

Muzi: Yes I got your email. You don't have to worry about those police officers. I checked with my guy on the police station and they don't know any police named by those names.

And There was no case that was opened by Olwethu.

Me: It must've been Themba. He's playing with fire you know.

Muzi: Relax, he won't know what hits him.

Me: He won't see it coming for real.

Muzi: Just go home and rub that anger off your Shaka Zulu.

I laughed and stood up. We both exited the room. I went to my car and drove straight home.

The boys were playing outside. I pulled through the garage and went inside the house. I greeted Mam'Nacy and told her that she can go. She then took her things and left.

Uyathandwa was watching TV. I greeted him. He came to me at the kitchen.

Uyathandwa: Thank God you're home early today.

Me: Don't be too forward.

Uyathandwa: Dad was swearing all the time last night.

I laughed and took off my shoes.

Me: Please go and put my bags upstairs. And come help me cook.

Uyathandwa: Okay mom.

He left with my bags. I wore my apron and started cooking. Uyathandwa came back and assisted me.

Me: Take out the full chicken baby and defrost it.

Uyathandwa: I am on it now. Mom why didn't you tell me that my sister is pregnant?

Me: I had a lot of things in my mind baby. I am sorry I didn't tell you. Did you speak to her?

Uyathandwa: Yes and she told me how it happened. I just need a little talk with that boy.

I gave him the "really" look. He nodded assuring me that he really needed to "talk" with him.

It was cute that he was protective of his big sister.

Me: Don't worry boy you'll have that talk with him. One day you'll see him.

Uyathandwa: Thanks mom at least you understand.

Me: I do understand baby.

He smiled. I did really understand that he wasn't just talking about the "little talk". I was just leaving that to the hands of the Lord. We continued cooking, he had no problem at all that I was directing everywhere around the kitchen and he was really willing to learn. That was the beautiful side of him that I didn't know. I was happy to be given a chance to know him much better again.

By the time dinner was ready my husband was back home. I could see that he was more relaxed to see me at home but he just didn't want to show it. I left Uyathandwa finishing up doing the dessert and I went upstairs to take a shower. I quickly finished, dressed up and went back downstairs. Uyathandwa was setting up the table.

Me: You're such a good boy. Thanks.

Uyathandwa: I can't be a bad boy around my mother. But please don't kiss me for being a good boy.

I laughed and raised my hands up. We finished up and called everyone to the table. Alupheli was awfully and ridiculously dirty!

Me: Thando!

Alupheli: Okay mom I know.

He lifted his tiny hands up and started taking off his clothes. He sat on the dinner table with his underwear only. Everyone was laughing at him and he didn't even care. He blessed our food and we started eating.

Alupheli: This food is way better than the one we ate last night.

Mesuli: Yes, it's much better. Mom you should give dad your recipes.

Samkelo: Ningaphaphi. I am sure Uyathandwa did most of the cooking here.

Uyathandwa: You can say that again dad.

They both laughed. I just shook my head.

Uyathandwa: Alondwe said I should remind you dad to fetch her school report.

Samkelo: Alright. Who will fetch yours for you?

Uyathandwa: My father will.

Samkelo nodded.

Mesuli: Alupheli you will pass your preschool?

Alupheli: Don't ask me that because you're not paying for my school fees.

Everyone in the house laughed. It was good to see them happy but my daughter was missing in all this happiness. I was really hoping that she was happy with her grandparents...

3rd Person Narrator....

Wednesday morning Muzi and the team were ready for last part of action plan. They were all together at the motel. The make up artists have done their make overs perfectly. You couldn't recognise them. They did final touch ups of the plan.

Muzi: "Please everyone make sure that your mics are working. We need to keep all communication lines open. Xolani on the inside will also have his mic on."

Member 1: "The guy who went to Themba's gang?"

Muzi: "Yes him. He's with the gang. He told me that they all also have a plan of killing the very same person that we want to save. But they will carry out their plan at night."

Member 1: "Do you think it's wise for him to have a mic on what if something goes wrong and he's exposed. Do you think they can spare his life?"

Muzi: "No I don't think so. They trust him. Themba won't suspect a thing. Let's go."

Others agreed and they left with different cars which were taking them to other cars that were going to use to enter the hospital where sick prisoners were kept. It was one four doors car with police stickers, one van and the ambulance. All these vehicles belonged to SAPS. Muzi was on the four doors. He was the one who was going to act as a detective who really needed this prisoner to be in KZN. The ambulance was in the middle while the four doors was leading and the van was at the back. They were on the road straight to their destination. When they arrived at the gate, they had to enquire about their visit. Muzi was the one who was going to speak.

Muzi: "I am detective Zungu from Westville prison. I am here to take my prisoner. I called few days ago"

The security checked on his books. After a few he approved him and they all drove inside.

Muzi and the member of the team went inside to speak with the Chief warden. They directed him to him. The chief warden and Muzi exchanged handshakes. He offered Muzi and his partner a seat.

Warden: "I received your emails and calls detective Zungu. And the prisoner that you want is really here in our premises. I just need his docket to confirm what is written on the email."

Muzi nodded and took out his "fake" docket and gave it to the warden. The warden took it and started screening it through. And it looked legit and true to his eyes. It corresponded with what was written on the email and what he has heard on the phone calls a few days ago.

Warden: "I need to call the detective who has been working on his case here in Cape Town."

Muzi: "No problem Sir, go ahead"

He took the phone and he called the detective but it rang with no answer. He tried more than four times.

Warden: "I will call your captain to confirm because the detective is not answering. I don't think it will be wise to keep you all waiting considering that you're still going to have a long drive back to Durban"

Muzi: "That's very thoughtful of you Sir, Thank you"

\*\*\*\*\* Back in Durban Camille saw the signal of the phonecall going out to Westville prison and she interfered and referred it to their offices. And the guy who was in their offices spoke

as the Captain. He confirmed that what “Detective Zungu” was saying was true. The warden believed him\*\*\*\*

After the call the warden authorised the nurses to move the prisoner to the ambulance. They did that and Muzi’s fake health officials accepted the prisoner who was in a bad condition. Muzi thanked the warden. Everything went well and they left with their prisoner feeling like winners.

\*\*\*\*\*

The nurse whom Themba had paid to keep a close eye on the patient was on her tea time when all this happened. When she came back the bed was empty.

In shock she asked:” Where is the patient who was here?”

The nurse who near her explained what happened to the patient. She then wasted no time. She went to the bathroom and called Themba. He answered after a few rings.

Themba:”Can you please tell me God did my job. That thug is dead”

Nurse: “I am afraid not Sir. They have moved him to KZN”

Themba:”What?”

Themba banged the table in anger.

Nurse:”They said he has bigger crimes in KZN. I think you should be happy Sir because you won’t have to kill him”

Themba:”Stupid nurse!”

Themba hung up the call. He sat at his office drumming his fingers against the office desk. He was thinking long and hard about this. There was no way that the man who worked for his father his whole life had crimes in KZN. KZN? This man grew up in Cape Town. This was written Thandeka all over it. But how did she find out about him that she wanted to save him. Why did she need this man. Those were questions that ran through his mind. Then he figured after a while that she might have a spy. He grabbed his keys and drove straight to the warehouse where the gang members were. They were all there training. The gang wasn’t a gang of professionals but it was a gang of hustlers.

\*\*\*\*\*

In no time Themba was inside the warehouse holding his gun up. He shot the roof twice and everyone obeyed his command.

Themba:”Apparently I have a spy here. Old members aside and new members aside”

Nobody asked questions. They did as told. Almost everyone in the gang was afraid of Themba’s rage and cruelty. He placed his gun on his back and started searching them on by one. He started with older members. That moment Xolani could feel the heat and he saw his grave opening up as fear cried in....

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

The week went by I was still at my grandmother’s house. In a week I was going to Cape Town to visit my other grandparents. But after dad have told me about my results. I was going to pass by Durban to see my brothers then leave for Cape Town. It was a Saturday morning. Friday night I was alone in our room. Aunt Melokuhle wasn’t using her room. She was sleeping with me because Simthande wasn’t home. But she was still with Grandma. Thapelo and I weren’t really talking. He was still mad because I hung up on him while he was still talking about “our future” so he says. I was really missing my friend Nkulu. I just wanted to share all this with him but I was still mad at him. I just clicked my tongue, took my phone and called him. He answered on the first ring like he was expecting my call.

Nkulu: Tell me you’re not dead and your angel is calling me right now.

Me:(laughing) Listen bitch, Thapelo is on about marriage can you believe it?

Nkulu: Wait! What do you mean? Is he proposing already?

Me: No silly! But he’s so serious. He’s even scared that my father won’t approve him to be

my husband. I mean what's wrong with him. He's still 17.

Nkulu: Vele wena mama bear usafuna ukuzifebela?(You still want to bitch around?)

Me: No I don't want that but I don't want to get married either. I just don't understand him.

Nkulu: Bitch you must understand that Thapelo grew up with two loving parents. Who have been together all their lives. Growing up seeing that and seeing there is still someone out there who can love you forever might have influenced him. He might have seen that to his parents and said I want this too for myself. And obviously with you he thinks he can have that eternal love.

Me: Okay! Who are you? And what have you done to my crazy friend?

Nkulu: That's why I didn't just become your guardian angel. I became your friend because I loved you the first time I saw you. And what I am telling you now is the truth. Thapelo really loves you. And besides you also have seen how decent his parents are.

Me: Yes I have seen them. But I –

Nkulu: Hhay bitch! You want to die with a little of being a girlfriend. Yazi uzofa kabi. Nezulu ungalingeni ke shame. Uzothi useshogweni ubone mina no Thapelo sitshekula njengamathole.

That killed me, I just laughed my lungs out. This guy was something else.

Nkulu: Don't laugh because zizokudla zingabi namusa izintuthwane.

We both laughed at that.

Me: No let me just say when time goes on I will change my mind about marriage.

Nkulu: At least say that.

Me: Alright. You really did hurt me by the way.

Nkulu: I know my friend and I am really sorry. I was just trying to help.

Me: Why does he want to be a part of my baby?

Nkulu: Because he knows that he made a mistake and he loves the baby as much as he still loves you.

Me: Mxm! You know what let's not even talk about him. There's nothing that will mix us up. Not even the baby. I don't want him in our lives.

Nkulu: Does that mean you don't want me too?

Me: No silly! You're my friend and I have already fallen in love with you.

Nkulu: Thank you.

Me: Alright. Good night.

Nkulu: Good night bears.

I laughed and hung up. I sighed and fell asleep.

In the morning I woke up a little bit late. I wasn't planning on waking up early but someone was busy calling my name. At first I thought I was dreaming but I eventually realised that I wasn't. I opened my eyes and it was Alupheli. I rubbed them again and it was really him.

Alupheli: Vuka Vila voco vuka.

I laughed and I carried him up to my bed. We hugged each other. He was making loud giggles as I was hugging him.

Me: You're here alone or?

Alupheli: The last time I tried to come alone to look for you in Egoli. I got a beating from your mom so I wouldn't risk it again!

He said raising his tiny index finger. I laughed.

Me: Izingane Zama Model C madoda.

Alupheli: Wake up.

Me: Okay! Okay!

We got off the bed and he left. I fixed my bed and left the room for the bathroom. I could hear my mom speaking to my grandmother. I showered and did everything. I then went to join everyone. Mesuli and Uyathandwa were also here. Only dad wasn't.

Me: Sanibona.

Them: Yebo.

Uyathandwa stood up and gave me a hug.

Uyathandwa: Chubby beast, how are you?

I looked at grandmother with desperate eyes. She laughed.

Grandma: You're not a beast baby. He's just joking.

Uyathandwa: Okay I am kidding. You're alright?

Me: Yes I am fine thanks and you?

Uyathandwa: I am fine. Sit.

We both sat down. I brushed Mesuli's head and he smiled.

Mesuli: You're going home with us today because you sleep too much here.

Everyone laughed.

Mom: Unjani Alondwe?

Me: Ngyaphila unjani?

Mom: Ngiyaphila nami. Can we go and have breakfast. I want to talk to you.

Me: In the kitchen?

Mom: No Richards bay.

Alupheli: You're leaving us behind. Take us all mom. You two can have your own table but take us all. Right grandma?

Granny: Yes I think so too.

Mom: Alright. Let's go.

We all left. Grandpa was the only one who wasn't with us because of work.

Our drive wasn't a quiet one. Our radio gogo Alupheli was talking non stop. But we finally made it to Richards bay. As planned mom and I got our own table.

Mom: You left me worried when you just left. You didn't even tell me how you were.

Me: You let dad chase me out.

Mom: I tried to speak to him but you have already left.

Me: So what? Now you're going to tell me to come back home?

Mom: If you're happy with your grandmother I won't force you to come back. But I just wanted to see you. And see if you're alright.

Me: I am alright mom and I am happy with Grandma. I don't want to come back home to dad.

Mom: It's okay. You can stay with Grandma. But you'll be with us for Christmas right?

Me: Uhm.. I spoke to grandad in Cape Town and he said we will be with him on Christmas day. But he'll tell you and dad about it.

Mom: Okay. Are you going to come back to help Nkululeko. Your dad and I have decided to renew our vows on our anniversary. On the 1st of January.

Me: But mom dad-

Mom: You can't run away from your father, all your life Alondwe. You'll have to face him eventually.

Me: He hates me.

Mom: Don't ever say that. Samkelo is your father and he loves you. He's angry but he won't be angry forever.

Me: Yes mom.

Mom: Now I know that I should have kept what happened between us. I am sorry for rushing to your father. I am really sorry baby.

The other thing I love about my mom. She's able to say "sorry" there's nothing painful like being hurt by your parents and they realise that they were wrong but they can't even say sorry to their children just because they are adults. My mom knew the definition of "Respect begets Respect".

Me: I am sorry too mom. I don't have words to justify my actions.

Mom: I can't shout no more. Be responsible and don't gamble with your heart. I just don't want you to get hurt. You've been through enough already.

Me: I will be careful mom.

She smiled and opened her arms for me. I laughed and we stood up and hugged each other. She kissed my forehead. I giggled.

Mom: Ngiyakuthanda Nana yezwa.

Me: Ngiyakuthanda nami mama.

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay.....

After dinner my mother asked to speak to me. We were alone in my room. She looked at me without a word. I sighed.

Me: What's wrong mom don't you want me here?

Mom: I didn't say that but I know that you're not telling the truth. Why are you here? What happened?

Me: I – I

Mom: You can talk to me baby about anything.

I sighed and told her everything that happened. It was still hurting me. I just couldn't stop crying. She held me close to her. She brushed my back.

Mom: If their Priest is a truthful man. He will tell your husband what happened. If he doesn't see who did it to him, time will tell what really happened to him. It's clear that whatever that happened to your husband was meant to hurt you and the baby. Question is how do they know? Or they just wanted to hurt you?

Me: I just don't know mom.

Mom: Don't cry my baby. Your husband will recover and he'll be with you.

Me: What if he believes his family over mom, what will I do?

Mom: Don't worry, God will figure that out. Your job is to pray for him. He'll be alright. You know that you did nothing to hurt him so you have absolutely nothing to worry about.

Me: Thank you mom for making me feel better.

Mom: It's my job baby. Now let's pray together so that you can get some rest.

I smiled and nodded. She held my hands and we both kneeled down. We prayed together.

After prayer she left my room. I took off my clothes and wore my pyjamas. I went straight to dreamland.

In the morning I woke up and I did the hygiene process. I went to prepare breakfast for everyone. I wore the same thing I was wearing the previous day because I was going to meet Nadine for the Doctor's check up. Everyone woke up and they had breakfast. I have already eaten. After breakfast my sister and I cleaned the house. We then relaxed together.

Me: When are you going back to work?

Philisiwe: I took one week leave so I will be going back on Monday.

Me: Have you seen Philani ever since the wedding?

Philisiwe: He called on mom's phone. He wanted to speak to me.

Me: Did you guys work something out?

Philisiwe: No, the last thing I want to do is to come between him and his wife. I don't want women at church to come names again. I had enough of that.

Me: But what about the babies.

Philisiwe: I told him that we'll speak once I gave birth.

Me: At least, he wants to be part of them.

Philisiwe: I miss him Nobuhle. I still love him and I don't know how will I be over him. I was just angry and I didn't mean to shut him out.

Me: Hey, don't cry. This was all his father and the congregation idea. I know that he still

loves you.

Philisiwe: Well that love doesn't matter anyway because he has a wife now.

Me: I am sorry sisi.

She cried and I tried by all means to comfort her. It was painful seeing her like that. It made me realise that sometimes we must not take actions while we're angry.

After 1.p.m my sister in-law and I were at the Doctor. She examined me and checked everything.

Doc: The baby is alright Mrs Pillay.

Me: Are you sure?

Doc: Yes mam. You have nothing to worry about. Your family is very supportive. I know them. Your mother in-law really showed concern about your health. But I did feel I ruined the surprise.

Me: Ruined the surprise?

Doc: Yes she was quite surprised when I congratulated her because she's going to be a grandmother soon.

I faked a smile. And looked at Nadine. She gave me a confused look. I shrugged. She then smiled and looked at the Doctor.

Nadine: So you're the one who spoilt the surprise for my sister.

Doc: (laughing) guilty as charged Nadine. I thought she had told her alright. I am sorry for ruining it..

Me: (smiling) It's alright. You didn't know. You thought like anyone would've thought that as a wife I was going to tell them right away. Don't feel bad about it.

Doc: Thank you.

I smiled and nodded. I cleaned myself up and we left. Nadine took me out to buy lunch. We drove to gateway. We were both quiet in the car. My thoughts and dots were connected by why the Doctor had told me. I was pretty sure that Claudine was behind this whole thing. We arrived at gateway and went to Rocco mamas. We placed our order.

Nadine: Are you also thinking what I am thinking?

Me: Suppose I am.

Nadine: So mom knew about the pregnancy before you could tell everyone. But she pretended like she didn't know.

Me: What have I done to her?

Nadine: It's not you dear. She's not over dad's affair. I really need to speak to my brother when he recovers. I will be the one who will tell him this because I know dad is already telling him how evil your are.

Me: Thanks Nadine.

Nadine: Don't worry your tears will be wiped soon. I will make sure that my brother takes you and the baby out of my father's house before you both die. Just stay with your family now. Everything will be alright. I won't show them that I know that mom knew about this. I wiped my tears and nodded. I didn't even know how I could repay her for being so good to me.

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

After dessert I left them watching the game. I don't even know which teams were playing. My mind was on how I was going to make my husband's night pretty awesome. I went to my room with a bowl of fruit salad, bottle of wine and glasses. I made sure that Samkelo doesn't see it and I locked the door behind me. I took the women magazine that I read a few days ago. I was going to do exactly what the magazine had said. So let me share this secret game with you

. Firstly I took two lingeries. The first one was black and red and the second one was black

and purple.

FIRST STEP: Dress up in a sexiest outfit and snap a photo of yourself. Then change a few minor details and take a second selfie in the same pose. Send both pics and challenge him to spot the difference.

So I took two selfies in my dress up mirror. I made a picmix of these two pics and I sent them to him via WhatsApp. I told him to spot the difference. I was hoping that he sees this because his phone was with him. While waiting for his response. I packed away my lingerie and I was left with the black and red one on me. I looked for every material that I needed. My phone beeped while I was setting up everything. I quickly went to it and it was an SMS from Vodacom. I clicked my tongue and continued doing my thing. It beeped again after a few minutes I went to it not excited like I was on the first beep. It was a response from him.

{Samkelo}: "You sure know how to make a man loose focus. What will the boys say if they see little Nduna moving. You know Alupheli has a big mouth."

{Me}: Don't tell me about Thando. I said spot the difference Mr Ndunakazi. You're making me impatient.

I sent it and waited for him to respond.

{Samkelo}: "Sorry my bad madam. I am spotting it right away. But how about I spot it in person"

{Me}: I swear to God you will sleep in the guest room. Just spot the difference already.

He typed back immediately after that text and he sent back the text that was spotting the difference. I laughed and looked at the second step. I took a pen and a pad. I put on our bed. SECOND STEP: Think of a fantasy you've wanted to try with your partner. Write down the phrase "I want to" or "I want you to" followed by enough blank spaces. Your guy must guess your fantasy and complete the sentence. If he gets it wrong he will act out ur fantasy. Also play his and act it out.

To do this I needed him to come to our room so it was either the game or me. And if he knew what was good for him. He better choose me. I took my phone and called him. He answered immediately.

Samkelo: MaDhlomo wami.

Me: Are you going to stay there forever?

Samkelo: What? Baby are you alright?... Oh you have a little headache?... (I was laughing)

No! No! the game can wait. I will come with painkillers now. Yes I will be with you till you feel.

Alupheli:(at the back) Yes, the game can wait let's go and take of mom guys. She cooked a very nice meal tonight. We can't leave her alone.

I laughed and waited for Samkelo to shake off Alupheli.

Samkelo:(To Alupheli) No Alupheli, your mom needs me. You guys stay here so that you can tell me who won I will take care of mom.

Uyathandwa laughed.

The boys: Alright dad.

Samkelo: I am coming baby.

Me: Hurry up I am dying here. The headache is killing me.

I hung up and quickly went to unlock the door. I lay on my bed on the side facing him. He walked in and locked the door behind him. He took off his flip flops and joined me in bed. He smiled and tried to kiss me. I stopped him.

Me: Not so fast. Here's the game.

He frowned and I laughed at him. I told him the rules of the game and his face lightened up. I wrote down for him. "I want you to \_\_\_ naked \_\_\_ me". I gav him a glass of wine and I took mine too. He looked at the note trying to figure it out. I laughed waiting for him. He kept on drinking the wine trying to figure everything out. He then filled in the blank spaces and

showed me. "I want you to strip me naked and make love to me" I laughed.

Samkelo: Come on baby I know that I am right.

Me: No! My fantasy say I want you to strip naked for me. Like be my stripper.

Samkelo: What? No!

Me: Yes! Or else we're sleeping.

He quickly stood up putting away his glass of wine. I smiled and sexual healing song on a low volume. He stripped for me so good I was feeling wet already. He finished and tried to kiss me. I stopped him again.

Me: No we're not done yet Mr. Put your clothes back on. Time for second game.

Samkelo: Hawu baby.

Me: Yes come on get dressed.

He got dressed again and I took the blindfold and a bowl of fruit salad. I blindfolded him.

**THIRD STEP:** Blindfold your partner and have him lick the food of your choice off your finger. If he guessed the taste correctly each of you must take off their clothes. If not he must answer your burning sex question. Or perform an erotic request while he's still a Blindfold. If he's always right have him kiss his way down to your body, pausing when you tell him to. Then give him the main course.

Samkelo guess all the fruits correctly and we were both naked by the time he tried all the fruits so he licked his way down my body and we made love to each other. It was perfect and it was everything that I needed. We caught our breaths after wards and listened to each other's heart beats until I was ready for the last part of the game.

**FOURTH STEP:** Choose one of the speed position. It must be clear that which one of you is doing more moving or keeping steady. The challenge is for that partner to stay in the position for 3min. When time's up switch position. Whoever is dominating the moves when one of you orgasm or the last to break form. Earns the sex crown.

I had the timer set and I started. We were doing the flying buttress position. I was doing the movements and Samkelo was keeping steady. I couldn't reach 3min I was already tired. I switched and Samkelo was in control. We were doing the lift off position and my husband was still working me out when someone knocked on the door.

Samkelo: Yesses man! Who is it?

Alupheli: It's Thando. Just that I am worried about mom and Uyathandwa says I shouldn't be worried. Mom are you alright? How is the headache?

I swear I was closed to laughing and my husband held my mouth.

Samkelo: She's alright Alupheli. Just go back to the game.

Alupheli: Okay dad. Can mom answer for herself. Samkelo sighed and removed his hands from my mouth.

Me: Yes my baby I am feeling much better now. Your father is taking care of me.

Alupheli: Are you sure mom? I can sleep with you and hold your head.

Me: No baby. Go and watch the game.

Alupheli: Okay. I am leaving now.

His footsteps walked away. I laughed.

Samkelo: Ayi don't laugh. Let's start –

He knocked again and said: If you need me mom. Call me please.

Me: I will call you baby. Thanks. I love you.

Alupheli: I love you too.

We then heard him running down the stairs.

Samkelo: Your son Kodwa.

Me: Come on he was worried about his mother. Let's give it another go.

He agreed and we started afresh. And he won.

Samkelo: So I take the sex crown! (Catching his breath) Thank you so much my love for this

wonderful night. I love you.

Me: I love you too.

Samkelo: For a moment I thought Alupheli was going to ruin it.

Me: He wasn't going to ruin this one for us.

We kissed each other Goodnight and we were dead sleeping after a few seconds.

Share the game with your husbands and partners.

3rd Person Narrator

Themba had searched all the older gang members. Xolani was sweating and shaking. He knew that today was probably gonna be his last day on earth.

Themba: "New recruits line up now. I hope and pray that none of you is not a spy because believe me I will show no mercy on you"

Themba started by searching them and it was turn for Xolani to be searched too. Themba searched him and Xolani tried by all means to hide his fear. But there was nothing he could do because Themba found the wired mic on him. Everyone in the room showed that they were surprised by this. Themba looked at Xolani.

Themba: "What is this?"

Me: "I don't know how it got here"

Themba: "You don't"

He felt a rush of anger inside him and he throw a punch on Xolani. Xolani felt like his jaw was going to crack. He held it. Themba ordered them to chain him up on the chair. He was going dry the answers out of him. This was the only way he was going to be a step ahead. They tied him up and Themba started punching him a several times.

Themba: "I need you to speak and I need you to speak the truth now! Who are you working for?"

Xolani: "I don't know what you are talking about"

He punched him again.

Themba: "I won't destroy this mic. I want your boss to hear you die. If you don't tell me who are you working for?"

Xolani: "I work for no one"

Themba: "Is it Thandeka Ndunakazi, my ex wife. Is it her?"

Xolani: "I don't even know who that person is"

Themba laughed and covered his fist with a chain and he worked out Xolani until he was tired. There was blood everywhere and Themba made sure that no member of the gang will leave because he wanted them to witness what was going to happen to Xolani.

Cikizwa's father: "Themba I think if you really want him to talk you must turn off that mic. Maybe he won't talk while his superiors are listening to him"

Themba and the others agreed to that. Themba destroyed the mic and He tried to make Xolani talk but he didn't say a word until Themba pointed the gun at him. Xolani then tried to speak.

Xolani: "I am an undercover cop. I work for government. I joined the gang so that I can bring you down."

Themba looked at the others for approval and the guy who brought him in spoke.

Him: "I think we can prove that by going to his shack. There must be something in there hidden that proves that he is a cop"

They all agreed to that and so they drove to his shack. Not all of them but only a few elder members of the gang.

When they arrived there, they tied him up on the chair and searched his place. They turned everything upside down but they found nothing that proved that Xolani is a cop. All they found were weapons that Xolani had. Themba started the whole process afresh.

Themba: "I am sure that you're working for my ex wife and she's not in this alone. But

you're not willing to give her up.”

Still Xolani dinied working with Thandeka. Themba tried to bargain with him and told him that he will pay him good money if he can agree to spy his boss back but Xolani didn't take the offer. Themba had no choice but to kill him. He put his gun on a silencer and shot him once on his stomach. He didn't die. He then took a picture of him using his phone. Then he thought this kind of death was too easy for Xolani. He chose to burn the place down. They went to take petrol for him in the car. He poured it around and gave Xolani the last chance to save his ass but he didn't. Themba burnt the place down and they left. A few people were around to help Xolani but they didn't. And those who helped, helped as they saw the fire and it was to stop the fire so that their homes won't burn down too. Not that those people didn't see Themba and his crew they saw him but they weren't going to say a thing because they knew what he was capable of.

\*\*\*\*\*

Thandeka Ndunakazi...

The following days I wasn't going anywhere because I had no work to do at the centre. I was going to wait for Muzi to call me so that they can tell me how did their plan go. I spent the rest of my days with my boys and we visited Samkelo for lunch. And we went back home after lunch. I was a little bit on the edge about the whole thing. I didn't know what was going to happen. But I tried to keep calm by all means. I didn't want my husband to be suspicious. I wasn't good until it was time for us to go to bed.

I spent Thursday and Friday wondering what was going on because nobody was giving me feedback. I even went to the center but Muzi wasn't there and something was wrong but nobody was telling me what was going on.

Saturday I went to visit my daughter and I was happy to see that she was doing great with my mother-in-law. I had a great time with my daughter but we had to go back home. Samkelo didn't want us to spend the weekend.

Monday morning I was woken up by my phone. It just couldn't stop ringing. I reluctantly took it and checked the caller ID. It was Muzi. I quickly got off the bed and left my bedroom. My husband was still sleeping. I went downstairs and I waited for him to call again and he did. I answered immediately.

Me: Talk to me.

Muzi: There's trouble.

Me: What do you mean there's trouble. Ain't you suppose to be here in KZN by now? You disappear and you come back saying that there is trouble.

Muzi: I am in KZN now. But things are not good. I need you to come down here.

Me: I will be down there within an hour.

I hung up the phone and rushed upstairs. My husband was still sleeping. I took a very quick shower did every necessities and I didn't wake Samkelo up because it was still early. I left the alarm on. It was going to wake him up. I then went downstairs to make breakfast for him.

After I was done I took an apple and my things. Then I left.

At the centre I went straight to Muzi's office. I sat down and waited for him to tell me what was going on.

Muzi: Xolani got busted.

Me: What? But how?

Muzi: I told him to put the mic on because I wanted to hear Themba's moves.

Me: What? Muzi why would you do that. That poor boy might be dead by now. Did you even think this through?

Muzi: I didn't think he can be busted. When we left the hospital we separated. Others came back using the plane and the ambulance is the only vehicle that was on the road back to KZN. They are the ones who didn't take off their mics and they heard the conversation between

Themba and his gang. We then had to go back and look for him in Cape Town. That's why we didn't come back early. Camille is trying to get the whole thing on the back up device. I nodded and left. Muzi tried to stop me but I just couldn't take it. I was the one who took Xolani off the streets so that he could get killed? I couldn't hold my tears. My phone beeped and I took it. I wiped my tears and opened the message from an unsaved number. I think was a picture of Xolani. I was pretty sure that he was dead. There was no caption. Themba really knew that I was on him. Or Xolani told him. I didn't know what to think I just cried for the poor boy's life....

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay....

TWO WEEKS LATER.....

I have been with my family. Nadine was updating me about my husband's progress. He was eating but he wasn't talking to anyone. They didn't really know what was happening with him. But he was much better because she even said, he went back to work. What was bothering me was that he never contacted me not even once. I was still hoping that he was going to reach out to us. Nadine asked me to respect my husband enough to wear my saris even if I wasn't home with him. Because I love Rajiv I did. It was wired walking around in township with saris but I didn't care. I didn't give up on praying for my family.

It was the 18th of December. It was a Sunday, we just came back from church with my family. My sister had left for Cape Town but she came back again for that weekend because we wanted to talk to mom about our half brother from her best friend Nandipha who was also a nurse but not at the same hospital. They went to church together. Ever since that secret was revealed that mom's friend son is my father's son. Mom never spoke about it or even tell us how she felt. So after lunch we asked to speak with her in my room. She agreed.

Mom: Okay. What is this about? Is everything alright? Are you having any problems?

Me: No mom.

Philisiwe: We are more worried about you.

Mom: About me? I don't get it.

Me: You never really spoke about our half brother and we were wondering what was going on.

Philisiwe: Like mom we didn't even see you breaking down beside crying that day. You never showed any emotions or anger afterwards.

Me: You and dad pretends like nothing happened. Like he doesn't exist. You didn't even tell us that if it was true. If he's really our brother.

Mom: I know. I didn't want to show you that I was breaking. I asked your father not bring his name up in this house.

Me: But mom you can't do that. We deserve to know him and he deserves to know us.

Mom: He's my best friend's son. I still can't get over the fact that Nandipha slept with my husband and they had a son together. They pretended like it didn't happen for years.

Nandipha fooled me.

Philisiwe: But the boy did not ask for all this to happen. Please mom just forgive her and move one for your sake.

Me: We know that forgiveness is not an easy thing to do whether you're a Christian or not. But we forgive to free ourselves from anger and hate.

Mom: So you want to bring her son to the house?

Us: Yes.

She swallowed hard and stood up.

Mom: You'll have to speak to your father about that.

Me: Obviously dad won't agree because he knows that he'll be hurting you.

Mom: I don't know.

Mom left the room. My sister and I looked at each other. We shook our heads.

Philisiwe: I think we should meet him somewhere else. Maybe dad and mom would not like to have him here but that doesn't mean we can't meet him.

Me: Does he even know that dad is his father?

Philisiwe: Yes, he does. Sakhile said he knows. They do hang out together at school sometimes.

Me: Okay. That means if you come back for Christmas we'll have to take him out and get to know him better.

Philisiwe: Yeah that's the good idea. I am glad we're doing this.

Me: Yeah. Me too. (we smiled) how are my babies?

Philisiwe: They are good. Though sometimes it feels like they fighting with each other. (We laughed)

Me: They are just playing.

Philisiwe: Their father is threatening to take me to court. Apparently he says I don't have the right support system for them.

Me: What does that suppose to mean?

Philisiwe: It means that he wants them to stay with him. He will give them a comfortable home with two loving parents.

Me: What!?! No he's mad. I thought he wanted to talk about coparenting maybe. But he wants to take them.

Philisiwe: Don't worry I won't let him do that. These are my babies and no one will take them from me.

Me: Yeah that's the spirit. (She smiled and nodded)

I stood up and I went outside to the toilet. I finished up and got out of the toilet. I nearly got a heart attack when I saw my husband standing outside the toilet door. We didn't say anything to each other for a few seconds. I didn't know what to say to him because I didn't know what he was thinking about me. Did he think that I had something to do with what happened to him. I didn't know what to think and what not to think.

Rajiv: You look beautiful.

I smiled faintly and looked down.

Rajiv: I have missed you.

I sighed heavily after I heard him say that. I smiled faintly. I looked at him.

Rajiv: Living without you by side was one the hardest things I had to endure the past two weeks. Waking up and you were not on your side of the bed

Me: They –

Rajiv: Let me finish (I nodded) I know that dad said you did that to me. For a moment when I didn't see you around I began to think that maybe he was right. That maybe you did try to hurt me.

Me: So that's why you didn't try to reach out to me because you thought I hurt you?

Rajiv: I tried to make sense of things. They wouldn't even let Nadine see me because they knew that she'll likes you and she'll probably tell me that you didn't do it. A part of me remembered how scared you were that morning. Scared for your life and our baby's life.

There was no way that you would have hurt me. I know that your love for me is real and true. So as mine for you and our child.

Me: You doubted me Rajiv for two weeks you've been trying to figure out if I was innocent or not. What does that say about us? Huh?

He didn't say anything. He took out a paper out his pocket. He took my hand and placed it on my hand.

Rajiv: That's where you are wrong. I didn't spend two weeks trying to figure out if you are innocent or not. I spent two weeks trying to figure out how I was going to keep you safe. You

and our little hope. (I smiled) I know it's not something big and not a fancy neighbourhood. But it's what I can afford for now. I didn't want to bring you back in that house so that you can live in fear again. I wanted to make sure that if I bring you back it will be a place that you will call your home and feel safe. So I managed to get a deposit for a house in Glenwood. It's a eight room house. I think it will be perfect for the three of us. All you need to sign and we can go home. Our home.

I wiped my tears and held his face with my hands that I didn't even wash. I didn't care if they were dirty or not. All I cared about was how bad I wanted to kiss my husband. I kissed him. This was my true love....

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

Spending the day with my mom and brothers was very good and it was everything that I needed. Alupheli did not want to go back home but mom didn't allow him to stay because he didn't tell dad about staying. My dad was a just a tough father. But I loved him he was my father and God gave him to me. I was in the bedroom alone. I took my phone and decided to call my father. I didn't know what I was going to say to him but I just wanted to hear his voice. He answered when I was about to hung up.

Dad: Alondwe?

Me: Hello daddy. How are you doing?

Dad: I am good and how are you?

Me: I am doing alright. I – I just wanted to make sure if Uyathandwa reminded you that you have to fetch my report on Wednesday.

Dad: Yes. He reminded. I won't forget.

Me: Uhm... Okay. Thanks.

Dad: Alright.

Me: Uhm dad?

Dad: Yes?

Me: I am really sorry for everything that I did. I didn't mean to embarrass you. Or disrespect you.

He didn't say anything. That felt really awkward. I just didn't know what to say anymore. I expected him to say something but he didn't say anything. Even an "Okay" would have been fine.

Me: Dad are you still there?

Dad: Yes I am here.

Me: Oh okay. Goodnight.

Dad: Goodnight.

He hung up the call. I felt really bad. I just somehow wish that I could undo everything. I just couldn't stop crying. It's like I wasn't talking to my father. It's like I was talking to some stranger that I am afraid of. A stranger that I was also somehow forced to talk to. I called Thapelo. He answered. I was crying when he answered.

Me: I love you my prince okay?

Thapelo: Hey why are you crying? Is it because I spoke about marriage. Okay I didn't mean to upset you.

Me: No. It's not you. I was speaking to my dad and I don't think that he'll ever forgive me.

Thapelo: Don't say that. He's your father, of course he'll forgive you.

Me: You say that. My mom says that but you don't know how it feels to speak to him now. It's like he's no longer there.

Thapelo: I am really sorry. I am here for you if you need to talk. I know I can never replace your father's place in your life but I will support you emotionally until he comes around.

Me: Why are you so perfect?

Thapelo: I am not perfect. I am also human. I do make mistakes too.

Me: Okay you may not be perfect perfect but you're.

He laughed and said: Don't say that. I miss you.

Me: I miss you too chocolate brownie.

Thapelo: You know I think my neighbour is sleeping with his step sister.

Me: It's gossip hour already?

Thapelo: Yes it is. I just don't know how can he do this.

Me: How do you know?

Thapelo: Their parents usually ask me to sleep over at their house with them whenever they are not home. Last night when I arrived he was all sweaty and he told me to go home because him and his sister. They are good. I pretended like I am leaving because I was suspicious and I heard sex noise coming from his room. I then went home.

Me: Maybe it was his girlfriend.

Thapelo: Yes and that girlfriend is his step sister.

Me: Well they are not really related.

Thapelo: Alondwe! Sies!

Me: (laughing) Alright. I was just saying. You know. Not that I am serious.

Thapelo: He got no morals. That boy.

Me: Maybe you should speak to him.

Thapelo: Hell no! I won't do that. Are you ready to know your results?

Me: Yes. I know that I knocked your ass down.

Thapelo: We'll see about that. Don't get too excited baby girl.

We laughed because he was making girl sounds.

Me: Let me sleep now baby I love you.

Thapelo: I love you too my white chocolate. Good night.

Me: Good night my Prince.

We hung up. I felt much better. My aunt came back and we had our girl talk until it was late. I fell asleep with a smile on my face.

Finally Wednesday came. I was really nervous. During the day I was sleeping and my phone was off. I didn't want to speak to anyone. Afternoon I woke up and switched on my phone. I went to sit with my aunt and grandma.

Me: Grandma dad hasn't called yet?

Granny: No baby he hasn't. But he will call.

I nodded. My aunt got a call and she left the room. I tried to call dad and his phone was off. I tried mom and she didn't answer her phone. I felt tears close by. I just stood up.

Grandma: Calm down Alondwe.

I just knew that I did really bad, that's why dad wasn't calling. That's why mom wasn't picking up her phone because I did bad. I know I wasn't going to fail but clearly my marks were bad. I went back to our room. My aunt came back with stuffy eyes. I looked at her.

Me: What's wrong auntie?

Melo: Nothing baby I am fine.

Me: I can see that you're not fine.

Melo: Alondwe I said I am fine.

I didn't say anything further. She changed her clothes and left. I sighed and decided to login on WhatsApp. Thapelo had sent his reports pic and he did absolutely great. I just felt my heart burning. Nkululeko and Mpendulo passed too. I didn't respond to their messages I was going to respond later. My dad called while I was crying. I wiped my tears quickly and answered.

Me: Dad?

Dad: Why are you Crying?

Me: I thought that I failed because you weren't calling.

Dad: Were you high when you wrote your Maths exam?

Me: No I wasn't.

Dad: Can you explain how you got a 60%?

Me: What?

Dad: That's not the answer I am waiting for Samkeliswa.

Me: Dad I don't know how it happened.

Dad: How can you know when you are busy going after things that are older than you? How can you know?

Me: I am sorry.

Dad: You're sorry, this is your future that you are throwing away. Run after boys and you won't go to med school. One thing will pass, it's either your studies or boys. Uyangicasula Alondwe. Uyanginyanyisa ngampela. Tsk!

He hung up on me. Okay!? How did this happen? I thought I got this. Where did I went wrong?

Thandeka Ndunakazi...

Muzi called me in after about an hour. Everyone who had gone to Cape Town was back. They wanted to brief us on the assignment. I stood up and fixed myself up. I left my office and went where everyone assembly for an address or anything that concerns the organization. Muzi took the stand.

Muzi: Ladies and gentlemen receive my warm greetings. Thank you for availing yourselves. I would like to give you the feedback on Themba Smith and gang's case. As everyone knows that Wednesday we went to rescue a man who is going to be our witness on the case we're building against Themba. We did go and luckily we had a very clean rescue. Thanks to everyone who was on the team from the planning team to the task team. And our IT genius. Everyone clapped their hands.

Muzi: On our way back home, we heard Xolani getting in trouble.

Member: getting in trouble how?

Muzi: He had a mic on so that we can trace Themba's moves through him. We didn't know when Themba was planning to kill our witness. Themba must have had an inside man who told him that we removed this ex gang member. He thought someone must have told Thandeka his ex wife about this man.

Member 2: So Themba knew that Thandeka was planning something against him and yet Muzi you decided that Xolani must put a mic on?

Muzi: I didn't know that things would turn out this way. Yes I admit. I was wrong and I should have consulted everyone first but I did what I thought was the right thing to do.

Member 3: So what happened to Xolani?

Muzi: Craig and Thembeke went back to Cape Town to track him down and try to help him but by the time they got there Themba had already destroyed the mic. They went to check on his shack and it was burnt down.

Those news came as a shock to everyone. I didn't expect it too. I just couldn't believe it.

Me: What did they find?

Muzi: They managed to pay someone who was there to talk and he testified that they left Xolani inside to burn. I am sorry but he is no longer with us.

I left the room immediately.

I went to my office and locked myself up. I should have not involve an innocent boy in all this mess. Maybe I should have stuck to muzi's original plan. None of this would've happened. I was to blame for all of this. He might have been a street kid but he deserved a better life like everyone else. I drank water and tried by all means to calm down. I think it

was guilt that I was feeling more than pain.

After a long time of being alone. Muzi came to my office. I stood up and opened up. I offered him a seat.

Muzi: Thanks. Thandeka I am really sorry.

Me: What is done is done. We can't change it.

Muzi: Craig and Thembeke did try to take what they thought were his ashes.

Me: How did they know?

Muzi: They saw the chair that was in the middle of the room. Themba must have chained him there. They ran it by the lab and it was his ashes.

Me: I can't believe that he actually killed him. I thought maybe he was going to use him as his allaby. To snitch on me. I would have lived with that because he was going to be alive.

Muzi: We have decided to make a funeral service for him this Saturday. Just to say goodbye.

Me: Yeah that's a good idea. May his soul rest in peace.

Muzi: May his soul rest in peace.

He stood up and made a turn on the door.

Muzi: One of the guys on the police force thought that maybe we must pitch our organisation to the government.

Me: What? What government? You want to involve politics in all this now?

Muzi: No but if the government was involved maybe it would be easier to cover our tracks because things do get messed up. We can only involve eThekweni government only.

Me: I don't like it. The government you're talking about will turn this whole thing into the work of some political party and we won't achieve our goals. I don't think involving the government is wise but we can decide with the team after Xolani's funeral.

He nodded and left. I seriously didn't like the sound of government. Sure case the government did have it secret organization that worked on protecting the government.

Organizations that the public wasn't aware of. I didn't want to be involve in that because before I know it we were going to be owned by the ruling party and be involved in politics. And I was never going to have time for my family if that was going to happen. I sighed and started working.

After work I drove straight home. I just couldn't stop thinking about Xolani. The pain he must have felt burning in that fire. This thing really distracted me. Even my family saw that but I tried to keep that smile special for my kids. I went to bed early with an aim of avoiding my husband's questions. I couldn't even sleep. When he joined me for bed he called my name but I pretended like I was sleeping. He kissed my lips and we slept.

I could hear screams and the smell of fire. It was dark and the smoke was all over. I tried to call his name thinking he will hear me and I will help him.

"Xolani! Xolani!" I screamed.

I realised I was dreaming when Samkelo shook me awake. I was scared and I was sweating.

Samkelo: Who is Xolani? (I looked at him) Who is Xolani? Answer me.

I didn't answer him. I stood up and I went to the bathroom. I washed my face. He followed me.

Samkelo: Thandeka I asked you a question. Who the hell is Xolani. You're calling his name in your sleep. You're even sweating.

Me: Why don't you say what you think he is because I can see that you have already made it up in your mind.

Samkelo: Do you blame? It's not like –

Me: It's not like I haven't cheated on you before that's what you were going to say right? I thought that is the past.

He didn't say but he kept his composure still.

Samkelo: You're keeping things from me Thandeka!

Me: Xolani is just a kid I was mentoring at work. He died on sight and I couldn't protect him. I am not sleeping with him.

Samkelo: Thandeka I am sorry. I didn't know.

Me: Save your sorry.

I left him and went downstairs to make warm milk for myself. I went sit on the couch drinking it, I ended up falling asleep. Samkelo woke me up and I went back upstairs to bed. Days went by and things weren't so good at home. Between my husband and I. I just didn't know that Samkelo wasn't over the fact I cheated on him. I mean it was 9 years back. I suppose it will always follow me.

On Saturday we buried Xolani with respect and dignity. Samkelo went with me to his funeral. We said goodbye to our hero. Our young soilder.

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay....

We let go of each other and he kissed my forehead. I gave him back the paper. He looked at me and took it. It's like he was scared that I was going to reject him. The look on his eyes had worry.

Me: Don't worry I just want to go and wash my hands.

Rajiv:(laughing) Oh man! Precious you touched my face with dirty hands.

Me: I have missed you. Can you blame me?

We looked at each other and laughed. I then went to wash my hands. We both went inside the house. My mom and dad were having tea and scones. I think they have already made one for my husband because there was an extra cup and scones.

Mom: Here's your coffee and scones my son.

Rajiv: Thank you mamma.

We both sat down and he had his coffee and scones.

Rajiv: My in-laws. I have came back to take my wife.

Dad: I was starting to get worried that you two may be getting divorced. It's easy for youngsters these days to give up on their marriages.

Rajiv: No we are not getting divorced. But I must say that since she has visited such a long time. She'll have to come back next year.

Mom and dad: Hawu!

Rajiv laughed and they laughed too. My sister joined us.

Philisiwe: Hello Rajiv.

Rajiv: Hello sister how are you doing?

Philisiwe: I am doing alright and you?

Rajiv: Much better thank you.

Philisiwe: Thanks for borrowing us my sister.

Rajiv: My pleasure.

I stood up and left them having a conversation. I went to pack my things. I was relieved that I wasn't going back to that hell house. I finished and went back to the lounge with my bags.

My parents stood up and gave me a hug. I hugged my sister too.

Me: Sakhile is not around?

Mom: No and you can't wait for him because he'll probably come back at night.

Me: Alright. Good bye everyone.

Them: Good bye Hlehle.

Philisiwe: We will speak on the phone.

I nodded and kissed her tummy. She giggled.

Rajiv carried my bags and we left.

Rajiv: We will leave your bags in the house and go back home to tell them that I am leaving.

Me: You haven't move our clothes?

Rajiv: No but they are already packed in boxes and bags. All your wedding gifts and our clothes. The truck that will move is on it's way home.

Me: Alright. Didn't they ask you questions when you were packing?

Rajiv: No. Nadine assisted me and they were probably thinking that I was packing your things away. I wasn't talking to any of them.

Me: Baby what did the priest say?

Rajiv: He only said that the danger is inside the house but he didn't tell me who it was. But Nadine told me what the Doctor said so it's clear that my father's wife did this but we won't accuse anyone of anything. They'll be war if we can accuse Claudine. Dad won't believe us. We will just leave in peace and go start our lives together.

Me: Okay. I am fine with that.

We passed by our house and left my bags there. The house wasn't furnished. Only the bedroom was fully furnished and the kitchen.

Rajiv: It will take some time for us to have furniture in the house. I hope you understand.

Me: It's alright baby I don't mind.

He kissed me briefly and we left.

We arrived at the Pillay mansion and I had to wait outside for our parents to welcome us because it has been too long since I wasn't home. They came to the door and father became angry.

Mr Pillay: What is she doing here?

Rajiv: She's my wife dad and she deserves to be with me.

Mr Pillay: She's not welcomed here in my house. Do you understand?

Rajiv: We need to talk dad please let us in.

Mr Pillay: You can come in but I don't want your witch inside my house. Do you want to die? Is this you dead wish huh Rajiv?

Claudine: I think you should listen to your father Rajiv. He only wants what is best for you.

Garry: You can't trust your wife.

Rajiv: Well since you won't let us in. I might as well say this here. Precious and I, we're moving out of the house.

Them: What!?

Rajiv: Yes. We don't feel safe here and so we're leaving this house immediately.

Mr Pillay: Are you out of your mind Rajiv?

Rajiv: No I am in my right mind.

Aunt Tashrika: It's the love potion. She might have used the love potion on him.

Nadine: I think you should let my brother do what he wants to do.

Mr Pillay: I didn't ask you to speak. Shut up!

Rajiv: The thing is I wasn't asking for your permission dad. I don't have to bring up how your precious wife has resented me over the years. I don't want to do that because it's in the past. So I am leaving and that's that.

Aunt Theresa: But I came here to make sure that she treats you right Rajiv. If you leave how can I see that.

Rajiv: Deep down you know that she cares for me and she wants what is best for me.

Aunt Theresa: Yes I know. And I spoke to Grandma in India. She said she's coming.

Claudine: What? Why would you do that Theresa?

Aunt Theresa: I did the right thing.

Claudine was pretty mad.

Rajiv: Thanks aunty but I am leaving anyway. Precious go back in the car.

I nodded and went back to the car. He went inside the house. The truck came and they packed everything inside. Nadine came to me.

Nadine: Hey there, how do you feel?

Me: I feel relieved and I am happy.

Nadine: I am happy to hear that. I must have my room there because I will visit as much as I can.

Me: Don't worry you will.

She smiled. Rajiv came back. We said our goodbyes and we left. This was a new beginning for us.

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

I called my mom because I didn't understand how on earth did I get a 60% on Maths. Like how? She answered her phone.

Mom: Hello baby?

Me: Mom did I really get a 60% on Maths?

Mom: Uhm... Yes baby you did.

Me: But how? I don't understand.

Mom: Maybe it's that test that you didn't do well in, it must have had a bad impact on your final mark.

Me: Dad is angry.

Mom: I know baby. At least you didn't fail.

Me: Mom? A 60% is like a fail. That's close to half. This is like I got a 50% which is half.

Mom: You'll do well next year. Don't worry about it.

Me: I failed. I just can't believe I failed Maths. And dad said boys are the outcome of this.

Mom: I know. Maybe he is right. I think you should stop dating.

I didn't even take note of that.

Me: How did I do on other subjects?

Mom: You got distinctions. 60% is the only low pass mark.

Me: What kind of distinctions mom?

Dad required to speak to me. I heard him on the background. Mom gave him the phone or she must have put me on loudspeaker.

Dad: Even your distinctions are poor. Your English is no longer on 90%. Are you happy now?

Mom: Samkelo don't be too hard on her.

Dad: I don't know what is with all of you.

Me: Did the others pass mom?

Mom: Mesuli did very well. Alupheli refused to give us his report. Uyathandwa's father emailed his report and he did well but not like the last time. His marks dropped.

Dad: It's understandable, Uyathandwa went through some really deep things. It must have been hard for him but he tried his best. You on the other hand I just don't know.

Mom: She's also been through too much Samkelo.

Dad: That too much made her bury herself in her books but as soon as she started sleeping with that boy she let go of her books and held on too tight on that boy's penis.

Mom: Samkelo?

Dad: Don't even try to defend her.

They spoke like I wasn't there with them on the phone. I just didn't understand my dad. How can he make me feel this bad?

Me: I did say I am sorry. It hasn't been easy on me too but I tried my best. I am sorry.

Dad clicked his tongue and he must've left the room because I heard the sound of the door banging.

Mom: Your overall aggregate is no longer on 90%. It is exactly 80%. But you did well.

Me: Thanks mom. Why did Alupheli refused to give you his report?

Mom: He said he wants to know who is paying his fees. He will give his report to that person

because he has something to explain first.

Me: (laughing) What? What did you say mom?

Mom: His father told him that the both of us pay for his fees but he said that is not true. You know how he is. I think something is wrong with his IQ.

Me: Mom?

Mom: What can I say? I mean I looked everywhere for his report but I didn't find it. Clearly he did a good job hiding it. But I will go to his teacher tomorrow.

Me: Alright. I hope he did well.

Mom: I hope so too. Mesuli did exceptionally well. Me: He's smart. I am glad that at least he did excell.

Mom: You all did but just that you can never do the same even if you have the same mom and dad.

Me: Alright. Thanks mom. Good night. I love you.

Mom: I love you too baby. Good night.

I sighed and I went to tell my grandmother about my results. She was still watching TV with grandpa.

Grandpa: 80% aggregate is really good.

Me: Dad doesn't think so.

Grandma: Your father will always want you to do much better than him. You should know that. On his 80% he got he'll want you to get 99%.

Grandpa: Be grateful that you got the mark that you got. Other kids struggle.

Me: Thank you grandma and grandpa.

Grandpa: Alright. Your grandmother will prepare a good meal for you tomorrow and I will get you a nice present. Forget about other things.

Me: A present? Haa! Thanks.

They both laughed.

Grandma: I think that present will be a lollipop.

Grandpa: Hawu Nkosikazi.

We all laughed.

Me: Anything will make me happy.

Grandpa: That's good.

I smiled and said my goodnight. Then I went to bed. I was chatting with my boyfriend and friend. We were making fun of my 60%. I couldn't cry about it forever. I just had to accept it and move on. Thapelo won he had a 92% aggregate.

{Thapelo}: ≥texting≤ "So are you ready to buy lunch for me? And the valentine's gift.?"

Say what?! He didn't forget. I mean I wasn't ready for that. My money? Kodwa why did I fail? I avoided the topic.

{Me}: I need to sleep now.

{Thapelo}: Sorry baby you're not getting away with this. Just forget it. If you won I was going to act like a girl right? So don't think of dissing me.

{Me}: Come on lunch is not a problem. I will buy it and that valentine gift. It's just a small amount. . I love you. Good night.

I logged out and put my phone on aeroplane mode. I was never ready for this. Like hell I wasn't ready. I was going to buy the cheapest lunch for him and buy the cheapest gifts. I mean I was supposed to buy two gifts. Eish! I sighed and I went to the bathroom.

On my way back to the bathroom. I heard someone crying in the kitchen. The lights were off. I was pretty sure that it was my aunt. She was probably talking to her friend on the phone.

Melo: "He fooled me Skwiza, I thought he loves me for real..... He's getting married in two weeks which part of that didn't you understand?..... He wasn't my first boyfriend but he was the first to have sex with me you know how hard it is to forget someone who broke your

virginity... Yes... His fiancée called and told me to leave him alone because they have kids and they are getting married. I asked him and he didn't deny it..... I didn't suspect a thing this whole time... I just don't know how to get over this..... I know.. You can never protect her enough from boys..."

I decided that I have heard enough and so I went back to my room. I figured she was talking to my mom. I thought my aunt's boyfriend was loyal but I guess you can never trust a man. Hearing her cry like that. It wasn't nice. She came back after some time and I pretended like I was sleeping. She sat beside my bed and brushed my forehead.

Melo: I can see your eyelashes moving. You're fake asleep.

I smiled and opened my eyes.

Melo: Sorry for snapping at you earlier. I am not alright.

Me: Is everything alright?

Melo: No but it will be. Your mom told me about your results. You did a good job.

Me: Thanks.

Melo: She will call you just now.

I nodded and took her phone. She stood up. Mom called, I answered.

Mom: Your phone is on voicemail.

Me: My friends are blowing my phone so I switched it off. It's on aeroplane mode so calls can't come through.

Mom: Okay. I have been listening to my old music and I came across a song I used to sing for you. That time I sang it because it liked it but now I want you to listen to it baby.

Me: My mom is going to sing for me .

She laughed. I was excited. It was kind of sweet for her to do that.

Mom: {singing} " Little sparrow, little sparrow, Precious fragile little thing. Little sparrow, little sparrow, Flies so high and feels no pain. All ye maidens heave my warning. Never trust the hearts of men, They will crush you like a sparrow. Leaving you to never mend, They will vow to always love you. Swear no love but yours will do, Then they'll leave you for another. Break your little heart in two". I love you my baby okay?

Me: thank you mom and I love you too.

We hung up. I figured she must have felt like Singing that song for me after hearing what my aunt told her. I sighed and tried to sleep. Life was not sweet at all. It throws lemons at us when we least expect it. Maybe mom and the writer of the song were right. Trusting the hearts of men wasn't the best thing one can do for herself....

Thandeka Ndunakazi...

Wednesday morning, I had to wake up and prepare my husband for his flight to Johannesburg. We woke up together and went to take a shower. He used the bathroom tub and I used the shower. We finished up and I left him and went to wake the boys up. They were going to fetch their reports themselves. Uyathandwa was going to be alone. I bathed Alupheli and dressed him up. I then went to make breakfast and I left them having breakfast. I dressed up for work and fixed our bed. I took my bags and everything that I needed then I went to have breakfast with them. Uyathandwa was still sleeping.

Me: What time will your school be out?

Mesuli: 11 mom please don't keep us waiting.

Mom: I won't.

Samkelo: If one of you failed, you must take a plane to Cape Town.

Alupheli: Aybo why dad?

Alupheli was really surprised to hear that from his father. I smiled. Maybe he was going to fail.

Samkelo: Because I have paid a lot of money for you to fail. I can't deal with that.

Alupheli looked at me. I shrugged my shoulders.

Mesuli: I won't fail. I don't know about Alupheli.

Alupheli: Are you saying I will fail?

Mesuli: I don't know.

He didn't say anything. He kept on looking at his father hoping that he'll say "I am kidding" but Samkelo didn't say that. After breakfast, I drove them to school. They were having a conversation with their father.

Alupheli: So dad since you're going to take Alondwe's report on her behalf. If she failed you won't come back home. You'll go to grandpa's house in Cape Town?

Samkelo laughed and said: Why are you so worried about this Alupheli?

Alupheli: I am not worried, I was just wondering.

Samkelo: Don't wonder if you won't fail.

Alupheli: Okay I won't wonder.

We arrived at their school. They said their goodbyes and their father helped them cross the road. He came back and I drove him to the airport.

Samkelo: I don't know how should I say sorry now. You'll be mad at me for how long?

Me: Don't get it wrong I am not mad.

Samkelo: I didn't mean to bring up the past like that and I am sorry for doing it.

Me: I know.

Samkelo: Then stop being distant Thandeka it's not healthy for our relationship.

Me: I know. I am not distant. I am just dealing with a lot of stuff from work.

Samkelo: Work has never made you this distant.

Me: I am sorry if you feel that way.

He looked at me and I looked at him briefly and made a short faintly smile then I looked back to the road. We drove in silence until we made it to the airport. He kissed me Goodbye and he left. I drove straight to work.

My morning was pretty hectic. The team and I wanted to make sure that Themba will be behind bars by Christmas. We were working on step two of bringing him down. We owed that much to Xolani. He couldn't just die for nothing. By 11am I was already waiting for the boys. They rushed to my car as soon as they spotted it. It was going to be my lunch time soon. Mesuli gave me his report. I looked at it and my baby did very well. I was so proud of him.

Me: Wow! Well done baby. You did very well.

Mesuli: Thank you mom.

Me: Mmm. I am so proud of you.

Mesuli: Give mom your report.

Alupheli: Did she asked for it? Why are you meddling in business that does not concern you?

Me: Thando! That's not the way you should speak to your brother. He's way older than you.

Do you understand?

Alupheli: Yes I understand. Ukuthi nje angiyithandi le minwe ethanda ukukopolota amakhala abantu. Lincane kakhulu yini ikhala lakho Mesuli? Noma alinawo udoti ufuna ukukhipha udoti wekhala lami? (But I don't like index fingers that wants to enter other people's noses.)

I didn't even know where he got that theory. He was full of surprises. Mesuli didn't say anything. He just looked at him and didn't answer.

Alupheli: Akasakhulumi. Inkukhu inqunywe umlomo.(he's no longer speaking now)

Me: Clearly you have forgotten that I can beat you up very well and you'll stop talking nonsense.

He didn't say anything. He shrugged his shoulders.

Me: And Mesuli doesn't have time to answer people who speak rubbish like they are not even educated.

I saw a glimpse of tears in his eyes when I said that. I knew that I have hit the right spot.

Me: Give me your report.

He shook his head “No”. He wiped his tears and I let him be. I drove my car home. Themba had also emailed Uyathandwa’s report and he did well, though his marks have dropped but he tried his best considering everything that he went through. We arrived at home and I went to Uyathandwa. He was watching a movie. I told the boys to change because I was taking them out for lunch. They went upstairs.

Me: Did your father call?

Uyathandwa: Yes, he did and he told me that I passed. I was quite nervous I thought I was going to fail.

Me: You’re my son and that means you don’t have a failing gene.

Uyathandwa: Those are the good pecks of being your son mom.

I laughed and took my tablet from my bag. I showed him the report. When he was looking at his marks I could see that he was pleased and amazed at the same time. I was happy with that.

Uyathandwa: You know mom if you didn’t come that day. I was going to repeat grade ten. I smiled and hugged him.

Me: I am so proud of you. You should never let your situation conclude how your future is going to be.

Uyathandwa: Thanks mom.

There’s nothing pleasing like hearing your child say “Thanks mom” it tells you that you’re doing the best you can to make an impact in their lives. The others came back and I took them out for lunch. I was starting to get worried about my last born. He wasn’t on his best mood and he was throwing rude answers on everyone. Maybe he failed.

After lunch I drove them back home and I went back to work. Everything was pretty hectic at work and we tried by all means to make a plan that wasn’t going to kill any more of us. We managed to get through Themba’s IT guy who was in prison. We were going to get him out of prison and he was going to help us get into Themba’s system. That was the only thing that was going to help us bring Themba down.

After work. I went home. Samkelo was already home. He was with Mesuli and Uyathandwa. He seemed really pleased by their work. I sat down with them.

Me: Someone is missing here.

Samkelo: He’s waiting for you to come back.

I called him and he came downstairs. He sat on my lap.

Alupheli: Mom and dad who is paying for my fees?

We looked at each other with Samkelo. He shrugged his shoulders.

Me: Why are you asking that?

Alupheli: I need to talk in private with someone who pays for my fees.

Samkelo: We both pay for your fees boy I told you.

Alupheli: That’s not true. It’s mom or dad not both. Maybe mom pays for Alondwe and dad pays for us.

Me: A child doesn’t ask his parents that question. You bring your report to us without asking questions.

Alupheli: But mom I said that I need to explain before I show you my report.

Samkelo: Explain to both of us.

Alupheli: No.

Samkelo: Ayi awubone Thandeka sengihlulekile mina.

His father stood up and went upstairs. I followed him and he showed me Alondwe’s report. Him being Samkelo he wasn’t pleased. I don’t even know why because it’s not like Alondwe failed. I didn’t have the energy to fight him. I went to search for Alupheli’s report. I looked for it everywhere and I didn’t find it. I wasn’t going to force him to show it to me. I was

going to his school to ask for a copy to his teacher. The way my daughter was worried about her father's opinion on her results. It was not sitting well with me. There was nothing that I could do. I was going to watch Samkelo act like he never had low marks before.

The following morning I went to Alupheli's preschool teacher. I explained my situation and she understood pretty well because she knew my son pretty well. She gave me the copy.

Me: This is not good.

Miss: Yes, he was really good but suddenly he just lost focus. I just don't know what is wrong with him. I think you should sit down with him and speak to him.

Me: I promise I will talk to him. Thanks.

Miss: My pleasure mam.

I smiled and left. I drove to work and my day began. It was a long day but things were going really good. I was confident that our plan was going to work.

After work I drove back home. I asked Samkelo to come back early. I just couldn't wait too long to speak to him. Alupheli passed with half. That is 50% aggregate. His performance was poor. Alupheli was bright he knew how to paint, draw, speak and do all those fine motor skills. I waited for Samkelo outside the house. He finally came.

Samkelo: This better be good.

Thandeka: I couldn't wait.

I gave him the report. He looked at it.

Samkelo: Yini ndaba vele siyalingwa?

Thandeka: Ey angazi. Let's go and talk to him.

He nodded and we went to speak with him in our bedroom. I gave him the copy of his report. He could read numbers clearly. He could read a few words. But when it comes to speaking he could speak like he was born in English. He looked at us.

Alupheli: But if you told me who is paying for my fees –

Samkelo: Hheyi we don't have time for that man! We're your parents, we pay for your fees, we feed you, we give shelter and clothes. So we demand you speak now!

He looked down and looked back at us.

Me: Speak baby.

Alupheli: I don't see why I should go to school. I don't like school. The teacher tells me what to do and I don't like that. I don't do well with submitting to authority. I just wanted to explain that. And I wanted support to leave school.

He said that and left. Samkelo and I looked at each other.

Me: He needs to see the Doctor. The Doctor must check his IQ. There's no four year old who speaks like that.

Samkelo sighed and said: Maybe my sperm was drunk when you concieved him.

I looked at him and said: I don't blame Alupheli at all. That's more sick.

I shook my head and went to the bathroom...

Alondwe Ndunakazi...

I spent a few more days with my grandparents. Like promised my grandmother did cook a nice meal for me and my grandpa bought white sandals for me as my present. I was doing great and I was stress free. My aunt was having a hard time coping with a heartbreak. I wish I could do more to help her but there was nothing I could do to help her. She wasn't talking that much. She kept to herself but tried to put on a front for her parents.

On the 21st of December I was going to Cape Town. In the morning my grandpa was driving me to Richards bay to take a taxi to Durban. I hugged my grandmother.

Grandma: You'll come back before going to school?

Me: Yes. I will come back after new year. I think I will come back with you. You'll be coming to mom and dad's ceremony?

Grandma: We won't miss it.

Me: I will see you then.

Grandma: Okay. Travel safe baby.

Me: Thanks.

I wanted to be in Durban by 8am because I was going to have breakfast with Nkululeko and Andiswa. Then I was going to take a flight to Johannesburg, I was going to have lunch with Thapelo and head to Cape Town. I bought the tickets myself. I wasn't going to see my brothers anymore because in four days they were also coming to grandpa's house. We drove to Richards bay. Grandpa and I were having a conversation. He was a great person to hold a conversation with. We conversed until we made it to Richards bay. Grandpa and I shared our goodbyes and he left me.

By 8:35am I was at gateway with Nkululeko and Andiswa. We shared our hugs. We walked waiting for our favorite restaurant to open. I was really happy to see them. We placed our order and had our conversation.

Nkulu: Do you really have to travel with a suitcase everytime you visit your grandparents.

Me: You know that I am pregnant bitch and the clothes in my grandparents house won't fit anymore. Andiswa: Don't mind him Alondwe. You look cute.

Nkulu: Come on Andiswa she looks chubby.

Me: Nonkululeko I will kick your gay balls do you hear me?

Andiswa laughed at him so hard that people around us were looking at us.

Nkulu: Okay I am sorry. You're not that chubby.

Me: Mxm! Andiswa did you pass grade eight?

Andiswa: Yes. I did. How far are you now?

Me: I am six months.

Andiswa: So I am meeting my nephew on March?

Me: Yes you'll meet him. But clearly not March.

Nkulu: You don't want us to accompany you to the hospital?

Me: What? No! So that you'll mock me afterwards. I don't want that.

They laughed at me. We continued talking. Our order arrived and we started eating.

Me: So where is baby daddy?

Andiswa and Nkululeko looked at each other like they didn't expect me to ask that question.

Me: What? Is it a crime to ask him?

Andiswa: No but we didn't expect that question. You even called him baby daddy.

Me: Well he is baby daddy and I just wanted to know.

Nkulu: He's at home. Do you want him to come?

Me: What? No! Don't push it.

Nkulu: Alright.

Andiswa: So he won't see the baby?

Me: No. Why must he see him?

Nkulu: Alondwe he's sorry for what he did to you and I really wish that you can give him a chance to be a father to your child.

Me: Look I didn't come here to discuss Sphephelo. We have a few minutes left.

They nodded and we finished up our breakfast. We then paid for our food.

Andiswa: Our ride is here. Let's go.

Me: Your ride will take me to the airport right?

Nkulu: Yes. We're at your service.

I smiled and we took some pictures. We then headed out. Nkululeko was dragging my suitcase, Andiswa my bag and I had my other bag. They led me to the car.

After Six months, there he was. He hadn't changed that much. He was still cute with that look that nobody understood but me. Maybe I understood it back then I don't know. My heart

stopped for a moment. I wasn't angry that they didn't tell me that it was him who was going to ride us. I wasn't angry at him. I was just numb. I didn't expect to see him. He was wearing white shorts with a blue tshrit and black Nike flips. I kept my cool and followed them to the car.

Nkulu: Awusachizile.

Sphephelo: Clearly you don't feel how hot the sun is. He was talking while his eyes were fixed on me.

Andiswa: You should have told us that you're driving a different car.

Sphephelo: Sorry, mom took her car that I usually drive. (He was still looking at me)

Nobody said anything for a while. He cleared his throat.

Sphephelo: Hi Alondwe.

Me: Why didn't you guys tell me that he's the driver of this ride you were talking about?

Nkulu: Calm down Alondwe.

Me: No answer me.

Andiswa: We didn't think you'll be angry. Sorry.

Me: I am not angry but you should have checked with me first.

Sphephelo: It's alright. Nkululeko can drive you to the airport. I will wait for them here.

I looked at Nkululeko he gave me that "awukahle" look.

Me: It's okay. You can drive me.

Sphephelo: Thanks. Are you two alright?

Me: Yes I am fine.

He nodded and opened the door for me. I hopped in. Andiswa and Nkululeko did the same.

He packed my bags. He stepped in and started the engine.

Nkulu: Damn! Can I go to the toilet. Just two minutes.

Sphephelo: Nkululeko ndoda.

Andiswa: I will go with him to make sure that he will makes it fast.

When she finished that sentence. They were already out. I knew they did that on purpose. I took out my phone and played with it.

Sphephelo: Is the baby alright?

Me: He's not your concern. So don't ask.

Sphephelo: Alondwe I am trying to be civil about this.

Me: Hehehe! Civil? What a big word.

Sphephelo: I know I wronged you but I just want a chance to father our son.

Me: "Our son" How nice? I don't even think that he knows you.

Sphephelo: I am sorry okay. I can't undo what I did to you but I can decide how I want the future to be.

Me: Shame.

He sighed. They came back and he drove off. They were having a conversation. I wasn't involved in their conversation. I just didn't know what to say. Nkululeko let me be for once.

He didn't like it when I was quiet. We finally made it to the airport. I sighed. We stepped out of the car and they walked me inside the airport. I hugged Nkululeko and Andiswa.

Me: Uhm... Thanks for driving me.

Sphephelo: My pleasure.

They left after that. I joined the line and after some time the plane was off the ground.

13:33 I was in Johannesburg. Thapelo fetched me. I was more than happy to see him. He hugged me tightly for a long time. We let go after a while.

Thapelo: I can't believe I am seeing you. It's been almost a month.

Me: Yes and you taller than before.

Thapelo: You're chubbier.

Me: Ayi futsek man. Let's go.

He laughed and took my bag and suitcase. I took my other bag. He was driving his mom's car. Mbali and Mpendulo were joining us for lunch. We met at the mall with them. I still had space for more food. Mpendulo was mocking my body.

Me: Mbali tell your boyfriend to behave before I knock him off.

Mbali:(laughing) Baby please, it's rude what you're doing and I don't want to see Alondwe kicking you.

They laughed. I was slowly getting irritated and I was going to bust in a few minutes. I gave Thapelo a warning eye that he was going to understand. He stopped laughing.

Thapelo: Okay that's enough. Leave my girlfriend alone Mpendulo.

He stopped laughing and we had a peaceful and good time. I couldn't keep my eyes off my chocolate brownie. I was just happy to be with him.

The time for me to leave came and Thapelo was driving me to the airport. I said my goodbyes to Mpendulo and Mbali.

Mpendulo: See you next year skhokho.

Me: Yeah. I won't be tutoring you because you got a highest mark than mine.

Mpendulo: Awukahle.

Me: Yes, let's go baby.

He nodded while laughing at Mpendulo. His face was just funny after I told him that. And we left. I wished I could be with Thapelo forever. He made me feel wanted and special everytime I was with him. At the airport I gave him my phone and I left him with my bags. I headed to the bathroom. I did my business and I went back to him. He gave me my phone back.

Thapelo: There's a private number that called. He wanted to know whether you arrived safe or what.

He said that taking my bag and dragging my suitcase. I took my bag. I followed him. I knew that it was Sphephelo Because he called using private number whenever he calls me. I knew Thapelo's insecurity took over and I wasn't going to explain myself here.

Me: Thank you baby for driving me.

Thapelo: Yeah sure. Travel safe.

He kissed my forehead briefly and walked away from me. I didn't try to run after him or stop him I just let him be. I proceeded with my journey. The plane took off and I just couldn't wait to be home...

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

Before reconciliation day it was time for us to go to Cape Town. Themba and his team were going to bomb an ATM on the 18th of December. We were going to leave for Cape Town on the 15th of December. Themba and his gang knew that the IT guy had made sure that he cracked into the ATM system and disabled alarm alerts and all the possible cameras around. But little did Themba knew that he didn't disable the ATM system. He made it in a way that the gang was going to do everything thinking nobody is seeing them. We were going to make sure that after the gang have been arrested his IT guy was going to skip the country to start a new life somewhere else. What I learned with this guy was that he was angry because themba did nothing to free him out of jail.

\*\*\*\*

On the 14th I was going to work. In the morning Samkelo and I were having breakfast.

Samkelo: I thought we were going to have Christmas here this year.

Me: Well your father had other plans for us.

Samkelo: Eish yeah. I don't see you planning our ceremony. You're busy working.

Me: Oh, yes! Thanks for reminding me. I have to call Nkululeko now.

I took my phone in my bag and I called him. He answered after a few rings.

Nkulu: Morning Mrs Ndunakazi.

Me: Morning Nkululeko. How are you doing?

Nkulu: I am fine mam and you?

Me: I am alright thanks. Look dear can we start with the planning on the 19th. You'll sleep in my house for the rest of the week. But we will be leaving on the 24th. So we'll continue when I come back.

Nkulu: Alright mam. I will bring everything with me.

Me: Don't worry I will fetch you at your friend's house. So that her parents can see me.

Nkulu: That's the best idea.

Me: Thanks bye.

Nkulu: Bye.

I hung up and sighed. I kissed my husband's cheek.

Me: You're the best husband ever.

Samkelo: I am just glad that I have my wife back. The death of that boy really got to you.

Me: Yeah it did. But we will make him proud wherever he is.

He smiled and kissed me. We kissed each other for a while. We stopped when someone cleared their throats. It was Alupheli.

Alupheli: Sorry to interrupt mom and dad. Good morning husband and wife.

Samkelo and I looked each other then back at him.

Us: Good morning son.

Alupheli: How are you doing this morning?

Us: We are fine thanks and you?

Alupheli: I am fine too. Can I join you?

Samkelo and I nodded. He pulled the chair and joined us. He looked at my plate. I took a small plate and gave him breakfast. He smiled.

Alupheli: Thanks mom. I thought you have left already.

Samkelo: Okay, Alupheli what do you want?

Alupheli: It's something small, it's not that big and it's not expensive.

Me: What is it?

Alupheli: I mean mom and dad look, mom is leaving tomorrow for the whole weekend she won't be with us and schools have been closed. I need something to keep me busy before my brain becomes blunt.

Samkelo: Just say what you want.

Alupheli: I need to start painting and drawing.

Me: You need materials to start painting and drawing?

Alupheli: Yes.

Samkelo: That's all you need?

Alupheli: Yes. And I don't want you to take me to the doctor nothing is wrong with me.

Samkelo: I am afraid because that will happen.

Alupheli: Alright. I won't stand in your way but I need something.

Samkelo: We're listening.

Alupheli: I need one room in the backrooms. I will turn the room to my art gallery.

Me: Excuse me?

Samkelo: It's fine you can have it. I will give you the key. Pick any room and we will set it up to be your gallery.

He smiled. His smile was the best.

Alupheli: You're the best parents ever. Thanks.

I smiled and stood up. He was kind of freaking me out. I kissed him goodbye. His father followed me. I looked at him.

Me: Really? Art gallery?

Samkelo: Come on give him a chance. It's obvious that he took after you. He loves painting and drawing.

Me: He's just four years old. It's not like he paints seriously.

Samkelo: He paints good. Maybe this is what he wants. Let's support him.

Me: He's still young Samkelo. He needs to go to school.

Samkelo: We can bring the school to him.

Me: Who's gonna pay for home schooling. It's expensive.

Samkelo: Us. We will pay for it.

I sighed and said: Goodbye have a nice day. You will buy those things he needs.

Samkelo: Thanks. You too have a nice day. I will find someone who will do it for him.

Me: Alright.

We kissed and went our separate ways. I went to work and I didn't forget to fetch Alupheli's birthday cake and present.

\*\*\*\*\*

The following day I was leaving. Samkelo had found someone who was going to set up the room for Alupheli. He was very angry when we came back empty handed. He started being happy when his dad told him that he was going to get a professional for him. When his brothers asked to join him in his "art gallery" when it's working. He refused. We tried to tell him that he must use it with them but he cried so we let him be. Samkelo was really excited about this too but I was just scared. I didn't know what was happening with my son. But I wasn't going to discourage him. I wasn't going to stand in his way. They all came downstairs to say their goodbyes. They were still yawning.

Uyathandwa: Remind me mom why are you leaving this early?

Me: I am sorry for waking you up.

Mesuli: Don't do it again mom.

Me: Alright. Alright.

We hugged each other.

Mesuli: Well since someone is getting a gallery can I get new games?

Alupheli: Jealous! Jealous.

Uyathandwa: But it's fair that we get something too.

Samkelo: I will buy those things for you.

Me: Yhu thanks. You're a lifesaver.

Uyathandwa: Mom you're going to suck dad dry. We wanted you to buy those things for us.

Me: Uyathandwa please. Samkelo will change his mind. (They laughed) Well my baby boy come to mama.

Alupheli: Me?

Me: Yes. You.

I picked him up. He smiled.

Me: Four years ago on this day I gave birth to this beautiful baby.

Alupheli: Ah man it's my birthday! Sing guys sing!

They laughed and we sang happy birthday for him. I walked to the kitchen with him. There was a birthday cake for him. I had bought him children's motorcycle. He was really happy.

Alupheli: Dad? Your gift?

Samkelo: The art gallery will be your gift.

He nodded and smiled. Uyathandwa and Mesuli had also bought him a gift. After cutting the cake. Samkelo drove me to the airport. We kissed each other goodbye and we went our separate ways.

\*\*\*\*\*

In cape Town, we booked a hotel. It was just the 7 of us. Camille was also with us. Our rooms were on the same floor and we were sharing. We have tipped the police about the ATM bomb that was going to happen on the 18th. We used a banner phone to do that. We emailed them every detail so that they can trust us and go to that location. Our work was clean and professional.

\*\*\*\*\*

On the 18th of December. Themba's IT guy was working with Camille on the hotel. He was

in contact with Themba. Themba thought he was assisting them as usual but he wasn't. The IT guy don't go with them on operations. We were going to be around the area to make sure that Themba did get arrested. We had a safe hiding spot that was going to allow us to see everything. 1:30 am we were already at the spot. We were hoping and praying that the police did really come. 2 am Themba and the crew were already at the ATM. When I saw Themba from afar my heart started beating fast. I hated everything that he did to put my daughter's life in danger. To kill xolani, neglecting my son until he used drugs. They were doing their work comfortable because they thought no one was watching.

Within a blink of an eye. Police sirens went off and the police were just on the spot on time. They tried to run away but police vans and vehicles came in all directions. There were gun shots fired by Themba's gang. Before it went out of hand Themba stopped his gang and they obeyed. He must have seen that there was no way that they going to gate away with this because more police were coming. Some did got shot both sides. And that's how Themba and his crew was arrested. I felt like there was a heavy weight lifted off my shoulders. I sighed in relief when I saw the vans leaving. Muzi tapped and brushed my shoulder.

Muzi: We did it Thandeka. We did it.

Me: Yeah. We did it. This is for my daughter, my son and xolani. I hope you rot in jail Themba.

Tears streamed down my eyes. This was my victory!

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

I arrived at home a little bit late. My uncle assisted me with my bags. I went to the lounge where my grandparents were. I greeted them.

Grandpa: I was told in the morning that you have left for Durban. Where were you?

Me: Eh.. mkhulu I started by having lunch with my friends in Durban.

Grandpa: Your parents knew about that?

Me: No I didn't tell them.

Grandma: Ayi Alondwe. Akwenziwa kanjalo. You must let us know everything that you'll do so that if something happens to you. We will know where you were.

Me: I am sorry.

Grandpa: I don't like nonsense. And you know that. Then don't act like we didn't teach you how to carry yourself as a child.

Me: Yes grandpa.

Grandma: Let's go to the kitchen.

I asked granddad to tell my grandmother in KZN that I arrived safe. I didn't want her to shout at me too. I stood up and followed grandma. She gave me a plate with food to warm up. She started preparing herself for cooking dinner.

Me: Where is aunt?

Grandma: She's at her husband's house but she will come back tomorrow.

Me: When are we having the wedding?

Grandma: Next year April.

Me: Thanks God I would have given birth when that time comes.

We laughed.

Grandma: kuza izibizo on the 26th I must make another attire for you.

Me: Yes! That's why we will have Christmas feast here?

Grandma: Yes. What will you wear on your mother's day?

Me: I don't know. Do you have a dress already?

Grandma: No but I want you to look for a dress for me on your phone.

Me: Oh. On the internet?

Grandma: Yes baby.

Me: Please make mine too grandma.

Grandma: No problem baby. I will.

I was happy to hear that. My grandmother made beautiful dresses. She was going to make my aunt's wedding dress too. That's what she retired to. People loved her work. And I can say if I love her dresses that means she's the best. I finished up eating and I assisted her with cooking. When I am in Cape Town. I cook regularly. My grandmother in KZN doesn't allow me to cook. She kind of spoil me. But here I do get a free time if I am watching soccer with my grandfather. Even if I have to cook they know that I shouldn't cook because of there's game playing. I am not the best cooker but they eat my food. Maybe I am not as bad as I think.

After dinner I watched TV with my grandparents. My uncle had left. I don't know where he was. He probably went to his girlfriend. I was feeling sleepy already so I went to take a shower before going to bed. I went to say my goodnight to my grandfather and grandmother.

Grandpa: Your father told us that you all passed.

Me: Yes, we did.

Grandad: You did well my baby. You're doing your final year in high school next year?

Me: Yes.

Grandad: That's wonderful. I am proud of you my granddaughter.

Me: Thank you mkhulu.

He smiled and nodded. I then went to bed. The bedroom was pretty quiet without my aunt. It was actually a fun thing to have a lot of aunts and an uncle. I took my phone and I had a lot of missed call from different people. I decided to call mom first. She answered.

Mom: Alondwe. Why didn't you tell me that you have arrived safe or?

Me: I am sorry mom. You know the excitement took over everything.

Mom: Yoh! When you're with your grandparents you don't even think about me.

Me: Sorry. Don't be Jealous mom I do think about you. Makoti vibes you for on the 24th till further notice.

Mom: Do you have to remind me that?

Me:(laughing) Gogo will ask you to bake cakes.

Mom: Cakes for what now Christmas?

Me: Yes and izibizo Zika Anti.

Mom: Oh dear God I forgot about that. Jesus!

Me: You'll be fine relax. I will help you.

Mom: You helping? Your grandmother will probably say "akahlale phansi bakithi uOwami. Uzovuvukala"

We laughed at that.

Me: She's looking out for me there's nothing wrong with that.

Mom: Yeah whatever. Your littlest brother is angry at you.

Me: Why? what did I do?

Mom: You didn't call to say happy birthday.

Me: Oh Nkosi Jesu. I forgot. Mom please give me cash to buy him a gift.

Mom: Don't you have your own money?

Me: Awu mama.

Mom: No use your own money. Goodnight baby.

Me: Ay goodnight Koti.

Mom: Musa ukuphapha we ngane.

Me: Ave ngilithanda Makoti itiye lakho. Bengeve ngilikhumbule ngoba ubengekho. Mina ngicela ubhake amakhekhe akho Makoti. (Mimicking her grandparents)

We laughed really hard.

Mom: If you don't stop provoking me. I won't get that money from your father to buy a

present.

Me: Ihee, why are you using my father's money? I want yours.

Mom: Kanti what's up with you protecting your father and his money. He's my husband. His money is mine.

Me: Ay kumnandi ukuba uwena Koti. Bengisacela a husband like yours too.

Mom: Uyadela bo. Sleep there and dream about monkeys and bananas.

Me: You too dream about new cakes recipe.

Mom: Ngizokuphoxa wena, uzoteta early ngyakutshela.

Me: Ihee don't wish that. Cabanga nje usubhaka nengane emhlane.

Mom: (laughing) Kazi wathathwaphi!

Me: Esiswini sa Koti wakwa Ndunakazi.

We laughed and hung up. I smiled alone. My mom was my rock shame. My first best friend.

I then called Nkululeko. He answered.

Nkulu: I am working here Miss.

Me: Aybo what are you doing?

Nkulu: I am a planner remember?

Me: Oh! I forgot. You're working from?

Nkulu: I am in your desk in your room.

Me: Really? You're in my house. Ah. Please don't mess my room up with papers.

Nkulu: Yhu. Get over yourself mntanandini.

Me: Mxm uyaphapha mfene. Goodnight.

Nkulu: Don't goodnight me yet. Your dad is hot!

Me: Ew! Fuck you man. That's my mom's husband.

Nkulu: I know. I didn't say he's not. I am just admiring God's great work. It's like he took the whole day creating your father.

Me: Ihee. Aybo.

Nkulu: Every morning it's like I am seeing different cute men in one house.

Me: How long have you been there kanene?

Nkulu: Since Monday, duh? Didn't your mom tell you?

Me: No. Maybe she thought you will.

Nkulu: Sorry. I forgot. (I had an incoming call from Thapelo) When will you come back to help?

Me: I don't know. Baby look, bae is calling. I have to take this call. I have a lot of explaining to do.

Nkulu: Explaining what?

Me: EY uthanda izindaba. Vala lapho.

Nkulu: No. What explaining?

Me: I will tell you later. Vala.

He hung up and I answered Thapelo's call.

Me: Baby?

Thapelo: What should I think if you don't answer your phone?

Me: I am sorry I was helping out grandmother with cooking and I watched TV with them.

Thapelo: Oh.

Me: About that call –

Thapelo: You don't have to explain. I got it figured out.

Me: Come on Thapelo don't do that. You'll figure out what is not true. I know you always got your theories. But it's not what you think.

Thapelo: And how do you know what I think? You don't Alondwe.

Me: That was Sphephelo. I had breakfast with Andiswa and Nkululeko this morning and he came to drive them back home. He then offered to drive me to the airport. I think he called to

know how was my trip.

Thapelo: Oh so your ex can call you and drive you around but you made a protest when Cassandra called me.

Me: What!?! No! Clearly you're not getting this. Cassandra wants you back.

Thapelo: And Sphephelo doesn't want you back?

Me: No he doesn't. And even if he did I don't want him back.

Thapelo: Eh. What are you trying to say Owami? Are you saying that I want Cassandra back.

Me: No. I didn't say that.

Thapelo: Stop trying to make me the bad person here. Just because you're the one who's at fault.

Me: What did I do?

Thapelo: Oh. Now you don't know what you did?

Me: No I don't.

Thapelo: Alright then, keep on fooling me then. Keeping on doing it because you're enjoying yourself. Tsk!

He hung up the call. I called him back more than twice but he didn't answer. I decided to stop. Mxm screw him then!

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay....

Living with my husband was everything I could ever ask for. I was stress free and happy. Though during the day I was always alone and bored but it was way better than being a slave in that Pillay house. There was no TV for me to watch here but it didn't matter. All I did was to wake up, make breakfast for my husband, clean my house and stay in my house doing absolutely nothing. I started looking for a job around Glenwood. I wanted to do something or else I was going to go crazy. I haven't told my husband about this. I didn't want to stress him because he was all worried about the house being empty. We were in our bedroom. I was searching for jobs in the internet. My husband had a paper on his hands.

Rajiv: I think we should start by buying TV first.

Me: Oh that's what you're looking at?

Rajiv: Yes.

Me: Why are you so worried about furniture? We don't want to be in debts Rajiv. Please just give it a month or two. Then you can think about the furniture.

Rajiv: I just want to provide for you. I don't like the fact that you just sit here doing nothing all day.

Me: Don't worry about me. You know I think this job will do for me.

Rajiv: What job now? I thought we agreed that you'll be staying at home relaxing. You're pregnant you shouldn't be working.

Me: I won't be working everyday. It's a volunteer work. Just being an assistant in Durban children's home. If not there's a position for preschool teacher assistant. In a preschool around. I will be working with children.

Rajiv: No. Don't even think about it.

Me: But look I will get paid. It won't be much but it's enough. I just want to do something.

Rajiv: No.

Me: Okay, let me study then.

Rajiv: I can't afford to pay for your studies right now. I thought we spoke about that.

Me: Those were your parents speaking.

Rajiv: Yes they did, but I was going to pay and right now is not the right time.

Me: Okay I am applying for this position with or without your permission.

Rajiv: You're not serious right?

Me: I am dead serious. Just wait and see.

Rajiv: Alright. Let's just wait and see.

He didn't argue further. Huh? But he was supposed to. Or maybe he wants me to work. Oh! I will just apply. I will. Of course. I smiled to myself. I placed my phone away and I took off my gown.

Rajiv: You're sleeping already?

Me: Yes the baby is tired now.

Rajiv: The baby told you that?

Me: Yes, the baby did. Don't you want me to sleep?

Rajiv: It's just too early for you to be sleeping right now so don't sleep.

Me: But we're tired. We want to rest.

Rajiv: Alright. Rest then.

I kissed him goodnight and I drifted off to sleep.

In the morning I woke up. I prayed and went to take a shower. I finished up and woke my husband up. I left him fixing the bed. I went to make breakfast. I wasn't cooking Indian meals only. I cooked anything and he was comfortable with it. But if I cooked his Indian meal I had to make something that I was going to eat because I didn't know which was giving me allergies. He then joined me for breakfast. He was dressed up for work.

Me: Just so you know I am going to work with you today.

He choked on his food and coughed. I quickly gave him a glass of water.

Me: What is wrong now?

Rajiv: What did you just say?

Me: I said I am going to work with you.

Rajiv: Why?

Me: You can't possibly think that I will stay here alone all day?

Rajiv: But you can't come to my workplace. It's not safe for you there.

I just had to cry so that he can do something for me. So that he can allow me to work. Tears were my escape plan everytime. And they did come very quick if I needed them.

Rajiv: No don't cry now please.

Me: What should I do?

Rajiv: Just relax.

I didn't say anything. I just shut up.

Rajiv: I didn't get the name of the preschool that you want to apply to. I only got the Durban children's home.

Me: Huh! I won't tell you. Forget it. I will not tell you. What do you want to do? You want to tell them not to hire me?

Rajiv: What? No! I was just asking.

Me: No. Forget it. You don't want me to come to your workplace so don't worry about mine. I stood up and cleared the table. He was looking at me with an amused face. I kept a straight face for him. He shook his head. I was going to apply at babies and children's paradise. I was praying that I get the job. He finished up and he came to me. He kissed my forehead.

Rajiv: Have a nice day. My love.

Me: Can you drop me off at Berea center?

Rajiv: What do you want there?

Me: Huh? My security guard!?

Rajiv: Okay! Okay! I give you two minutes to grab your bag.

I smiled I took it on the cupboard. He frowned, looking at me. I smiled. He led the way and I followed him. He was preaching on the road about how I should take things easy. That I shouldn't rush things because this was my first pregnancy. He wanted me to feel bad but I didn't feel bad at all. He dropped me off at Berea center.

Me: I love you baby.

Rajiv: Yeah. Yeah. I know.

I laughed and he drove off. I went to the internet cafe and I applied for the job. I then went back home.

In the afternoon Rajiv came back from work. I was cooking. He shortly greeted me

Rajiv: We're going to my father's house now.

Me: What? Why?

Rajiv: Grandma is there and there is a ritual that is going to take place tonight. Finish up there and we will go.

I nodded and he went to our room. I sighed. That family drama never ends. It keeps going on and on. I finished up cooking and we hit the road with my husband. We were having a conversation on the road. Just a neutral conversation. We arrived at home at last and we were welcomed by grandma inside the house.

Grandma: Look at you. You look beautiful.

I blushed and looked down smiling to myself.

Me: Thanks grandma.

I touched her feet and she blessed me. I did that to the rest of the elders.

Nadine: My sister.

I smiled and we hugged each other. Apparently the ritual that they were going to perform were for the protection of our unborn babies. Gary's wife was also pregnant. Grandma was guiding us. We did the entire ritual and it was time for family dinner. Nadine had bought food I was going to eat because she knew I wasn't going to eat. I thanked her and we had dinner. It was time for family meeting after that.

Grandma: Why have you outcast Rajiv and his wife? (She was looking at Mr Pillay)

Mr Pillay: I didn't outcast them mother. Rajiv left with his wife because I was trying to protect him from her.

Grandma: How so?

Claudine: I think Rajiv should explain.

Rajiv explained everything that happened that morning. And how I never trusted his mother and aunt Tashrika.

Claudine: You can't possibly think that we did that to you Rajiv. I accepted you and your wife to live with us here.

Rajiv: Dad forced you to accept. I was here when he said that. Not that you offered.

Grandma: This child did nothing wrong to you Claudine. You should be angry with your husband not him.

Claudine: But I didn't know about her pregnancy.

Nadine: You knew mom. The Doctor told us that you knew. She was the one who told you.

Mr Pillay: What? Claudine is it true?

Claudine: How can you even think about it?

Grandma: Why would this girl want to kill her husband? She loves him. Am I right Theresa?

Aunt Theresa: Yes. She really loves him mom. She has proven that to me. The way she treats him says it all. And I am sorry that I doubted you.

I nodded. Aunt Tashrika was so quiet like she wasn't even there with us in the house.

Mr Pillay: I thought you didn't know. Now it makes sense. I can't even stand your sight Claudine.

Mr Pillay stood up. His wife did too.

Claudine: My husband I can explain.

Mr Pillay left and his wife followed him.

Grandma: Can I come and sleep in your home my children?

Rajiv: The rooms are empty at the moment. Only the kitchen and our bedroom is fully furnished.

Grandma: That means me, your wife and Nadine got some work to do tomorrow. You can't give this beautiful girl an empty house.

Rajiv: Don't worry grandma I am working on it.

Grandma: She's a Pillay now let me take care of everything and you'll take care of her.

Nadine: Just accept Rajiv.

Rajiv: Alright. Thank you.

Grandma: Now go back home. I don't want you to sleep here because clearly you're in danger.

Us: Thank you.

She blessed us and we left. Oh Lord those dark days were finally over. Yazi Uma kuthiwa kuyabekezelwa kushiwo into ekanje! If my mom and our God wasn't there to help me get through hardships I was going to give up.

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

The morning we were all going back home. The IT guy had left the country around 11am. But he passed by Themba's house to plant every crimes that he had covered up for Themba. He planted this on his office. His wife let him in because Themba knew the guy and she knew that he was working for him. The police were going to search his house and that was going to be evidence of other crimes. He then left the country and we didn't even know where he was going. He did his cover up for himself. We provided the money for him and he helped us. We were at the hotel having breakfast with the team. We were ready to go.

Muzi: This calls for celebration.

The others: Yes.

Me: I want to go and see him in prison.

Muzi: What? Don't even think about it.

Me: Why not? I have to ask him if was it worth? Having that affair that ended up killing our daughter. My little girl would still be alive if Themba wasn't selfish and dirty. My husband wasn't go to go through hardship when he lost his job. That separation we had happened because of Themba. My son used drugs because of him. Xolani died because of him. I just want to look at him and ask why?

I was angry and I was crying. After all that we did the pain didn't go away.

Muzi: You need to calm down Thandeka.

Me: No. You know what? I think prison is too good for him. Did I tell you that sometimes he used to slap me when we were dating and married? No I didn't. Prison is not enough for Themba. It's not.

They gave me water.

Camille: Thandeka I am really sorry about what happened to you in the hand of your ex husband. But think about what you told us on the meeting. He shot Samkelo in your presence while his son and your daughter were inside the house. And his little baby girl was also there. This proves that Themba doesn't think straight. He just acts on anger. Don't be like him.

Member1: If you show him that you know a thing about his arrest. He might come after your family. You can't put them in danger.

Muzi: And Samkelo doesn't know about all this. So just keep calm and act normal.

I sighed and nodded. They were right. I had to keep calm and I had to act normal. Everything was going to be alright. After breakfast, we took the route that was taking us back to Durban. From Durban, we started by passing by the center. Muzi assembled everyone. And he gave them feedback on the assignment. Everyone was pleased. They clapped hands.

Muzi: Our work is not over yet. There's still a trial that's going to take place. But the big part is done so this calls for celebration?

Us: Yes!

Muzi: So tomorrow, look nice, bring a date and we will celebrate. And remember we don't speak about our projects tomorrow because our partners and spouses will be here and they are not part of our work. We just having a year end function and we will come back on the 9th of January to continue with our projects of helping our people. Thank you.

We all clapped hands for him as he stepped down on the stage. We then said our good-byes and went our separate ways.

I drove my car to Andiswa's house. I was fetching Nkululeko. It was time for me to plan my ceremony. When I got there, they let me in and I had no difficulties explaining myself because Nkululeko have already told them that I was taking him. We said our good-byes and left.

Nkulu: I wish Alondwe was going to be with us. It was going to be much better.

Me: Yeah but hey there's nothing I can do. She has a difficult father.

Nkulu: That's unlike him. He looks so cute and soft on the outside. Mmm.

I laughed at that. I was wondering how my sons were going to take him. Specially the little one. We had a good conversation until we got home and we went inside with our bags. When I opened the door it was like the boys were already waiting for me. They all came to give me a hug.

Mesuli and Alupheli: Welcome back mom.

Me: Thanks my babies. Hey big boy?

Uyathandwa: Hey mom. It's good to have you back. Dad almost burn the house last night trying to cook something "different".

The boys laughed and I laughed too.

Me: Shame my poor husband. Are you alright though Uyathandwa? You look –

Uyathandwa: We will talk about it. (I nodded)

Mesuli: Mom, introduction please.

Me: Oh. I am sorry. Guys this Nkululeko, he's Alondwe's friend. Nkululeko these are my boys. Uyathandwa, Mesuli and Alupheli.

Nkulu: Hey boys nice to meet you.

They all looked at each other and then back at him.

Them: Hey Nkululeko nice to meet you too.

Alupheli: Are you a girl or boy?

Nkulu: I am both.

Alupheli: Huh? Say what? So you're like those people from TV?

Nkulu: What people?

Alupheli: Those people like Somizi on idols who is a boy but acts like a girl and then there's Randall he is firm like a man but when he speaks he has that thing in him like he wants to be a girl I don't know if he wants to be like Somizi or what or he just fail to be like Somizi because like really Somizi is too much.

Uyathandwa: Dude where's your full stops and commas in that paragraph?

Nkulu laughed.

Nkulu: I like this one already. Yes I am like Somizi. I will be here to help your mom plan her second wedding.

Alupheli: My God where are you from? It's not a second wedding. It's called renewing vows. We all laughed.

Nkulu: And I thought he didn't know.

Me: Don't worry about this one. He knows almost everything. My baby please show Nkululeko your sister's room.

Mesuli: Is my sister coming back?

Me: No but we're going to her on the 24th.

Mesuli: Alright.

Alupheli: I don't even want to see that one. She forgot about my birthday.

Me: Ouch sorry baby.

Alupheli: Don't be sorry mom. Sissy brother let's go to my sister's room.

Nkululeko nodded and followed him. I sighed and gave uyathandwa my suitcase. Mesuli went back to the couch.

We went to my room and it was untidy. The bed wasn't made. I looked around and

Uyathandwa laughed.

Uyathandwa: He was late in the morning.

Me: Yeah whatever. Let's sit over there.

We went to sit on my bedroom couch. I looked at him waiting for him to speak to me.

Uyathandwa: My stepmother called and told me that dad was arrested.

Me: What? Why?

I had to act surprised because I didn't want him to suspect that I already knew.

Uyathandwa: I don't know mom but grandma told him not to continue with grandpa's business because it was dangerous but dad continued. Now he was arrested.

Me: I am sorry baby. Are you still going to his house for Christmas?

Uyathandwa: Yes. Aunt Kimberly said dad wants to speak to me. I will go home and come back when you come back to Durban.

Me: Alright. Everything will be alright.

Uyathandwa: I don't want my father to go away mom.

He cried. I sighed and hugged him. I didn't want to see him crying like that. What have I done to my son?

Alondwe Ndunakazi...

It's been 3 days since Thapelo and I last spoke. He wasn't taking any of my calls nor responding to my texts. I decided to let him but it was heartbreaking. I really love him and I was hoping things between us could work. Only if he could just listen to me. I understood clearly where he's coming from and if Cassandra were to call him I was going to be mad too but maybe not for this long. I was in my room crying. Not speaking to him was really killing me. I took my phone and saved Sphephelo's number again. I knew it by heart. I unrejected it and I called him again.

Sphephelo: Alondwe.

Me: Please stay away from me okay!? Stay away.

Sphephelo: What have I done?

Me: Why were you calling me?

Sphephelo: I am sorry. I didn't think your boyfriend was going to answer the call. I just wanted to know how did you go.

Me: As if you care! Leave me alone.

Sphephelo: Your boyfriend told me that I should leave you alone. I didn't want to cause trouble for you Alondwe. I am sorry.

Me: Tsk!

I hung up the call and deleted his number. I didn't want the number to appear on my phone. I was just grumpy and sad. I was home alone. My aunt and uncle went to buy groceries. My grandparents went to fetch other members of the family. At least when everyone was home I was going to get distracted.

I went to prepare lunch for myself and I went to watch TV. That's all I could do. There was a car that pulled over. Maybe it was my grandparents. The door was opened and my father came in followed by my brothers and mom. I smiled and stood up.

Me: Look who is here.

I started by hugging Mesuli. I tried to hug Alupheli but he blocked me.

Alupheli: No I am mad at you and you're still ugly.

Me: Mxm suit yourself. I won't apologies little man.

He pouted. I hugged my mom.

Mom: How are you my Angel?

Me: I am fine mama and you?

Mom: I am alright. You look pale. Are you moisturising your body?

Me: Mom? Yes. Sawubona Baba.

Dad: Hi Owami. Where is everyone?

Me: My grandparents went to fetch others. My aunt and uncle went to buy groceries.

Dad: Alright. Are you fine?

Me: Yes I am fine thanks and you?

Dad: I am fine too. Boys go and put your bags away. Then help your sister unpack the groceries. They in the car trunk.

He gave me the car keys. The car wasn't his. It was my uncle's car (his brother). The guy from next door drove it to the airport to fetch dad. I took the car keys and walked out. I started taking the plastic bags out. My brothers came and assisted me unpack. I was directing them.

Mesuli: You did well on your report. Mom showed it to me.

Alupheli: Don't bring that topic up.

Mesuli and I laughed at him.

Me: Thank you brother but dad doesn't think so.

Mesuli: Don't mind him. He doesn't understand that as we go deeper that means the game must also be tougher. That's how it is. But next year you won't be like this and you'll do much better.

Me: Mm. Thanks. You should be a motivational speaker.

Mesuli: What? No. I want to be a scientist.

Me: And you'll be just that. Your results also shows. He smiled and nodded. Alupheli was just bored by our little school talk.

Alupheli: I want my present. I don't want to talk about school.

Me: Did you think I wasn't going to buy you a present?

Alupheli: Really? You did?

Me: Yes. I did.

Alupheli: (hugging me) Thank you! Thank you! Okay, maybe you're not that ugly.

We laughed and continued doing our job. After that we went to their room and I helped them unpack. I gave Alupheli his present and he was happy. I gave Mesuli one too because I didn't give him on his birthday. They were just happy and that made me more happier. We called Uyathandwa and checked up on him. He was also alright with his family.

Alupheli: So you have a sissy brother friend?

Me: What!? Who's that?

Mesuli: Nkululeko. He was so wired.

I laughed and we went to help as my aunt and uncle came back with more groceries. It was just busy and it started getting crowded. I could feel the Christmas spirit already.

I went to bed by 23:36 I was really tired. My grandmother had told me to go bed early but I just wanted to stay with my brothers and grandad. I left them and went to bed because I was sleepy. I checked my phone hoping there was something. And he did send a text saying: "I hope you're doing alright and the baby is fine. I love you"

I smiled, the message just showed that he was still angry but he couldn't let his ego be bruised by admitting that he misses me. I replied back and fell asleep feeling much better.

The following day was a Christmas day. I was woken up by my phone ringing. The others in our room were still sleeping. You know how crowded rooms become in our households when

there's going to be a ceremony or Christmas celebration. I quickly answered the phone before they wake up. I got off the bed and went to speak outside.

Thapelo: You're still sleeping at this hour?

Me: Thapelo it's 6:30 in the morning.

Thapelo: Yes, 6:30 in the morning and it's a Christmas day.

Me: Well you know I am not a morning person.

Thapelo: Yeah. I know.

Me: So what made you to finally call?

Thapelo: I was angry but I miss you.

Me: I called for three days Thapelo you didn't answer me.

Thapelo: I know. That's what we do right? You also do it to me.

Me: Oh so it was payback for you?

Thapelo: No. Alondwe but if it was you, were you going to be happy and understand?

Me: No I wasn't.

Thapelo: And what made me angry the most was the fact that you implied that I want Cassandra back.

Me: I didn't mean to put it that way. I am sorry my chocolate brownie.

Thapelo: Alright. I forgive you. I am sorry too. For being over angry. (I laughed) I just wanted to be the first to say merry Christmas. Before your mom and dad. And your whole family. I just wanted to be the first. To tell you that, today we're celebrating that our saviour Jesus Christ was born. So this day is a celebration of new life.

Me: Amen Pastor Moloji. (He laughed) Thanks my love that's so special to me. It's means a lot and merry Christmas to you too.

Thapelo: Thank you first lady of the congregation.

We both laughed.

Me: What is your family doing today?

Thapelo: I don't know. My mom said we have special guests coming so I will just wait and see. And your family?

Me: We're just having a Christmas feast. And we will be merry. (He laughed)

Thapelo: Have a wonderful day then I love you.

Me: You too have a wonderful day. I – (my dad came out of the house. I cleared my throat) Good morning dad.

Dad: Morning. What are you doing out here so early?

Me: I am talking to my friend on the phone. People are still sleeping inside I didn't want to wake them.

Dad: You better be talking to a friend for real. Open that gate for me.

He headed to grandpa's car. I went to open the gate and continued speaking.

Me: (whispering) I love you too.

Thapelo: He won't hear you relax. (We laughed) We will talk later baby. Bye.

Me: Alright. Bye.

We hung up the call. The car approached the gate.

Dad: And merry Christmas MaNdunakazi.

Me: Merry Christmas dad.

He hooted and drove off. I closed the gate and went back inside the house. I was more happy now. We didn't go back to bed so it was time to prepare for Christmas lunch. Everyone got busy and I was just enjoying my day.... Family is everything and family is power! We had the best Christmas!

Thandeka Ndunakazi...

I did call Uyathandwa's grandmother. I had to do before they wonder why I didn't call. She was really

sad about Themba being arrested but she didn't like to tell me why was he arrested. Clearly she thought I didn't know that Themba was a gangster. My husband came back home late. He was tired and drained. Nkululeko and I were still working. Samkelo sat next to me.

Samkelo: My wife is home.

I smiled and kissed him.

Me: You look tired my love.

Samkelo: I was auditing today. You know that takes forever. We have to close on the 21st.

Me: Alright. I will dish up the food for you.

Samkelo: Thanks. You're Alondwe's friend right?

Nkulu: Yes Sir.

Samkelo: I hope you will give us something perfect. And don't just work for fun I will pay you real money.

Nkulu: I won't disappoint you.

Samkelo nodded and kissed me again.

Samkelo: it's good to have you back. I will take a shower and come back to eat.

Me: Alright.

He took his bag and headed upstairs.

Me: Alright. Let me leave you.

Nkulu: Okay. Your husband is very cute.

Me: Don't mention it.

He laughed. I went to dish up the food for my husband. He came back and I served him. I then went back to work. The boys were already sleeping. I wasn't ready to tell Samkelo that Themba was arrested. I just didn't want to start an unnecessary fight or anything. I was going to tell him maybe the following day. We went to bed at about 23:00. I was really tired. I went to my room and Samkelo was still working.

Me: I thought you were sleeping.

Samkelo: Yeah. I am just wrapping up the business proposal. Candice must print them tomorrow some possible investors want to see it.

Me: You're really going to open a business?

Samkelo: Have a little faith in me.

Me: Come on I have faith in you. I didn't think you were serious. Not that I don't have faith in you. He nodded and continued working.

Me: Please come to bed. This was not the way I pictured my welcome back home honey.

He laughed and said: You missed him?

Me: You didn't miss her?

Samkelo: Okay I did. I will continue in the morning.

He stopped working and joined me in bed. We made love to each other and went to sleep immediately. Sex is just the best drug to help you sleep fast.

In the morning. My husband had left for work. My sons were on duty. They were cleaning the house while Nkululeko and I were working. Alupheli walked inside our office.

Alupheli: Mom there is a lady who says she is here to deliver your gown and your husband's tuxedo.

Nkulu: That's the dress already?

Me: No. It's for tonight's event.

He nodded. I carried Alupheli downstairs. He laughed.

Alupheli: Mom is this your way of saying sorry for making us work?

Me: What? No. I am teaching you to be responsible and clean.

He laughed again and shook his head. I put him down and I went to sign for our delivery. I then went back inside the house and continued working. I left Nkululeko to go and prepare lunch for my kids.

They were sleeping on the couch. The three of them. The house wasn't that bad anymore. It was clean. Uyathandwa must have done most of the work. We had lunch when it was ready and I prepared myself for our function after that. My husband came back in time and we got ready

together. I thought of telling Samkelo about Themba before he hears it somewhere else.

Me: Themba got arrested.

Samkelo: What? How and when?

Me: Uyathandwa said his stepmother called and told him. I called his mom to confirm and she told me that he got arrested on Sunday. I asked why and she didn't like to tell me the reason.

Samkelo: What were you and muzi doing in Cape Town?

Okay! I tried not to panic and be cool about all this and his question.

Me: We were helping on the investigation about new ATM bombing that gangsters use. Why are you asking?

Samkelo: No I was just wondering. How is Uyathandwa?

Me: Not taking well but he's alright. You saw how quiet he was at the dinner table.

Samkelo: Yeah. He'll be fine though.

I nodded and sighed. I then smiled and looked back at him.

Me: Okay, how do I look?

Samkelo: Jesus! You look perfect. Please don't leave my side tonight. I don't any men checking your fine ass.

I laughed and held his collar. I kissed him deeply.

Me: I am yours and you're mine.

Samkelo: I love you.

Me: I love you more.

We then headed downstairs. We got compliments from our kids. And they took pictures.

Nkulu: I thought these kind of couples exist on TV.

Alupheli: Yeah. You can say that again sissy brother.

We laughed and Mam'Nancy arrived after a few minutes. She was going to watch over them. We then headed to the door.

The kids: Have fun.

Samkelo: Behave!

Them: Don't worry.

Nkulu: I will make sure they behave.

We nodded and then left for the party. The party was really beautiful and almost everyone brought their partners. We had a lot of fun.

On the 21st we also went to Samkelo's workplace year end function. And on the 24th we flew to Cape Town. I left everything in the hands of Nkululeko. I was going to come back after Christmas because they knew that I have a ceremony to plan. When we arrived at the airport. I gave Uyathandwa cash. For his cab and for himself. Samkelo and I had to wait for his brother's car. I hugged my son.

Me: everything will be alright. Call me when you get home alright?

Uyathandwa: Yes mom. I love you.

Me: I love you too my son.

He said his good-bye to the others and he left. I sighed. Samkelo held my shoulders.

Samkelo: Don't worry. He's going to be alright.

I nodded and snuggled myself under his protection. Everything had to be alright. It just had to.

I was unpacking our clothes in our room at home when Nkululeko called me. I answered the call.

Me: Nkululeko?

Nkulu: Mam I have tried everything I could to find the venue but they all booked for the 1st of January.

Me: What? No! Please tell me that you're joking. It can't be. Please.

Nkulu: I am not joking this time around.

Me: Oh dear God. No. What am I going to do?

Nkulu: I will try some other places after Christmas and see what I can find.

Me: Okay. Please let me know.

Nkulu: Okay mam.

Me: Thanks.

I hung up the call. Anxiety was killing me now. Where was I supposed to find the venue? I just felt hopeless and I cried. Samkelo walked in while I was still crying. He came to sit next to me.

Samkelo: What's wrong now Thandeka?

Me: We can't find the venue. They are all booked. What am I going to do Samkelo?

Samkelo: Don't cry okay. Don't worry about it.

Me: Don't tell me not to worry about it. I have to worry. You don't even know how it feels.

Samkelo: I am trying to think of something Thandeka don't shout at me.

I didn't say anything. He didn't let go. We sat in silence for a few minutes.

Samkelo: I think we should go back where we met?

Me: What do you mean?

Samkelo: Do you remember that spot that you used to hang out in with your friend Lizeka.

Me: At school?

Samkelo: Yes. That's where I approached you. Lizeka was absent and you were sitting there alone and I asked you out. I think we need to go back to our high school and renew our vows there.

Me: You know what that is perfect. That tree is still there. We're going to have a beautiful day. My husband you're genius. And those teachers who are still working there now will see that you didn't play with me. Samkelo I love you.

He laughed and kissed me deeply.

Samkelo: I know I am the best.

I laughed and kicked him out of house. He left. I called Nkululeko and told him about the idea. He loved it. Samkelo was the one who was going to call the principal. It was still the same principal. You know how people on the department of education don't want to retire. I was really excited about my big day.

We had a very good Christmas day and it was beautiful. Izibizo for my sister in-law took place the following day. It was a beautiful ceremony and we got blankets. Though I worked really hard. I just couldn't wait to go back to my house and relax.

On the 27th of December. Samkelo and I were going back home. We was going to leave the kids behind. The principal agreed to let us have our ceremony in the school if we invite him and we did invite him and teachers who knew us from the school. I was packing up our clothes when my phone rang. It was an unsaved number. I answered. It was a call from prison. I accepted it.

Me: Hello.

Themba: I hope you're happy now. You've hurt our son Thandeka for what?

Me: Excuse me what are you talking about?

Themba: Tsk! Don't pretend like you don't know because you do.

Me: Aybo –

Themba: Futsek man! Tsk!

He hung up the call. My heart was racing. I didn't expect that call from him. It took me by surprise.

My phone rang again giving me a fright. It was Uyathandwa calling. I tried to calm down and answer.

Me: Hey baby how are you?

Uyathandwa: Mom can we meet I need to talk to you?

Me: That's how things are done now. You don't greet. You just say a request.

Uyathandwa: I am sorry mom. Please.

Me: Alright. I will meet you in an hour.

Uyathandwa: Thanks.

He Hung up and I finished up packing. Themba must have told him... I was hoping that he was going to understand.

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay....

Grandma Pillay was just a blessing. Having her around made me wish that my grandmother was still

alive. Grandmothers are just a blessing. She bought furniture for us. Nadine was helping me choose. She hired people to set everything up and made our home a beautiful home. We now had our bedroom which had an en suite, the lounge, the kitchen, one guest room, one bathroom, the room for the baby (it wasn't made yet), the garage and one empty room. Our home was beautiful and we were more grateful to her. She was spending the holidays in our house. It was really fun to have her around. We cooked together. Then I will clean the house and spend the rest of the day with her. I was very worried because Durban children's home wasn't responding to my application. I didn't know what I did wrong. Rajiv was kind of relieved that I wasn't going to work. He made me think that maybe he had something to do with me not getting that response. But luckily for me the preschool called me for an interview. I went there to do it. I didn't actually tell my husband or his grandmother. I didn't want them to talk me out of working. I wanted to do this for myself. As days went by they hired me. But I was going to start working on January. I was very excited. I didn't tell my husband. I just kept it to myself. I was going to tell him when his grandmother left.

After the 16th of December my sister came back home. We spoke on the phone about taking our half brother out. He let him know and we were going to town with him. Rajiv was going to drive me there because I couldn't go to eMlazi just to fetch them. I was ready and waiting for my husband. I was with grandma on the lounge. She was watching TV.

Grandma: Which restaurant are you taking your brother?

Me: We're taking him to spur grandma. Do you want something in town?

Grandma: Now that you asked. Yes my baby. I saw a plate with ribs, buffalo wings, –

Me: (laughing) You want that plate?

Grandma: Yes.

Me: I will come with a takeaway for you.

Grandma: Thanks. How much?

Me: Don't worry grandma I will pay for it.

She smiled and said: Thank you.

Rajiv came out of our room dressed up and ready.

Rajiv: Let's go. I want to come back and work on painting the baby's room.

Me: But I wanted to do that with you.

Rajiv: No I am not letting you near that paint. Your sinuses will be bothering us.

I didn't say anything. I stood up. I wanted to do it with him. This was my first child and I just wanted to do it with him. Mxm. He was talking on the car I was just quiet. I pretended to be asleep. He stopped talking. I smiled. He woke me up when we arrived at our destination. I called my sister and she told me that they are on the way to spur. I kissed my husband goodbye.

Me: I will see you later.

Rajiv: Call me when I have to fetch you.

Me: I will call you.

I got off the car and went inside the restaurant. I got the table for us and I waited for them. They finally came.

Me: You know the waiters were starting to think that I was lying that I was waiting for someone.

Philisiwe: Sorry I didn't want to tell you that we were still on the taxi.

Sakhile: Because you were going to shout.

Me: Just shut up wena. (they laughed) Hello.

Boy: Hi. You're sisi Nobuhle?

Me: Yes and you're Sizwe?

Sizwe: Yes. Are you Indian?

Me: No I am black like you. But I am married to an Indian.

Sizwe: Alright, nice to meet you.

Me: Nice to meet you too little brother.

Our waiter came and we placed our order. I also ordered two takeaways for my husband and grandma. I couldn't order for grandma alone and leave husband out. We then get to know our little

brother. He was doing grade 9, he passed for grade 10. He had a half sister.

Philisiwe: How did you feel when you were told that dad was your father.

Sizwe: I was angry at my mom for lying to me but I accepted it. And he is actually a good man.

Me: Do you often see dad?

Sizwe: Yes, he calls me and I also call him if I need to talk to him or if I need something.

I was happy to hear that at least my father was having a relationship with his son though my mom didn't know that but hey. Dad had to do what he has to do. When the food came. We all ate and continued to have a conversation. It was good and Sizwe was a good boy. We paid the bill. I paid for my takeaway then we headed to markam, my sister had an account there. She was going to buy a few things for both of them. Just jeans and t-shirt. She opened an account because she was having fraternal twins. While we were waiting for the boys on the fitting rooms. We were just looking around and I saw philani.

Me: Someone's baby daddy is here.

Philisiwe: Who? (She looked around and spotted him with his wife) Jesus. Why did we come here?

Me: Relax, just be cool they are coming here.

Philani and his wife: Sanibona.

Us: Yebo Sanibona.

Philani: How are you doing Philisiwe?

Philisiwe: I am breathing and walking as you can see.

Wife: Sisi. We've been meaning to come to your parents house.

Philisiwe: Oh. Come to my parents house and do what exactly?

Wife: We need to talk about the babies because they'll be living with us.

My sister and I looked at each other laughed.

Me: Awuguli perhaps?

Philani: I will be able to provide a safe home for them.

Philisiwe: Safe home? Philani just forget it. I am not giving you my kids.

Philani: Cape Town is miles away Philisiwe. How will I see them?

Philisiwe: You're the father so you'll figure it out. So please don't even think about coming to my house.

The boys came back and we excused ourselves. Philani was just sick to think that my sister can give up her children just like that!?! Shameful.

After buying everything we needed. We took a cab because I wanted to drop off the food by house.

We were going home. I went inside the house.

Grandma: You're back?

Me: Yes but I am still going. I am just here to drop this off please don't tell him that I am going home. He's overprotective.

Rajiv: What are you going to do at your parents house?

Grandma: I am sorry baby. But I wasn't going to tell him though.

I sighed and looked at him. He was still painting I saw the way he was.

Rajiv: I saw the car pulling over and I heard you speak so I had to ask.

Me: We're going to speak to my parents.

Rajiv: Before 5pm I will fetch you.

Me: But it's 3:30 now that's too early.

Rajiv: Please go before I change my mind.

Grandma: Sorry love.

Me: Ah!

I left. My husband was just overprotective and it was too much. The cab drove straight home.

We arrived at home and there was a meeting. Nandi and her husband were there. We walked inside the house everything was just fire. The husband was really mad. We were told to sit down. My mom's face was just blank.

Husband: Mthembu I want my money.

Philisiwe: Woah! What money now?

Husband: The money that I used feeding his son, taking him to the doctors, clothing him, taking him to school and providing a shelter for him for 15 years.

Philisiwe: How much is that?

Husband: Because I am a mercy full man. I want half of it. R 25 000.

Us: What?

Husband: I want it all before I change my mind. R25 000 is the small amount. I have been taking care of your son for 15 years. You slept with my wife. I want my money Mthembu! Let's go nandi.

Nandi stood up.

Husband: You boy, stay here with your family. I don't want you in my house. You're not my son.

They then left leaving us all quiet.... Where was dad supposed to get that kind of money!?

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

I drove my car straight to Themba's house. I was using my father in law's car. Samkelo did let me go and see my son. He wanted to know if things were alright with Uyathandwa and I told him that he was okay. But I will let him know when I come back. I arrived outside Themba's house and called Uyathandwa. He answered.

Uyathandwa: Mom.

Me: I am outside the gate please come.

Uyathandwa: Okay.

He hung up the call and I waited for him. I opened the front door and he stepped in.

Me: Where do you want us to go?

Uyathandwa: Can we please book the hotel room.

Me: What? The hotel room?

Uyathandwa: Yes I want to speak freely without people looking at us.

Me: Alright.

I drove to the nearest hotel and luckily we found the room. I booked us in. I sat down and he stood on his feet.

Me: You will not speak to me while standing.

He nodded and sat down. I looked at him giving him the expression that says go on speak.

Uyathandwa: Are you the reason my father is arrested?

Me: I am sorry what?

Uyathandwa: Mom you were here on Sunday then my father got arrested. What did he do to deserve this treatment from you?

Me: How was I going to make your father be arrested?

Uyathandwa: I don't know okay. You tell me.

Me: Quit the attitude Uyathandwa. You're talking to me not your girlfriend.

Uyathandwa: I JUST WANT TO KNOW WHAT DID HE DO TO DESERVE THIS FROM YOU!

He shouted and banged the table. I got a fright. His anger was just too much.

Me: Listen here young man. If you want to reason with me and find out the truth. You will leave violence outside this room. Do you understand me?

Uyathandwa: Yes I understand. I am sorry.

Me: I had nothing to do with your father's arrest. Did he tell you why he thinks I had a hand in his arrest?

Uyathandwa: No he didn't. He said you will.

Me: Do you know what dangerous business that your father was doing?

Uyathandwa: No but I know that it's dangerous.

Me: You want the truth right?

Uyathandwa: Mom please just tell me.

Me: Your grandfather was a gangster. So your father took his business and continued with it. They sell drugs, bomb ATMs and do all sorts of criminal activities that brings money.

Uyathandwa: So you put my father in jail because of that?

Me: I didn't do it. Yes I had something planned for your father but it wasn't prison. Prison is too good for him.

Uyathandwa: What did he do to deserve anything that you were going to do to him?

Me: My husband was suspended from work. For the money that he didn't steal. Your father framed him. I didn't believe Samkelo when he told me that someone told him. I thought your father cared for me. He wouldn't do me like that. So I did my research wanting proof and your father did frame my husband. Samkelo and I fought and we separated. He was angry because I defended my ex husband. He threatened me so when your sister died I thought that Samkelo killed her. So that's how we separated.

Uyathandwa: So it was revenge for your husband?

Me: Then I found out that your father had an affair with the daughter of the man that works for him. That man wanted to kill your father but your sister took the bullet. Uyabongeka died because of your father. You turned on drugs because of him. I just wanted to teach him a lesson but then he got arrested so I couldn't continue with my plan.

I wasn't about to tell him that I put his father in jail. I wasn't going to do that.

Uyathandwa: If dad was so dirty why did you allow us to stay with him?

Me: He had something on me. I assisted the guy who worked for your grandfather cover up the murder of the woman who kidnapped you when you were young. That woman was your father's ex girlfriend. So Themba threatened me that he'll tell the guy to witness against me that I killed Ava. So I had to let him take you. And I knew that he wasn't going to harm you guys because he loves you.

Uyathandwa: I guess you knew wrong because my sister died.

We were both crying. It was harder than I thought and the pain didn't stop.

Me: I am sorry. But I didn't put him in jail.

Uyathandwa: I want to hear dad's side too. Maybe you're lying to me.

Me: But we can't go to prison. I am leaving today.

Uyathandwa: I will send a please call. He will call me

Me: Your father has a phone while he's in jail?

Uyathandwa: He has to communicate with his son remember?

I sighed and didn't say anything. He sent the please call. Themba had easy access to the outside world that meant he was going to be out in no time. He called after a few minutes.

Uyathandwa answered and put him on loudspeaker.

Themba: Uyathandwa.

Uyathandwa: Dad is it true what mom says about you. I am with her now.

Themba: What did you tell him Thandeka?

Me: I told him the truth.

Uyathandwa: My sister died because of your affair?(He told him everything that I told him)

Themba didn't say anything for a while. I don't know if he was crying or what.

Themba: I made some bad choices my son. Yes, and I was going to fix them with you. I know that I put your lives in danger by choosing that bad lifestyle but I didn't mean to hurt any of you.

Uyathandwa: I can't believe this.

Themba: I didn't deserve to go to prison Thandeka and be away from my son. Do you know how much evidence you gave the police?

Me: Oh so you think it's me who put you in prison? Clearly you don't know me too well. Yes

I was planning something against you but it wasn't prison. Prison is just too good for you. I did put Maud in prison once and she came back and tried to kill me. So I wasn't going to do that mistake again. I was going to something big something that you wasn't going to forget. I wasn't going to kill you because death is too easy. And prison was just a cheap hotel for me. Whoever put you in prison didn't think it through. So Themba prison is not my style. And mercy is for the weak Themba.

I couldn't continue with the sentence and say prison is muzi's style. I kept that to myself because if it was for me and me alone I wasn't going to send him to jail. He didn't say anything at all.

Uyathandwa: So who do I choose? Should I hate you for wanting to revenge my father? Or hate you dad for doing things that killed my sister? What should I learn from parents who hate each other?

I sighed and looked down. I didn't want my son to grow up thinking hatred and violence solves problems. I know that it's not easy to learn from the person who preaches something that they don't live but Uyathandwa listens. He obeys and he respects our word as his parents.

Me: Ethan Junior I once told you that we don't learn from good things only. We learn from the bad and the good.

Themba: You have to be a better man than the kind of man that I am. We're sorry for giving you this kind of life. If I could turn back time. I would've done things differently.

Me: Please forgive us.

Uyathandwa: I forgive you.

Us: Thanks.

Themba: And you'll be alright. Everything will be alright. Don't worry about me. I am not dead I am still alive. I love you my son.

Uyathandwa: I love you too dad.

Themba: Thandeka I have no words for you.

Me: I have no words for you too Themba.

He hung up the call. I sighed. I didn't expect that from my son I thought I was going to lose him. I hugged him until he stopped crying.

Me: You're staying behind or going back home with us?

Uyathandwa: I will stay behind. I kind of told my other father that you put my father in jail so he was really angry. So I don't want to be there when you fight because he said he'll talk to you.

Me: Dear Jesus Christ. When did that happen?

Uyathandwa: After I called you. He said you looked worried is everything alright with me so I told him what happened. I will come back for the ceremony and school.

Me: I doubt that ceremony will happen.

Uyathandwa: it will happen don't worry. He'll understand he loves you.

I smiled and said: So you don't want any room service since you made me book the hotel room?

Uyathandwa laughed and said: Okay. I do want room service.

Me: I can't stay so take my card.

Uyathandwa: Okay! I won't eat here. I want try something at ocean basket.

Me: You'll have a problem there paying with this card. Eat here. I will notify them. Please don't suck me dry please. My phone will report everytime you make a transaction.

Uyathandwa: But mom there are sneakers from –

Me: No please don't. Bring back my card.

Uyathandwa: Mom I will go with my stepmother. I will take them only. Please.

Me: Okay. But remember that January you're going back to school and you will need that money. And you'll have a nephew soon. He will need that money.

Uyathandwa: I forgot I am going to be an uncle. But mom I do need to speak to the baby daddy. Please.

Me: Don't worry you'll speak to him. Tell your mom to buy the plane ticket using that card.

Uyathandwa: Alright. Bye.

I hugged him and I left. I notified the hotel that my son was going to use my card to order room service and I signed for that. Then I drove back home.

I was with my kids outside the house. We were waiting for their father. Alupheli was in my arms.

Mesuli: You know mom Alupheli is no longer a baby anymore. You like carrying him.

Me: He's my last baby.

I said and kissed his face all over. He giggled loudly.

Alondwe: Don't forget who is your last baby.

She said pointing at her tummy with her eyes.

Me: Oh. I won't forget my love.

Alupheli: I don't know why people are jealous. I didn't say be big babies.

Me: Bayeke Ndunakazi.

Their father came to us with his brother. He was giving me a cold shoulder.

Samkelo: We're leaving now please guys behave. Don't give my parents trouble. Alondwe look after them please.

Alondwe: I will dad.

Alupheli: It's not our first time here dad. We know how to get in trouble without being caught.

Samkelo: Okay. I am leaving with this one.

Alupheli: No! No! I don't want to go with you.

He opened his arms for his sister. Alondwe took him. We said our good-byes and left.

In our house Samkelo didn't wait for us to go in our room. He spoke while we were still downstairs.

Samkelo: Were you in your right mind when you got the father of your son arrested?

Me: I didn't do it. I knew you were dying to ask me that question.

Samkelo: That doesn't answer my question.

Me: I didn't do it.

Samkelo: I ASKED WERE YOU IN YOUR RIGHT MIND OR NOT?

I didn't answer him. I walked up the stairs.

Samkelo: Thandeka don't you dare walk away from me while I am talking to you.

Me: You don't believe me. I guess this is the part where you call off our ceremony? Because I am the devil wife?

Samkelo: No. But I want to you free that boy's father in that prison that you sent him to.

Me: I won't interfere with what God is doing in his life. So if you want him out of prison. Go and free him yourself. Then marry him. Tsk!

I left him and headed upstairs. Did this mean I should call everything I have planned off?

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

My parents went back to Durban. I needed airtime. I was very busy that I didn't even have time to touch my phone. The last time I used it was on Christmas day. My father would shout at me if he saw me with my phone. So I just stopped using it. Everyone was gone so it was just me, my brothers, uncle, aunt and our grandparents. I asked my brothers to walk me to the shop.

Grandpa: Alondwe please be careful on the road with your brothers. Specially –

Alupheli: Specially Mesuli.

Grandpa: Specially Alupheli.

Alupheli: Why is Alupheli always the problem?

Me: Get over yourself little man. Let's go.

I held their hands and we went to buy airtime. People look at you like you have a disease when you're pregnant.

Mesuli: These people are looking at us like we're celebrities and it's pretty cool.

Alupheli: They are not looking at us. They are looking at Alondwe.

Mesuli: Oh.

Me: Ave uphapha shame wena.

He laughed. We arrived at shop and we bought airtime, chips and lollipops. Mom wasn't there so I did let them eat lollipops. When we get home, my brother's went to watch TV and I went to the bedroom. I took my phone from the charger, I switched it on and I recharged my account and I bought data bundles. I had some missed calls but I wasn't going to respond to them. I tried to log in on Facebook and Nkululeko called. I answered.

Me: My dearest friend.

Nkulu: Bitch where have you been?

Me: I have been busy. What have I missed?

Nkulu: You haven't been on Facebook?

Me: No.

Nkulu: I think you should log in and call me back.

Me: Alright.

We hung up the call and I logged in on Facebook. I read through my news feeds. I blinked twice and closed my eyes. I blinked again. Cassandra tagged Thapelo on a picture. It was a Christmas lunch with Thapelo's family, Cassandra's mom and what looked like her brother. I read through the comments. Her friends commented complementing how beautiful they look. Someone commented: "Are you two working things out because you were really cute together. Our school's power couple."

Cassandra replied: "Yes baby we're trying to work things out. Thanks."

I looked for Thapelo's comment but he didn't comment on the post. He just liked the photo only. I reacted with a on the post. I logged out. I didn't know how to feel. I was feeling numb. They looked good together. I just felt like Thapelo and I weren't going to work. His parents didn't like me. And my dad didn't want me to date. I called my aunt Melo. She answered.

Melo: Hello my nana.

Me: Hey aunty how are you?

Melo: I am fine and you?

Me: I am fine.

Melo: How is your chocolate man?

Me: I don't know.

Melo: Okay. What did he do.

Me: He had Christmas lunch with his ex girlfriend. With both their parents. How should I feel about that?

Melo: I am sorry baby. Did you ask him about it?

Me: No. I don't know what to do. What should I do?

Melo: Don't confront him. Just shut up and pretend like you didn't see it. He'll explain himself.

Me: Okay aunty. Thanks.

Melo: Alright.

We hung up the call. I just cried. Why didn't Cassandra leave Thapelo alone. He was with me. Why didn't she accept that and leave him alone. Now she was involving parents. Was my love and Thapelo strong enough to go against everyone who didn't want to see us together. My grandmother walked in while I was crying. I quickly wiped my tears. My grandmother

sat next to me.

Grandma: What is wrong nana?

Me: It's nothing. I just miss my parents that's all.

Grandma: I am sorry baby. Just get some sleep you'll be fine.

She was looking at me like she knew that I was lying. I nodded and closed my eyes. Grandma left. I drifted off to sleep.

I woke up when my phone was ringing. I took it and answered. Thapelo was calling.

Me: Hello Prince.

Thapelo: Hello princess how are you?

Me: I am fine my lion and how are you?

Thapelo: I am fine my lioness. Alondwe I tried calling but your phone was off since Christmas afternoon.

Me: Yeah I know. I was busy. You know that my aunt had that ceremony going on.

Thapelo: Yeah I remember. So how was your Christmas?

Me: My Christmas was good and yours?

Thapelo: It wasn't so good. Remember those guests mom was talking about?

Me: Yes I remember.

Thapelo: That was Cassandra, her mom and her brother. Mom is trying to get us together n I just don't know what can I do to make her stop. Her and dad are so determine that she's good for me.

Me: So you're telling me this because you want her?

Thapelo: What? Alondwe?

Me: I am just trying to understand. I saw the picture on Facebook. It did look like you had a good time.

Thapelo: You see? This is what I was trying to avoid. Alondwe I am tired of fighting with you. I just want to love you. I don't want to fight you. I am telling you because I didn't want us to fight about this.

Me: I don't know Thapelo. Is our love strong enough to stand against all odds? Your parents don't like me and my father doesn't want you. He doesn't want me to date. How are we supposed to survive?

Thapelo: Love will find a way. I don't know how but it will. I love you. Our love is not wrong and it will never die. Even if the whole world stands against it.

Me: Why do you love me this much?

Thapelo: You're not just a beauty but you're smart. You challenge me. You make me question life. I feel like I can be whoever I want to be when I got you. So I don't want to let you go.

Me: My chocolate brownie. I love you man and I will always do. Nobody will tear us apart and I mean that. Thanks for letting me know about the Christmas lunch.

Thapelo: Thanks for not going crazy about it. (I laughed) people do grow.

Me: Ah. You're too forward now.

Thapelo: I miss you.

Me: I miss you my phinadi.

Thapelo: I will call you later neh?

Me: Alright. Chocolate brownie. Yummy. Juicy. Man.

Thapelo: Ah someone is missing the fix.

Me: Oh come on. I don't miss it.

Thapelo: What? Are you trying to tell me that I don't work you good.

I laughed and hung up the call. This guy was kind of crazy. He called again. I answered.

Me: Thapelo Moloji leave us alone.

Thapelo: No I just want you to admit.

Me: Okay I admit. You work me so good and I miss you.

Thapelo: Thank you. I love you.

We laughed and hung up the call. I sighed and smiled to myself. I stood up and I went to start cooking.

While I was cooking Alupheli walked in with my phone. He was talking to someone.

Alupheli: Ehe. Who are you and what do you want with my sister?... What?.. You're Khasa what?

I laughed and took my phone from him. I spoke to the phone.

Me: Alondwe speaking hello.

Cassandra: I bet you saw that picture on Facebook. I think after seeing that you'll leave my future husband alone.

I laughed and said: Girl don't stop on my account. Go and get your man.

Cassandra: Yeah I will. I told his mom that you're still dating and today she said she'll call your mom.

Me: She must call her and Thandeka will be happy to speak to her. But right now I am busy cooking so if you have a problem with me report to head office. And leave me alone.

I hung up the call and clicked my tongue.

Alupheli: Who was that rude girl?

Me: Just a low life girl. Don't worry about her.

Alupheli: Are you sure because Mesuli and I can go to Uyathandwa and we can pay that girl a visit. The three of us.

I laughed and said: Thanks bhuti but I am fine. Go and continue playing the game.

Alupheli: Alright.

He took my phone and left. I smiled and continued cooking.

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay...

After Nandi and her husband left. We were left with our parents. Mom was quiet.

Philisiwe: Mom?

Mom: What?

Philisiwe: You're the glue of this house what should happen now?

Mom: I am not the one who cheated.

Dad: Nkosikazi. I said I am sorry. I have said that more than twice.

Sakhile: Mom you go to church just forgive dad.

Mom: This is not about forgiveness. It's about finding a way forward.

Me: Mom. It is about forgiveness. We can't find a way forward if you haven't forgiven daddy.

Mom: I have forgiven your father but he can't forgive himself because he knows that what he did is deep. So what should I do to make him move on and forget the past?

Philisiwe: If you stop trying to make him feel bad than he already does about what he did. He'll try to move on and forgive himself.

Me: Dad. You heard mom. Stop apologising and let it go. You did wrong and it's time to move forward and think about your son.

Dad: I hear you ndodakazi.

Philisiwe: Mom you said you didn't want him here so what will happen to him?

Mom: Where must he go?

Sizwe: I can go to my grandmother's house. My aunts live there. I don't want to cause trouble.

Mom: You're not causing trouble. You're my husband's child so this is your home. You will stay here. I don't think they will welcome you there if they can learn that you're not their brother's son

Me: Mom do you really mean that?

Mom: Jesus said even if your brother has wronged seven times you must still forgive them. If I don't welcome him in this house then my forgiveness means nothing.

Me: You're my rock woman.

She smiled and nodded. She wiped her tears. Men really hurt us but we keep on forgiving them because we still believe that there is some redemption for them. We believe they can be saved and they'll treat us like Queens and Princesses but is there any redemption for them?

Dad: Thank you mkami. I really appreciate it.

Mom: It's okay baba.

Philisiwe: That problem is solved and the money how will we get it?

Sakhile: I think dad should offer to pay it in instalments. We don't want to owe anyone in this community.

Mom: Sakhile is right.

Philisiwe: I will help you pay the money dad.

Dad: No I will pay it. Don't worry. You'll buy groceries in this house. I will take my salary and pay the whole amount in instalments.

Mom: Your father is right. Don't take that burden. Save your money for your kids.

Philisiwe: Alright mom.

Me: I think you must go to the police with him. Write the agreement down and the police will stamp it so that he won't blackmail you if he wants more money.

Mom: Nobuhle is right. You should do that.

Dad: Thank you.

Me: We got you old man.

Philisiwe: Yeah and it's 5pm for you.

Me: Ah. It's time for me to go.

Just then My phone rang and it was my husband calling. I didn't answer it. I stood up.

Me: Okay goodbye family.

Them: Goodbye.

Mom stood up and hugged me.

Mom: I am really happy that you're finally happy with your husband.

Me: Thanks to you mom and your prayers.

Mom: You'll pass that one to your children.

Me: I will.

She hugged me again and I left. Rajiv opened the door for and I stepped inside the car.

Me: I bet after I left you took a shower and followed me?

Rajiv: Of course not. I had to eat that takeaway you brought home.

Me: You're such a coward my love. This is my neighbourhood. I grew up here.

Rajiv: I just want to keep you safe.

I shook my head. I didn't know what did he think will happen to me.

Days went by and my brother had moved everything that belongs to him to his home. He was staying at home. I was relieved to hear that. Things were going well for me and my husband.

Grandma was leaving going back to India. Rajiv and I were driving her to the airport. She did go visit to the Pillay house but she was always with us. We helped with her bags.

Grandma: Rajiv take care of your family. Provide for them and protect them.

Rajiv: Grandma I think you need to tell my wife that I need to protect her. Maybe she'll understand you better.

Grandma: Precious this is your husband. He must protect you. Let him protect you. He is your shield.

Me: Yes grandma.

Grandma: Be happy my children. You deserve happiness. Love each other and stay together.

Us: Thank you grandma.

I touched her feet and she blessed me. Rajiv did it too. We then headed back home. It was sad to see her go but hey goodbyes are never easy.

Me: So now that grandma is gone.

Rajiv: You gonna bully me with your tears.

Me: What? No silly! I wanted to tell you that I got the job as the teacher's assistant.

Rajiv: What are you kidding me?

Me: No husband. I am dead serious.

Rajiv: What is the name of that preschool?

Me: You won't know because I won't tell you. I know you did something so that I won't get that job. One thing you must know my love. I am very lucky.

Rajiv: Damn!

I laughed and kissed his cheek. He kissed my forehead. I smiled. I was just happy. Everything was going alright.

My husband was taking a shower and I was in my bed reading my magazine. My phone rang. I took it. Claudine was calling. I said a short prayer and answered the call.

Me: Hello.

Claudine: (crying) Precious I am really sorry for what I did you. I didn't mean to hurt you but I was just a woman filled with hatred and pain. Things are really bad please talk to my husband. I am really sorry. Please talk to him on my behalf. I know that he'll listen to you. I want to be a better person and a better mother to my family and grandchildren. Please forgive me. Please.

My mouth just went dry. I didn't know what to say to her....

Thandeka Ndunakazi....

I finished up taking a shower and I went back to the bedroom to dress up. Samkelo was on the phone speaking to his father, telling him that we had a safe trip. I moisturised my body and wore my pyjamas with my gown on top.

Samkelo: What did you mean exactly when you said I should marry Themba?

Me: What did you think I mean. He's so important to you right?

Samkelo: Are you saying I am gay?

Me: I don't know are you?

His jaw tightened. I looked at him. He took off his clothes. I left him and went downstairs. I started cooking a quick meal. I didn't even know if he was going to eat. I swear if he wasn't Samkelo he was going to punch me. He came downstairs dressed up. He headed to the door. The main door. I followed him.

Me: Where are you going?

Samkelo: You told me to go and marry your ex husband right?

Me: Samkelo what is your problem? Huh?

Samkelo: My problem is you. You're my problem. You want to control everything and you go around punishing people like you're God. When will it stop? Huh?

Me: I can't clap hands when people hurt my family. Should I?

Samkelo: I don't know this person. This is not my wife. I don't know you.

He opened the door. I couldn't let him leave I didn't know where he was going.

Me: It's me Samkelo. (He stopped) It's me. I may not be the same person but it's still me. You made me a wife and for that I had to do everything to make sure that our family is safe. You have a soft heart, you forgive people easily well not for Alondwe but that's how you're. One of us has to be tough because in this dirty world people take advantage of soft people. Yes I wasn't going to let Themba slide just like that. Not after what he put us through. Not after my daughter died because of him. Maybe I am a bad person but I have to be like that

when dealing with Themba because he shows no mercy for anyone but his children only.  
Samkelo: Do you think I didn't know that Themba is ruthless? I know and that's why I told you to stop. Because he won't stop until he hurts you again. He won't care about everything that he did to you.

Me: Then we'll take him together. We're a team right? Please don't leave.

He closed the door and came back to me. He kissed me and we stripped each other naked. We went down to the floor and we had the living room floor sex. I couldn't ask for a better husband.

The following morning, we drove our car straight to KZN. Nkululeko was on the backseat.

My phone beeped. I took it. And read the text. I screamed.

Samkelo and nkulu: What is it?

Samkelo: Thandeka what's wrong?

Me: R 1 500 for sneakers.

Samkelo and Nkululeko laughed.

Me: Why are you laughing it's not funny.

Samkelo: Well baby it is funny. It's very funny. That's Uyathandwa?

Me: Yes. Why Did I even agree?

Samkelo: And Alondwe will want them too.

Me: What? You'll buy them for her.

Nkulu: Don't worry mama bear won't want them yet her feet won't fit.

We looked at each other with Samkelo and we laughed.

Samkelo: My daughter is mama bear?

Nkulu: Yes cute Sir. She's mama bear.

Samkelo: Can you tell him to stop calling me cute sir. Please my wife.

Me: Ain't you cute?

He didn't say anything. Nkululeko and I laughed. When we arrived at Richard's bay. We went to the school and checked the progress of the people who were fixing the place for us. It was almost done and what was left was decorations. We then went back home. To my mother in-law's house.

Samkelo was still with his parents and I was in our room looking at my dress. It was really beautiful. Nkululeko was just a genius for coming up with such a beautiful design. My phone rang. I went to to it and answered. The number was unsaved.

Me: Thandeka Ndunakazi hello.

Caller: Hello. This is Mrs Moloi here. Thapelo's mother. You're Alondwe's mom?

Me: Yes I am. What can I do for you?

Mrs Moloi: Please tell your daughter to leave my son alone. I don't want her to poison my child's life with nonsense. She's 16 years and pregnant and she's going after my son.

Shouldn't she be with the father of her baby. Does she even know the father of her child?

Please help me and tell her to stay away from my son.

Me: You're doing this the wrong way mam. It's your son who approached my pregnant daughter. He dated her knowing that she's pregnant. The person you should be talking to right now is your son. You should be telling him to stay away from my beautiful and smart daughter. And mam you know nothing about my precious baby girl so please don't talk like you know her life. I don't have time to deal with a woman like you. I have a ceremony to plan. Bye.

I hung up the call and clicked my tongue. She had the nerve man. Argha!! I put my dress back on its bag. I just looked at my daughter's life. She was just stucked between two men like I was. I sighed and I went to my bed making a mental note that I have to speak to her. I had to try to convince her that dating wasn't a good choice for her at the moment. I then prayed and fell asleep without my husband.

OUR BIG DAY: On the 1st of January Samkelo and I were celebrating 10 years in marriage. I really wish that my father was there but he wasn't. Even my brother wasn't. But all my kids were there and my in-laws and my friend Thobelani. My partner Muzi and some of the team members. We were getting dressed at the school rooms. It was far easier like that. My sisters in-law were dressing me. Someone knocked on the door.

Melo: Who is it?

Person: Someone is here to see the bride.

Simthande went to open the door. I couldn't believe it. I told her over a text. I didn't think she was going to come but she did. I had tears in my eyes. Her presence meant a lot to me.

Evelyn: Hello my beautiful daughter.

I laughed in between the tears and stood up. We hugged each other.

Me: I can't believe you came.

Evelyn: I wasn't going to miss this beautiful day.

Me: Thank you so much mama.

Evelyn: My pleasure. Ladies please do your work.

They nodded and continued. Alondwe hugged her and thanked her for coming. My dress was white. It was a lacy mermaid dress. It embraced my curves nicely. We finished up and we prayed.

The event was going to take place under the tree where Samkelo first approached me. There was a net tent for those places where the tree branches couldn't reach to cover people from the sun. The place was beautifully decorated with cream and gold. Alupheli and Mesuli were walking their father down the aisle. And Uyathandwa and Alondwe were walking me down the aisle. They were holding me both sides. The song "A Thousand years" played and I walked with my children. I couldn't stop crying because it did feel like it's been a thousand years since Samkelo and I have been together through thick and thin. And I was willing to love him a thousand more years.

Pastor: We're gathered here to celebrate the love of Samkelo Matthew Ndunakazi and Thandeka Trinity Ndunakazi. And witness their love as they renew their vows.

The pastor then preached a short sermon based on love and marriage. Then it was time for us to renew our vows.

Samkelo: 17 years ago I was standing on these grounds. You were really beautiful. I approached you not knowing that you were going to turn my life for the better. You loved me when I was in the darkest place. You didn't give up on me. Those years we were apart were hell for me but I never lose hope about our love. You've been with me through thick and thin. When I wasn't myself you made me feel whole again. Words can never describe how much I love you and how I will continue to love you. This school was our foundation. We found love in a hopeless place. (He cleared his throat and looked at the crowd) Uhm to my daughter specially, I am not saying all boys in highschool will be good like your father. (Everyone laughed) To my wife I just want to tell you that I love you and I will always love you till the end of my days. And I will still love you in the next life. My forever. Happy 10th anniversary.

Everyone clapped hands for him. He wiped my tears. Me: Through trials and tribulations you've been there with me. At my lowest point you're the one who picked me up. Loving you has been a positive reinforcement in my life. You make me feel alive. You make me laugh when I am sad. Sometimes you shout when I start having my crazy seizures (he laughed) Your love is life to me. It's food to my soul. Your love is everything I could ever ask for. I draw comfort knowing that our kids don't only have a father but they have a mentor and a true leader. I love you my honey bear. My Knight. My husband. My eternal love. (I also looked at the crowd) So Principal this is for you also, just giving you feedback that Samkelo didn't break my heart but he loved it and kept it safe. (The principal clapped hands

and others joined him) I love you my husband. Happy 10th anniversary.  
People clapped their hands and we kissed each other deeply.  
This was my eternal love I had no other.  
From Thandeka Ndunakazi to you. This was my story.

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

On the 31st of December, we were going back to KZN. I was really looking forward to my parents ceremony. I was excited about everything and the food that was going to be there. It was going to be fun. I really liked the idea of my parents going back to the school where they met. It was beautiful and romantic. And to top it up my dad came up with that idea. It was just lovely. How my parents love each other maybe realise that marriage is not a bad thing after all. It's just beautiful. Our cab came. I called Uyathandwa because we were going with him. He answered.

Uyathandwa: Called to check up on me?

Me: Yes, we're leaving for the airport now where are you brother?

Uyathandwa: On my way to the airport too. I will text you when I get there.

Me: Alright.

I hung up the call and played with my phone. In no time we arrived at the airport and grandpa paid the driver. We waited for Uyathandwa. In a few minutes he was with us. He greeted everyone. We greeted him back. We did all the procedure and the airport left the ground. I was sitting with Uyathandwa.

Me: Hey how was your Christmas with your dad?

Uyathandwa: Dad is in prison. Mom did not tell you?

Me: What? No why? What happened?

Uyathandwa: He got mixed up in the wrong business so he was arrested.

Me: Is there a chance for him to get bail?

Uyathandwa: I don't know. He got arrested in bad time. With the holidays going. His case will be dealt with next year. So he'll stay in prison the whole December.

Me: Tjo. I am really sorry bhuti. But let's hope he will find a good lawyer. Your dad is not prison material.

Uyathandwa: Yeah but he's done some pretty bad things so I don't want put my hopes up. I might not be with him for a long time.

Me: I am sorry. But you got me. It won't be the same but I am here.

Uyathandwa: Thanks. Anyway what's the name of the baby mom?

Me: I don't know. Uyathandwa kakhulu maybe.

Uyathandwa: (laughing) You can't be serious.

Me: I don't know Ethan Junior the 3rd. That sounds so great right?

Uyathandwa: It's sounds awful.

We laughed at that. We had a great conversation while eating on the plane. You gotta love food if you want to get along with me.

From Durban we took a taxi to Empangeni. My grandparents were going to a hotel and my brothers and I were going to my other grandparents house. We went our separate ways and we made it home before dark. People were busy. Nkululeko was making calls it was just hectic like it was going to be a wedding.

Alupheli: I just love crowded rooms.

He smiled and dragged his feet to our grandmother.

Me: Uyathandwa I think you will use the same room that they use.

Uyathandwa: Alright.

Mesuli: Yeah. Let's go.

He lead Uyathandwa and I went to our room. My aunts were there with some other ladies

wrapping up small “thank you for sharing this day with us” packages. I greeted them and they greeted back.

Melo: Are you fine?

Me: Yes I am fine and you?

Melo: If you’re fine. I am also fine please come and help us.

I nodded and I helped them.

1st of January in the morning my mom asked to speak to me in private. I had my phone with me because I was directing grandma Evelyn. She wanted to surprise mom by coming.

Me: Please don’t shout if I check on my phone now and then. I am directing a friend.

Mom: Alright. Your boyfriend’s mother called me.

Me: Oh.

I looked down. I didn’t know what to say about that. Was I supposed to be scared that maybe she’ll tell dad and it will be war again.

Mom: That woman doesn’t want you to date her son. She dislikes you.

Me: Well mom I know that she doesn’t like me. She once threatened me that she’ll call you if don’t leave Thapelo alone.

Mom: You really love this boy?

Me: Honestly mom I do.

Mom: Baby. I understand okay. You love him and I know how that feels to be pregnant and be in love with a man who isn’t the father of your child.

Me: Mom please don’t make your life an example of how my life might be.

Mom: But it is don’t you see that. Or haven’t you think about it? I am not saying don’t date but why don’t you just wait until you go to varsity.

Me: I don’t think I will have time to make new connections in varsity mom. I am good with Thapelo. If his mom doesn’t like me, it’s okay. Thapelo loves me and that is enough.

Mom: Are you aware that your father doesn’t see you getting married.

Me: I didn’t see myself getting married either. But looking at you and dad I think I would like that too at a later stage.

My mom sighed. I just saw it in her eyes that she wanted me to stop dating.

Me: If dad didn’t want me to get married he wasn’t supposed to be this kind of good husband that he is maybe then I was going to hate it.

Mom: Haa! Are saying that he was supposed to beat me and abuse me. And cheat on me.

Me: (laughing) Yes. Maybe then I was going to hate the idea of marriage. And my boyfriend loves the idea of marriage.

Mom: Oh my little angel. I can’t believe you’ve grown this much to even know a thing about boys and marriage. Life was much easier when you were laalaa.

I laughed and she hugged me.

Me: Don’t worry about me. I won’t let anyone play with my heart. I will be fine.

Mom: I pray that you will be.

I smiled and stood up.

Me: By the way you’ll be beautiful today more than any other days. But not more than those days when you carried me in your tummy. You were beautiful like you were living in heaven.

She laughed and said: Thanks my love.

My phone rang and I excused myself.

Their day was just beautiful, I just felt much more in love with settling down and having a family but that didn’t mean that I wanted it sooner. I still wanted to travel the world and have fun. Eish life. Love was the beautiful part about that day but food was the best part. It was awesome. I ate almost everything that was there. My friend is just a genius. We were outside the house with Nkululeko just the two of us. We were eating and talking. Mom was saying her goodbyes to her guests. Dad went to Richards bay with the boys.

Nkulu: Your father though, did you get the part where he said not every boys in highschool will be good like him?

Me: Yes I did. But he's wrong because Thapelo is.

Nkulu: Yeah that one is one of the good ones. What was going on with that picture thing?

Me: His mom invited Cassandra and her family. Thapelo didn't know.

Nkulu: That bitch never stops right?

Me: And she'll never stop. But I don't have a problem with her now. She can do whatever she wants. Thapelo belongs to?

Nkulu: To you baby and you only.

Me: You got that right. And I just can't wait to go back to school.

Nkulu: I just hope that you'll fix each other carefully this time around and don't leave evidence behind.

I looked at him we laughed. My friend though he was just something else.

Voice: Hey Alondwe.

I looked up and it was my friend from old highschool Zenande. Thobelani's daughter. I smiled and stood up. Things between me and her didn't end well, my first trimester drifted us apart.

Me: Hey look at you. How are you?

Zenande: I am good. How are you?

Me: I am fine. It's been ages since I last saw you. How had metric been?

Zenande: It's been hectic but I did cope. I have missed you.

Me: I am really sorry about how things –

Zenande: Don't mention it. It's in the past now.

Me: Thanks. Hey this is my friend Nkululeko and Nkululeko this my friend who held my hand through difficult times. Zenande.

Nkulu: Nice to meet you Zee.

Zenande: Nice to meet you too Nkululeko.

Me: Join us please.

We sat down and we joined conversations. My phone rang. Thapelo was calling. I answered.

Me: Pastor.

Thapelo: You're such a bad first lady. Not even one picture sent to your pastor just show me how did you look and how your parents were.

Me: I am sorry. You know I am with Nkululeko and when he speaks he never stops.

Nkulu: I am still here. Hello?

We laughed.

Me: I will send the pictures and you'll wish that you can propose already.

Thapelo:(laughing) Suppose you like marriage now?

Me: Ah maybe. Your mom called my mom. Your mom scares me Thapelo. Her hatred for me is too deep.

Thapelo: And my love for you is just deeper. Mom will never stop just like Cassandra. That is what will keep us stronger.

Me: Alright my lion. Let me send these pictures now.

Thapelo: Okay my lioness. Thanks.

We made the kiss sounds to each other and we hung up.

Zenande: Okay. Someone is in love.

Me: Tjo. Girl you don't understand. I am under a spell.

I hid myself in her and they both laughed at me. I was just in love and it felt so good.

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay...

I couldn't stop thinking about Claudine. I couldn't even sleep. She was in my mind. I kept

tossing and turning. My husband even woke up.

Rajiv: What is wrong Precious? The baby is awake?

Me: Yes the baby is awake so I can't sleep.

Rajiv: Alright. Come close to me.

I shifted close to him and he held me tightly. I didn't want to tell him what was going on.

This was between me and Claudine. I just wanted my husband to be happy without worrying himself about his stepmother. I didn't know if Claudine was being honest with me when she apologized or she was pretending just to get her husband to forgive her. Either way I was going to try and forgive her. I needed to do it for myself. I ended up falling asleep in between my thoughts. In the morning I woke up my husband wasn't next to me. There was a note on the bedside I read it: "Morning my love. I have already gone to work. You and the baby were sleeping so peaceful so I didn't want to disturb you. Have a nice day. Love your husband"

I smiled and got off my bed. I just loved what my pregnancy was doing to my husband. It was just wonderful. Clearly if I didn't want to prepare breakfast for him I was going to sleep and he wasn't going to wake me up. I laughed. I went to shower then I dressed up. I sent my husband a text wishing him a good day. Then I went to have breakfast.

After breakfast I was really lazy to clean the house so I just sat on the couch and watched TV. I couldn't stop thinking about Claudine still. I decided to take my phone and Called her husband. He answered immediately like he was expecting my call.

Mr Pillay: Just the person I wanted to talk too. How are you doing Precious?

Me: I am fine father, thanks and how are you?

Mr Pillay: Not so good. I am sorry for the way I doubted you. I didn't think my wife can try to harm an innocent child. I am really sorry for not looking into this matter before judging you. Please forgive me.

Me: It's okay father. I understand, it did look convincing because you didn't know that she also knew about the pregnancy so I forgive you.

Mr Pillay: Thanks my daughter.

Me: Mother did call me and apologies. She is really sorry for what she did. Please find it in your heart to forgive her.

Mr Pillay: I don't think I can even try to forgive her. She tried to kill my grandchild. I was really hurt.

Me: I was also hurt when you chased me out of the house but I did forgive you. So please forgive her just find it in your heart to forgive her. For the sake of peace and harmony in our household.

Mr Pillay: You're right. I will try. Thanks again.

Me: My pleasure father.

We hung up the call and I sighed. If Claudine was just pretending. My God was going to see her through there was nothing that I was going to do. I watched TV until I fell asleep in the middle of the show.

I was woken up by my husband. I sat up straight and rubbed my eyes.

Rajiv: Were you sleeping all day?

Me: I didn't mean to.

Rajiv: No this is unacceptable. You didn't even clean the house. You haven't cooked yet you're just sleeping.

Me: I was tired.

Rajiv: Tired from doing what?

Me: Tired from sleeping last night.

Rajiv: No Precious. Don't let the pregnancy control you please. I don't want to fight about what you should do in this house.

He went to our room. Okay? Maybe the pregnancy wasn't going to help me after all. I stood

up and I went to the bathroom to wash my hands and face. Then I went to start cooking. My husband came out of the bedroom. He took the broom and started sweeping the floor.

Me: You don't have to do it. I will.

He didn't say anything. He continued sweeping the floor. He moped it after that. I was just looking at him. I wasn't going to stop him because he didn't want to stop.

\*\*\*\*\*

3rd Person narrator.

Claudine was really happy that Nobuhle managed to speak to her husband on her behalf. And her husband forgave her. She took her phone and called Nobuhle. She answered after a few rings.

Nobuhle: "Hello."

Claudine: "Hello Precious are you sleeping already?"

Nobuhle: "No I am not"

Claudine: "Oh. You don't sound alright. Is everything alright?"

Nobuhle: "Yes everything is alright"

Claudine: "Okay. I just wanted to say thank you for forgiving me and for speaking to my husband I really appreciate it. "

Nobuhle: "It's okay. I am glad to hear that. Goodnight"

Claudine: "Alright. Goodnight dear."

They hung up the call. Claudine laughed inside her heart.

Claudine: "This only the beginning. I will lay low for a few years. But I am not done with you and your bastard husband"

She thought to herself. She couldn't speak out loud her husband was with her.

Mr Pillay: "I am really proud of you my wife"

She smiled and kissed her husband.

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

ONE MONTH LATER...

It's been an awesome year and I was really looking forward to the new year. January was the longest month ever but I survived it. Being back at school wasn't fun because I was more fat and my tummy was bigger. I couldn't wait for March so that I can give birth. Cassandra was the she devil, she was serious about getting Thapelo back. Mostly she liked making fun of me because I was pregnant. I didn't even try to back chat her or fight with her. I wasn't going to fight and put my champion in danger. I really loved my baby and no matter what happened nobody was going to make me go crazy and put his life in danger. Thapelo was very supportive. I didn't like my body anymore. I was very moody. And the only thing that helped me whenever I felt like I was going to lash out at someone. I moved away from them and be alone until I was calm. I had my corner at the back of the classrooms. That's where I used to hide. Matric workload wasn't playing with nobody. It was hectic. All I did was to do my required assignments in time. For January I think they did rush us with school work. But I had to keep my head up high. I had my father to impress.

It was now February. Hell I didn't like this month. I hated it because I had a debt to pay. I was with Nkululeko, we were eating inside his classroom.

Nkulu: Did you buy lunch for Thapelo today?

Me: No I didn't. Next week it's valentine's day and I have to buy two gifts. What was I getting myself into?

Nkulu: You started it so you need to finish it.

Me: You have money can you please help me with a few bucks. You got paid pretty well.

Nkulu: What! No! I won't do that. Use your money.

Me: I want my baby to wear something that I bought with my money when I first bring him

home. I don't want it to be clothes bought by my mom so please help a friend out.

Nkulu: No. Ask your dad.

Me: Ah. Dad? You know I asked him to buy those sneakers for me after I gave birth. He agreed so I can't ask him for more cash.

Nkulu: You and your father are cool again?

Me: Not really but he takes care of my needs. He's still not like before. But at least he gives me money.

Nkulu: Shame. That should be hard.

Me: Yeah. It was fun back then, we used to call each other and spend more time talking about soccer, upcoming games and wrestling. It was just fun.

Nkulu: You and your dad loves sport?

Me: Yeah we do.

Nkulu: It will be alright.

Me: I hope so.

The sirens went off so it was time to go back to class. I left Nkululeko and I went to my class. I sat next to Thapelo just like the previous year.

Thapelo: Do you know that I didn't eat today?

Me: Argh. You're lying. Come on Pastor. I have bought lunch for you everyday to keep my word. I don't have money now.

Thapelo: Then I should eat your lunch.

Me: Then what will the baby and I eat?

Thapelo: You'll eat that 60% you got on maths.

I looked at him and we laughed. The teacher came in and we stopped laughing. It was fun to go to a class that didn't have Cassandra. After that class we walked to another class.

Mpendulo was with us.

Thapelo: Can you be my date on that valentine's ball thing please.

Me: I am sorry baby but I am not coming to school that day.

Mpendulo: Why?

Me: I am not in the mood for it. I will be sleeping all day. You'll come and get your gift in my room.

Thapelo: I won't come to school too then.

Mpendulo: What? Man. You can't do that. At least get another date.

Me: Another date? Hee don't push me or I will kill someone. This is my man. Ain't no tempo date that he'll have.

Mpendulo: Alondwe come on.

Thapelo: What's the big deal. You'll be with mbali. There's no need for me to be there.

Mpendulo: Alondwe maybe you did put a spell on my friend.

Me: (laughing) Just like he did to me too.

Thapelo laughed and kissed my cheek. I smiled.

Mpendulo: So you guys will be together?

Thapelo and I looked at each other and responded: No we won't be together.

Mpendulo: You're lying.

Me: Brah. I am pregnant and huge. I don't want him breathing down my neck.

Thapelo: And besides it's too hot to be lovely dovey.

Mpendulo: Alright. At least I will rest knowing that you won't be smashing each other.

We looked at him and laughed. Mpendulo was something else.

Mpendulo: Mbali doesn't want to hold me down anymore. I won't make her pregnant I was kidding.

We laughed at him. He was so worried about this. He lied to his girlfriend and said she'll make her pregnant so that they'll always have something connecting them. Mbali took him

serious and she's denying him sex for the whole year.

Me: I think you need rehab.

Thapelo: Yeah. My lady is telling the truth.

Mpendulo: Screw you guys.

We laughed at him. He walked faster and left us behind. It was funny shame.

On the 14th of February I didn't go to school. My aunt knew that.

Melo: Please don't burn the place down and don't have sex please.

Me: Auntie I am eight months pregnant now. I don't want to have sex. I am too huge for it.

Melo: Alright baby. Have fun.

Me: Thanks.

She left. The place was really beautiful. Thapelo and I were going to have a romantic dinner in the morning and have our own morning cenema. My aunt helped me cook and set up the place nicely. She even gave me money to buy gifts. It was just beautiful. I was wearing a red dress and Thapelo was supposed to wear white only. There was a knock on the door so I went to open. My prince was looking cute on his white shorts, t-shirt and flops. We hugged each other. He kissed my forehead.

Thapelo: You look beautiful.

Me: Thank you and you look cute.

Thapelo: Thanks. This is for you.

Me: You bought a gift for me.

Thapelo: I couldn't help myself.

I smiled and kissed him. He walked inside and we had our dinner in the morning. He couldn't believe that I did all that for him. I also gave him his gift.

Thapelo: I can't believe you made me skip school.

Me: No I didn't you chose to do that. I was planning on sleeping the whole day.

Thapelo: Well I couldn't be at school and see people together while you're not with me.

Me: You're with me now.

Thapelo: Are you sure you cooked this?

Me: Okay. My aunt helped me.

Thapelo: Wow that's so cool. I like your aunt.

Me: And she likes you too. Otherwise she wouldn't have agreed to this.

He smiled. After eating we went to watch movies together with a bowl of popcorn. We ended up falling asleep on the couch. It was just a wonderful day. And we really didn't smash each other. It was just a clean valentine's day.

10th of March I was with Nkululeko, Mpendulo and Thapelo at the mall. We were buying baby clothes. My mom was on her way because I was due on the 20th of March.

Mpendulo: This little guy has a lot of uncles and even gay uncles. (We laughed)

Thapelo: You can say that again. Nkulu are you an uncle or an aunt to the baby.

Nkulu: Well I am both.

We all laughed at him. I couldn't help it. He was so funny. I felt a quick sharp pain on my lower abdomen. I held Thapelo's arm.

Thapelo: What's wrong little pudding are you alright?

The pain came again. I couldn't help it I screamed.

Nkulu: It's happening guys. She's going to give birth.

Mpendulo: Today is the 10th of March, it's not the 20th. It can't be. Alondwe you're joking right?

The pain came again and it was getting stronger.

Mpendulo: Okay. Alondwe I forgive you for spending valentine's day with my friend doing God knows what but please don't give birth now. What are we going to do.

Nkulu: Let's call her mom.

Thapelo: Her mom is on the plane, we can't call her.

Nkulu: I am calling her father.

He called my dad and put him on speaker.

Dad: I think I paid all your money. What's wrong now?

Nkulu: You're funny Sir. Alondwe is in pain. We don't know what to do. And which hospital to take her to. Private or public.

Dad: What? Where's she? (I screamed) Okay Nana. Don't panic. Oh Lord I don't even know what to say. (He mumbled that) Uhm your mother will be there soon. Just give Nkululeko your medical aid card and he must take you to the hospital. Did you hear that Nkululeko?

Nkulu: Yes Sir.

Dad: Take care of my baby girl Nkululeko alright?

Nkulu: Yes Sir.

Nkulu hung up. People at the shop were looking at us. Others were just talking about how young I looked to be pregnant. Nkululeko searched my bag.

Thapelo: Okay. Let's go now. Please baby loosen up your grip.

I held him tighter than before. We walked out of shop. I felt like swearing at everyone who was looking at me. Well I did swear at some people. We got the cab and it drove us to the hospital.

When my mom got there I was still in pain. Nkululeko, Mpendulo and Thapelo had left. My baby was far from coming.

Me: (crying) Mama I want to go to theatre please. This is painful.

Mom: No you're not going to theatre. Let's climb the stairs together. Take my hand.

My mom helped me climb the stairs to quicken the process. It was really hard. I felt labour pains for the whole two days and I finally gave birth on the 12th of March. To a beautiful baby boy. I held him in my arms with my mom next to me.

Mom: Give him a name baby.

Me: His name is Sphephile Samkelo Ndunakazi.

Mom: That's a beautiful name.

Me: Thanks for being here mom. I love you.

Mom: I love you too baby.

She kissed the baby. I smiled. My baby was so yellow, that was his father's skin colour because I wasn't that yellow. He was just beautiful. I just fell in love....

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

I suppose I have to make an introduction. Okay. As you all know. I am Samkelo Matthew Ndunakazi. The husband of the most beautiful woman on earth Thandeka Trinity Ndunakazi. Being a father and a husband is something that I have never planned in my youth, you all know how reckless and heartless I was. But Thandeka's love saved me and loving her changed me. I have a beautiful family that I wouldn't trade for anything. It's been great years and also hard but my wife and I, we're still going strong. From where we are now, nothing can tear us apart. I hope you'll learn something from my heart. I won't give much details on my posts. I am here to serve a purpose.

January was a hectic month. The kids were going back to school and we had to help them, pay for their school fees and everything that was needed. I must say that ceremony was expensive but it was the best way to celebrate our undying love. Thandeka and I were with our sons trying to talk to Alupheli. He was a very hard nut to crack. And I didn't know how was I supposed to convince him to go back to school.

Uyathandwa: Look Alupheli you're way too young not to go to school. You have to go back to school.

Alupheli: The doctor said there is nothing wrong with me. I just have a high IQ. Then I

decide I don't want to go to school and waste my IQ.

Thandeka: You won't be waisting it. You'll be sharpening your IQ. You need that education.

Mesuli: You'll have to go to varsity at some point. You won't cope there if you don't start by going to school.

Alupheli: But dad said he can pay for homeschooling. Dad please talk don't be quiet.

Me: You'll get what you want.

Thandeka: Samkelo you can't be serious. This child needs to go to school.

Me: We will bring the school to him. Thandeka if we force him to go school while he doesn't want to. He'll resent us and he'll always cause trouble just to prove a point that he doesn't want to go school. He'll be rebellious. I can't have a five year old who'll be rebellious and be trouble.

Uyathandwa: Mom, dad has a point. You don't want to loose him because of that. Just give him homeschooling.

Thandeka: I am not paying for that.

Me: Fine. I will pay for it.

Alupheli: Dad?

Me: Yeah.

Alupheli: I also need someone who will mentor me and teach me more about art.

Thandeka looked at me. I sighed.

Me: Alright. I will get that person for you and that's it. No more requests from you.

Alupheli: Alright. Thank you so much. Thanks.

He hugged me. His mother stood up and left us. She didn't like the idea. But I was only trying to save us from having him being a rebellious child who was going to resent his parents for not giving him something he wanted while they can afford it. I made a vow to myself that I will give my children everything they need to make their future better. I will do that while I still can. And see them bare fruits. That is what I was doing with all of them. Growing up I didn't have everything I wanted so I wasn't going to do that to my kids because that's how I grew up. That's why I was pushing Alondwe to work because should something happen to me. She was the one who was going to help her mother raise her brothers. I didn't want boys in her life because they were only going to distract her. And most boys in highschool wanted to play.

The kids went back to school. Uyathandwa was doing grade 11. Mesuli was doing grade 4.

Alupheli also started home schooling. He had a male teacher for homeschooling and a female mentor for his art. I didn't know where he was wanted to go with his art as young as he was but I was going to support him. Month end my wife came to my workplace. She was there for lunch. She couldn't stop smiling. I didn't even know why she was happy.

Thandeka: Okay. I am leaving now can I have my money?

Me: What money?

Thandeka: Hello? It's January. We exchange salaries remember?

Me: What? No! We're not doing that anymore. You don't earn the money you used to earn as an Architect.

Thandeka: (laughing) That didn't change our tradition. This is the family tradition. Our children will also inherit this tradition. Just to prove that what is yours is mine. Little or big. So can I have the card.

Me: No. I will give you cash. Last year you took more than you should have.

Thandeka: Come on I was just treating myself. It's my husband's money after all.

Me: Well this year. You're getting cash.

Thandeka: You're boring. I will give you cash too.

Me: Okay. Deal.

Thandeka: I love you husband.

Me: Yeah go now lunch hour is over.

She laughed and headed to the door.

Me: Oh because you'll be spending my money today you don't even kiss me.

Thandeka: You're chasing me away nje.

Me: Oh January. You love my money not me?

Thandeka: Ah stop being a baby. I love you everyday.

She came back and kissed me then she left. I wasn't really feeling this money exchange. I just got a raise and my wife will take it. Ayi.

On the 20th of March. My wife came back with the baby. He was an adorable child.

Thandeka: His mother didn't want to let him go.

Me: My poor baby. I didn't want this for her.

Thandeka: But the baby is here now.

Me: Yes. And we'll love him like all our kids. Let me hold him.

She gave me the baby. Alupheli walked in with paint on his clothes. It was after school for him. The boys were going to use taxis to come back.

Alupheli: There is a new baby?

His voice was loud so the baby woke up and cried. I gave him up to his grandmother.

Me: Ukuphapha akufuneki.

Alupheli: Sorry. Can I hold him please.

Thandeka: No. You're dirty. Go and attend the gate.

There was someone on the gate. He stood up and went to attend it.

Me: You didn't tell me his name.

Thandeka: His mother said he's Sphephile Samkelo Ndunakazi.

Me: She named him after me?

Thandeka: Yes and this little worrier deserves this name.

I liked that my daughter named the baby after me. I couldn't believe I was grandfather. A 36 year old grandfather. I felt like I was too old already. Sphephelo came inside the house. He had baby clothes and a few baby things with him. I just saw myself in him. I remember I was still studying when I had Alondwe and I loved her more than anything in the world. If I bought her things using my money I would feel proud and it would be like I have done a huge difference in her life. This boy was a good boy. Thandeka told Alupheli to direct Sphephelo to the baby's room so that he can pack his things there. Alupheli did that.

Me: I didn't think he was going to come.

Thandeka: Me too. I thought he was going to run away from the responsibility. But he's a good boy.

I grieved with her, Mesuli and Uyathandwa walked in from school and they went to sit next to their mom.

Uyathandwa: This is my nephew?

Thandeka: Yes.

Mesuli: Your nephew? Nephew? That means he's Alondwe's baby?

Thandeka: Yes.

Mesuli: Ah. Alondwe has a baby. Oh. There was a baby in her tummy. I thought adults are supposed to have babies.

Samkelo: Yes but God decided to give her the baby early.

Mesuli: Oh. I want to hold the baby too.

Uyathandwa: No I will be the first to hold him. I am his big uncle.

Thandeka: His father is here. Remember you want to speak to him.

Uyathandwa: Really? That's good.

Uyathandwa untied his tie. He took off his shirt. I looked at Thandeka trying to figure out what was happening. She just smiled and shrugged her shoulders. When Sphephelo and

Alupheli came back upstairs. Uyathandwa stood up quickly. He went straight to Sphephelo and he gave him three quick strong punches.

Alupheli and Mesuli: Hhaybo!!!

Sphephelo fell on the floor.

Uyathandwa: That is for hurting my sister. Dumass!

I stood up and I went to bathroom. I left Thandeka hiding that she's laughing by kissing the baby. I closed the door and laughed. I didn't even expect that to happen. I had nothing to worry about should I die Uyathandwa was going to protect my baby girl. I couldn't stop laughing though. It wasn't funny but I couldn't help it..

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay...

6 MONTHS LATER....

I thought pregnancy was supposed to be fun, specially when you were married with a supportive husband. But no there was no fun most of the times. My husband was always starting unnecessary fights about how reckless I am and how I shouldn't be working. He was basically driving me crazy. Sometimes everything would be good and it will be just fun. At work the kids were always on the play mode and they wanted to play with me. Or they'll say the baby wants to play too. It was hard to say no to children so I would agree and play with them. I was always tired after work. My sister had given birth to two beautiful babies. Qalokuhle (girl) and Sqalo (boy). The name Qalokuhle means the beginning of beautiful things/ start beautiful things. And Sqalo means the beginning. Her children were adorable. She was on maternity leave so she was home. Her kids were three months. Philani tried to take the kids but the court didn't allow him. His parents didn't care about the kids. So he was fighting for them alone. My sister didn't even want him to pay damages for them. Our father wanted it but Philisiwe refused. Philani's wife was also pregnant. That is the baby that his parents cared about.

It was June the 10th. I was due that month. It was my last week at work. I was on my lunch when my phone rang. My mom was calling. I answered

Me: Mom?

Mom: Mom my foot? What are you doing at work?

Me: Mom?

Mom: Phuma lapho manje and come to me.

Me: I can't come home now.

Mom: I said come to me before I enter that place and drag you out myself.

I hung up the call and I went to the supervisor. I told her my situation so she let me go. I took my bag and I left. My mom was with my husband. They were standing by the school fence. Rajiv was making me angry with this over protective behaviour of his.

Me: Really? You brought my mom to the mix now?

Rajiv: You don't listen to me so what was I supposed to do?

Mom: Don't talk like that because I will be staying with you until you give birth. You will not do as you please syezwana Nobuhle?

Me: Yes.

Mom: Get in the car. We're leaving.

Me: I will walk.

I said and started walking.

Rajiv: Precious don't do this. You can't just walk while there is a car.

Me: Well I want to walk.

Mom: Let her walk if she wants to walk. Let's go. Uyazihlanyisa lo.

Rajiv: I don't want to leave her on the streets.

Mom: She's acting crazy so leave her.

They indeed drove off leaving me behind. I didn't care I was going to walk because it wasn't a long distance.

I was tired of walking so I decided to sit down on the sidewalks. I was just taking my breath. My phone rang, my sister was calling me. I answered.

Me: Hello.

Philisiwe:(laughing) You want mom to have a heart attack?

Me: Awu. Mom is just exaggerating. Just like her son in-law.

Philisiwe: Dad said so too. He said your husband is dramatic.

Me: And he's telling the truth. What Rajiv did is being dramatic.

Philisiwe: But you're nine months now you should stop working.

Me: This was my last week. Look there's someone coming I want them to help me get up. I will call you later.

I didn't wait for response. I hung up the call and asked the guy. He helped me and I thanked him. I had no problem with walking. The problem started when I started getting my contractions. When I tried to keep on walking was the more they get intense. I took my phone out of my bag and called my husband. He didn't answer his phone. I tried more than three times but he didn't answer. I called mom and she didn't answer too. I decided to call the cab. I wasn't going to wait that long for it because there are some cabs who park at DUT or Berea center. I was really angry at Rajiv. I was in pain and angry. I was going to show Rajiv flames. I decided to switch off my phone as the cab dropped me off at Addington hospital. Because it was already June. I always had my clinic card with me. The nurses told me to start walking. I was no longer wearing my sari. I was wearing hospital gown.

On the 11th of June, 2:30 am I gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. Giving birth was not as easy like I thought. It was hard and painful. She was so adorable. I couldn't believe that I brought a life on earth. My daughter was beautiful. This was the moment I was supposed to share with her daddy but because he was crazy. He wasn't with me. I just wondered how he was feeling where he was. Knowing that his family is out there where he doesn't know. I looked at my baby.

Me: You're Heather. My flowering evergreen plant, you will thrive against every bad things that this world has in store for you. I love you.

I kissed her forehead. This was my love.

On the 12th of June. In the afternoon we were discharged. I did ask the lady who was working at the hospital to buy clothes my baby was going to wear and a blanket to cover her. I gave her money. She was generous enough to sacrifice her lunch hour just to help me. The cab drove me straight to my house. The driver assisted me get inside the premises. I have paid already so I thanked him and opened the door. I walked inside my house. Rajiv, my mom, Mr Pillay, Nadine and aunt Theresa were in the lounge. They all looked sad like someone was dead. Claudine and aunt Tashrika weren't allowed in our house. Rajiv didn't want them there. Everyone stood up when they saw me. Nadine came to me and asked to take the baby. I gave her the baby. Rajiv came to me and he tried to hug me. I stopped him by giving him one hot slap. He held his face.

Mom: Nobuhle!!

Me: Don't you dare, I mean don't you dare ignore my calls ever again when I call you Rajiv. Do you hear me?

Rajiv: Yes precious. I am really sorry. I thought I have lost you.

Me: Thank God you didn't.

I kissed his cheek where I slapped him. He smiled faintly.

Me: Come and meet our beautiful baby girl Heather.

He smiled. I held his hand and they met each other. Heather was on her father's arms.

Rajiv: Our Heather Hope Pillay.

## Chapter : 9

It's been a four long years. It has been hard, sweet, lovely, tears involved but what is important is we're still kicking and alive. Glory to God! After giving birth I didn't want to let go of my baby but my mother had to go back home with him. I was always thinking about him. Every month end I used to go home and see him. My dad was against me traveling every month but I was saving my own money so he wasn't allowed to complain. A few months down the line I found out that my parents allowed Sphephelo to father my child without even telling me. I was really angry and heartbroken. But I forgave them. I let go of all the anger that I had for him. I did it for the sake of peace and my son. Sphephile was my blessing in disguise. My matric year was pretty hectic but with Thapelo and Mpendulo studying together with me. I didn't struggle. With no big tummy I didn't let "Khasa what" get to me. I proved my dad wrong and got distinctions for all my subjects. I got a bursary to study medicine so my dad didn't pay a cent for my studies. My parents were really proud of me. I was really happy. That was the best moments of my life.

Varsity? Thapelo went to Durban. He was doing Surveying at DUT. The first year was the hardest year for us as a couple. Whenever Thapelo didn't get ahold of me he would accuse me that I was cheating on him because he wasn't there with me. The insecurity was at its best on him. I also had my insecurities but it didn't measure to his. End of first year I found out that he was cheating on me. We broke up. It was a two months break up. But we got back together. So the following years got better but we were always fighting. I don't know how our love survived but it did survive and thrive. Mpendulo was also with Thapelo studying a different course. Nkululeko was in Johannesburg doing fashion design. On my 3rd year I lost both my grandfathers. My grandpa from Cape Town and grandpa from Richards bay. I had a difficult time focusing on my studies but my parents and Nkululeko were supportive. Thapelo too was supportive. My grandmothers were widows. When I was doing my fourth year my aunt Melokuhle bought a house. She was staying there, she had a car and she was pretty successful. But her relationships always failed. I wanted my own space too so I kept my flat. I was staying alone. I didn't go with her but I was there most of the times. Everyone in my family was good.

Thapelo did his 3 years and finished in record time. He graduated and came to work in Johannesburg. But he was working and completing his BTech part time. It was better on my fourth year because he was also in Johannesburg. He wasn't living with his parents, he had his own apartment. After matric "Khasa what" went back to London. She gave up on Thapelo because he wasn't giving in. Both our parents didn't know that we're still dating. It was just between us and our friends. We have dated for 6 years. Baby daddy was also working. He was living with his daughter. His foster mom was married now. But our son was living my parents and I refused to give him his father's surname.

This story will continue on the beginning of the 5th year. I am 21 years old now going to turn 22 on this new year I am doing Medicine at WITS. I have three more years to go then I will be a Qualified Doctor. Let me take you on, to the LAST RIDE.

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

4 YEARS LATER...

It's been four years, it hasn't been easy but there were best moments. The one that outshines them all is that my daughter did very well on her matric. And she got the bursary and went to varsity. I was so proud of Alondwe. I couldn't even put in words how she made me feel. She continued to make me proud by keeping her bursary. My daughter was a hard-working child and she got that from both her parents. She was focused and she knew where she was going. Just a highlight on my family.

UYATHANDWA: he has been through a difficult time special on his father's trial. From the first day in court there was no hope that Themba was going to make it out of prison. The evidence that the state had against him was strong and they had witnesses. He was sentenced 25 years in prison. He was going to be granted parole on good behaviour in 15 years. That's if he did behave inside prison. He went down with all his gang members. Uyathandwa's grandmother died after Themba was sentenced. It was a really difficult time for him but he pulled through. With support from his mom, his brothers, God and I he made it. He will be 21 years old on the new year. He is going to complete his Degree in Business Science at UKZN. He got an opportunity to gain experience on the business that Candice and I started. He was going to start working while he continues studying after his Degree. When his grandmother died his extended family members wanted him, they fought saying he belongs with them but Themba told them that he must stay with his mother. I was proud of that through everything that he went through he still managed to go above all circumstances and make it to the top.

MESULI: There comes my noble son, he's the kind of man who doesn't speak a lot but he just let you see his actions speaking louder than words. He was goal driven and focused. When my father and stepfather died he was the one who stood for his name "Mesuli" he was the wiper of sorrow. The words he spoke were wisdom. Alondwe insisted that he must be a motivational speaker but he just loved science. He wanted to have his own room so we allowed him. He didn't want to share with Alupheli anymore. His room was science when you enter it you see science. He will be 13 years old doing grade 8.

ALUPHELI: My trouble maker. Alupheli was I don't know what to say. His high IQ made him think he knows everything. He didn't like to be told what to do. There was a time where he didn't want to be home schooled anymore. He just wanted art only. I had to stand my ground and force him to continue with home schooling. He obeyed but he made sure that he didn't pass with the pass mark that was going to make me proud. It wasn't because he was incapable but he was doing it to shake me. He was homeschooled but he wrote his tests and exams at the school that he went to with his brother Mesuli. That was the arrangement we had with the school. He was going to be 9 years old doing grade 3 according to the school. He was really good on painting, using words and drawing. But he liked causing trouble on purpose. One day at the party in the neighbourhood he stole a gift and brought it home with him. His mother and I were so embarrassed when we took the gift back to the owner. Whenever there was a party or event we didn't let him go. It was better like that.

MY WIFE: Thandeka and I were 40 years old now. My wife was still working with Muzi. She was really enjoying her job though sometimes it took a lot of her time but I didn't ask her to stop. Her father died with a grudge against her. She didn't even get a chance to see him when he was sick. Her brother called when he was dead. Thandeka and I went to funeral with the kids. Alondwe refused to go so we couldn't force her. It is the funeral that made his brother let go of whatever anger that he had against her. They had a relationship again but it wasn't strong like it was before. My wife was still beautiful and our daughter was just like her, body structure, beauty and attitude.

SPHEPHILE: My grandson. I can say this one is like his father and Mesuli. He was a very quiet child. He played alone in peace and he spoke when he wanted something and when you speak to him. But he had his days. I suppose there was something inside him that said "hheyi you're Alondwe's son" then that day he would speak without stopping. He didn't have a nanny anymore because he was going to turn 5 years old and going to do Grade R. He knew his parents clearly and he knew that his mom was studying. His dad was now working so sometimes he would take him. He'll spend a weekend or even a whole week with him. He was calling us Gogo and Mkhulu. Then our sons he called them Malume. Even Alupheli wanted to be called Malume.

My family was well and alive. My business with Candice was also a success. So get comfortable as I take you on, to the LAST RIDE...

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay....

4 YEARS LATER.....

It's been four years and God has been great to my family and I. I don't know how to describe it but I have never been this happier in my life. After Heather was born I took leave at work but I had to find someone who was going to fill my position while I was gone. She was going to work until I am ready to come back. I did find that person and I stayed at home for Six months looking after my baby girl. She was so beautiful and I really loved her. There was something about her that made people love her. But the strangest thing about it all was how Claudine loved her. Her love for my daughter was legit. Gary had a son. In my mind I thought Claudine was just acting up about loving my daughter. But one day I had to go home and assist mom with dad because he was ill. I left my daughter with Claudine. In fact she offered to look after her. I didn't say when I was going to come back. My husband didn't want me to leave her with his stepmother but I told him that she won't do anything to her because her husband won't forgive if she did. When I came back she was with her, the joy that she had in her eyes when playing with Heather was unspeakable. But as soon as she saw that I was looking at her, she just pretended to be normal. There was something about Heather that made her to be a different person. I suppose I will never know.

The following year I was supposed to go back to work. My husband didn't want me to go back to work. But I didn't want to be a stay at home mom. I wanted to work. I asked him that when I don't go back to work can I please study then? He had no money to pay for my fees so I didn't have time to entertain him and do everything that he wants. I went back to work and I used my salary to study Educare part time. At least if I had a diploma or certificate I can even work at government schools teaching grade Rs. That would be better than nothing. Rajiv really hated that I was working not looking after our kid. But Claudine convinced him to let me go to work. And she was going to look after Heather. He was starting to make an excuse that he can't pay for nanny. Claudine pushed this matter until Rajiv agreed but she was going to look after her at the Pillay mansion not in our house. I figured out that it was Claudine's plan to spend time with my daughter. I really wish to know why she loved her this much. Sometimes Heather will stay with Claudine for a week, depending on how busy her father and I were. Even Mr Pillay saw what I saw in Claudine but we didn't know what was the deal with Heather. That year aunt Tashrika died. The family went through a difficult time but we got through it.

On the third year July I got pregnant again. I was carrying twins. That was the most difficult pregnancy ever. Rajiv and I weren't sleeping on the same room. There are things about him that I didn't like and there were things that he didn't like about me. Sometimes we would wake up not greet each other and he wouldn't drive me to work. And sometimes we would love each other like it was the end of time. I was having twins. Heather was always with Claudine on my last two months. I gave birth March the following year and Heather went to live with Claudine. My mom came to my house to help me. It was two baby boys Brandon and Bradley. They were beautiful and I loved them too. After them I wasn't going to have anymore babies. I didn't want them. Three was enough for us. Rajiv and I agreed to that. Nadine, Gary, and his wife they were still kicking and alive. Claudine loved our boys too but not like Heather. Heather loved Claudine too. They were two inseparable buddies. She loved to talk about things that she did with her grandmother. And sometimes she would praise how her grandmother's food is better than mine. It was just unbelievable to me and my husband. I was now 27 years old and my husband was 30 years old. Our daughter Heather was going to be 5 years old. She was going to preschool at Glenwood where I worked. But on the new year

we were going to enroll her at a primary school. She visits Claudine every weekend and sometimes she'll visit my parents. She was speaking English but I was also teaching her Isizulu. My sister's children were same age as Heather. They were living with her in Cape Town. They visited their father occasionally. My brother Sakhile was working. He didn't want to go to varsity. Sizwe was going to do his first year at MUT. My father paid the debt and he owed Nandi's husband nothing. My boys were 9 months they had a nanny because I went back to work. I was now a permanent preschool teacher with a Diploma. After a year or two I was going to study BEd. I was working on saving my own money I didn't want anyone to pay for my fees anymore not even my husband because he wanted me to be a house wife. So take a sit, fasten your seatbelts as I take you on, to the LAST RIDE....

\*\*\*\*\*

3rd Person narrator

Claudine's love for Heather was true. And it is through Heather that she let go of every anger that she had against Rajiv and every evil plan that she had planned. When aunt Tashrika wanted them to continue with the plan of making Nobuhle and Rajiv's life miserable Claudine protested against her. Tashrika told her that she was going to do it alone. Claudine was then pushed by this love that she had for baby Heather. She didn't want anything that was going to hurt Heather. And if her parents were miserable Heather was going to be Hurt. So she killed Tashrika making it look like it was suicide. There was something that Claudine saw in Heather that changed her life.

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

I was in Johannesburg for registration of my 5th year. I was going back home the following day. I was going to spend the night with Thapelo at his apartment. I was supposed to go back home that day but he hijacked me.

Me: You know what you are doing is wrong right?

Thapelo: Well I just want to be with you. The last time I saw you was November. So please all I am asking for is just one night and tomorrow morning you're going back home.

Me: I have to lie to my parents now?

Thapelo: Alondwe please.

I sighed and took out my phone. I called my mom. I knew she was home. She was on home rest for three days. She answered the call.

Mom: Alondwe?

Me: Mama how are you?

Mom: I am alright what's wrong ain't you supposed to be on the plane back home?

Me: Yes but I have to enquire with my bursary holder tomorrow morning, then I'll be able to register.

Mom: Really?

Me: Yes. Why are you saying it like that? You don't believe me.

Mom: No I didn't say that. What is the problem?

Me: They haven't cleared my fees for the previous year. So they said I must come back tomorrow morning.

Mom: Oh. Well tell Sphephile yourself. He's here.

Me: Hawu mama he didn't go to school?

Mom: Ah. You want me to stay alone here? Sorry I can't.

Me: Alupheli is there.

Mom: That one doesn't come out of that small classroom gallery of his unless he's on his break or if he wants to eat.

Me: My son will miss out now because of you mom.

Mom: Musa ukuphapha it's just today until you come back. Tomorrow he'll go to school.

Me: Okay. Can I speak to him?

Mom: Here Pepiye. Your mom wants to speak to you.

Everyone was calling him Pepiye because when he was 2 years old he couldn't pronounce his name. He'll say he's Pepiye. So that name went viral. But now he can add the S.

Sphephile: Mama wa Spepiye, you're bringing the aeroplane today?

Me: What aeroplane baby?

Sphephile: Spepiye's aeroplane cracked he need another aeroplane. He told his mom and his mom said she'll buy it.

That's how he spoke. He wasn't saying it directly. But he did that when he was speaking to me. I don't know why.

Me: Okay. I will buy it. But mommy is not coming back tonight alright?

Sphephile: Why?

Me: Mom didn't finish doing what is required of her at school. So when you come back from school tomorrow. You'll find your mother home Okay?

Sphephile: Okay. Spepiye's dad is taking Spepiye for the weekend. He will go?

Me: No baby Sphephile won't go. Remember his mother is leaving soon so he must spend more time with her. Sphephile will see his father another weekend.

Sphephile: Sure mama wami. Spepiye thandas you.

Me: I thanda you too baby.

Sphephile: Mncwa.

Me: Mncwa.

Sphephile: Gogo.

My mom must have taken the phone. I spoke to her.

Mom: Please come back tomorrow. And don't tell me you'll need clearance for 1st year debt tomorrow.

Me: Hawu mama.

Mom: Hawu mama wani because you are lying. Your father won't buy this story.

I laughed and said: I love you mom. Dad will because it's true. bye.

Mom: Mxm. I wonder who is making you stay in Johannesburg.

Me: It's the bursary. Mom hawu.

Mom: Okay. Say hi to bursary for me.

I laughed. She hung up the call. I looked at Thapelo.

Me: You made me lie to Sphephile now.

Thapelo: He'll understand. We share you with him akere?

Me: Mxm. Let's go. I don't want to be here now.

He paid and we drove to his apartment. He had a car. He bought it himself.

We arrived at the apartment. I was tired so I just threw myself on the couch.

Me: Chocolate brownie please take off my shoes. I am really tired. I want to take a few minutes nap.

He sat next to my feet and he took off my shoes. He stood up.

Thapelo: You'll need a blanket?

Me: No. You're not done. My bra is too tight please take it off.

He bend over and unbuttoned my shirt. I looked at his face. It was just perfectly shaped, smooth and spotless.

Me: Your beard is cute. Why did you start growing it?

Thapelo: So that I can charm you.

I smiled and held his face. He looked at me. We looked at each other for a very long time.

My breath quickened. Thapelo and I loved practising the brain or the mind sex before we do the actual intercourse. But we did it Specially when it has been a long time since we saw each other. It helped us reconnect through the mind and our emotions before we can reconnect

through our bodies. If one of us didn't crave the other through the mind sex process then you'll know that they are distracted so we'll talk about that first before we can even have sex or make love. I was getting no emotional response from Thapelo and his body was tense. I stopped seducing his mind.

Me: Okay. What's wrong Thapelo? Is there something I should know?

Thapelo: No I am just distracted.

Me: Distracted by what exactly? Your mind isn't reconnecting with mine. I see no emotions beside the fact that you're tense. What is wrong?

Thapelo: Nothing is wrong Alondwe.

I stood up. He tried to hold my hand. I yanked my hand out of his.

Me: When you're ready to tell me what is wrong. You'll talk to me then.

Thapelo: Alondwe?

Me: No! Tsk!

I went to his bedroom. I took off my clothes and I threw myself on the bed. After giving birth I didn't go back to my slim curvy body. I started gaining weight. I was becoming thick like my mom. I didn't like that body the ass and curves? I just didn't feel them. I tried to gym but I wasn't losing the ass and curves. So I stopped. I didn't like it I just wanted to be slim. But hey life. I have made peace with that though. After all I was Thandeka's daughter. I tried to sleep but I couldn't. It was still early. I went to take a shower. I had clothes in his apartment so I wore my pyjamas and I went to the lounge. He wasn't around. I looked for my phone. I called him and it rang inside the house. I clicked my tongue. I just didn't know what was the meaning of all this. He stopped me from leaving then he doesn't spend time with me? I was really angry. I waited for him but there was no sign of him. The time was 22:00 and he wasn't back. I felt like crying. I went to bed because wherever he was, he was having a good time.

In the morning I was woken up by Thapelo. I didn't even hear him come back the previous night. I rubbed my eyes and sat up straight. I was still angry at him.

Me: You think a tray of breakfast will make me forget what happened yesterday and what happened last night.

Thapelo: Well this tray of breakfast is the reason I was distracted.

I laughed sarcastically and said: Really? This is not the first time you made breakfast for me.

Thapelo: Well this one is different. Please.

I sighed and took the tray. It was English breakfast. I took the cup of coffee. Thapelo was sitting on the edge of the bed looking at me. I let him be. I took a teaspoon and I added sugar on my coffee. On the last teaspoon I saw a ring. The ring was on the sugar. I took it and looked at Thapelo. It was a white diamond ring. Thapelo was on his knees.

Thapelo: Ever since I knew that I need to make you my wife. I have been distracted. I didn't know how to ask you. Yesterday I became more nervous. We've been together for Six years now. We've been through a lot and through it all you've shown me nothing but love. I want to love you till Jesus Christ comes back. So Alondwe Samkeliswa Owami Ndunakazi will you marry me?

I looked at him. I was just shocked. Marriage? I am not ready for marriage. How do I tell him without pushing him away?

Thapelo: Please say something.

Me: No.

Those were the quickest words that came out of my mouth. I could see disappointment in his eyes.

Me: Thapelo I –

Thapelo: I get it okay. You said no.

Me: No, let me explain. I love you okay, I would love to marry you some day but not now. I

am still studying and it's too soon.

Thapelo: You're not ready? You're not ready? What will it take for you to be ready?

Me: I am still studying Thapelo.

Thapelo: Oh. So what are you trying to say? I must wait for three years so that you can complete your studies? Three years Alondwe.

Me: It's all I am asking for.

Thapelo: I think you should get ready to leave. At least you'll be ready for that. Yeah leave.

Me: So I should leave now? Are you breaking up with me Thapelo.

Thapelo: I don't know Okay! I am trying to understand why you don't want to marry me. Don't bring up school. Because you were cool with marriage. Nobody can ever be ready for such a change but we were going to do it together. Or is it because I cheated on you that year in varsity.

Me: Thapelo. It's not like that.

Thapelo: It's like what then huh? It's like what? You know what, please get ready to leave. Your plane ticket is on that drawer. Travel safe.

Me: Thapelo don't leave like this.

He took his car keys and left. I sighed and cried. Why didn't he understand. It's not that I don't want to marry him. I am just not ready. I ate my breakfast with my tears. I finished up and washed the dishes. I made the bed and cleaned his room. I took a shower and I dressed up. I took my plane ticket. The box of the ring was also there. I took it and put the ring inside the box and I put it in my bag. I then left...

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay....

It was beginning of February. In the morning we were having breakfast. The boys were still sleeping. Their nanny was going to come any minute.

Heather: Mom I will need new clothes. Beautiful clothes.

Me: Clothes for what?

Heather: We are dressing up on the valentine's day.

Rajiv: You need new clothes for dressing up?

Heather: Yes daddy. I want to be beautiful more than every girl in school.

Rajiv: Even if you have new clothes or old clothes. You'll still be the most beautiful girl.

Heather: Really? Mom? Dad is telling the truth?

Me: Yes, baby your father is telling the truth.

Heather: Okay. But still I will ask grandma to buy them for me. I am visiting her this weekend.

Rajiv: No. You're not visiting anyone.

Heather: But daddy I promised that I will come and visit her.

Rajiv: You'll call her and tell her that you can't make it. You'll go some other time.

Heather: That is unfair.

She got off the chair and took her bag. She walked away.

Rajiv: Heather come back here!

I sighed and stood up.

Me: You know we can't get in between her and Claudine. I don't know when you'll accept that.

Rajiv: I just don't want my daughter to love Claudine more than anyone else in this planet.

I left him and went to Heather. She was standing beside my car. Her father bought me a car.

Me: You're riding with me to school today?

Heather: Yes I am because daddy doesn't want me to go and visit grandma.

Me: Okay. But you can't go to school without brushing your teeth remember?

She nodded and went back inside. She went to the bathroom. I went to clear the table. Rajiv

stood up and kissed me.

Rajiv: Have a nice day. I love you.

Me: Thanks. You too have a nice. I love you.

Rajiv: She's angry with me so I guess she'll drive with you?

Me: You know how it is.

He shook his head and headed to the door taking his bags.

Rajiv: (shouting) Heather baby bye bye.

Heather: Bye bye.

Rajiv: You don't love me today?

Heather: I love you a little.

Rajiv laughed and left. The nanny came and we left.

Afternoon I was cooking in the kitchen. Brandon and Bradley were on the floor. Heather was doing her homework in the lounge. Their father walked in. The boys crawled up to their father. They knew exactly when he was going to get home. I followed them. He picked them both up. After putting his bag down. He kissed me. I took his bag.

Rajiv: Hello Heather.

Heather: I am doing my homework dad. You're disturbing me.

Rajiv looked at me and I shrugged. We went to our bedroom with the boys. He put them down.

Me: So what happened?

Rajiv: Kiss me first.

I smiled and kissed him deeply. He kissed my forehead.

Rajiv: They appointed me.

I screamed in happiness. I was really happy.

Rajiv: You know what does that means right?

Me: Yes baby and I am happy.

Rajiv: Not like I am. I can finally take you to school and you'll get your Degree.

Me: I can't believe we're leaving.

Rajiv: You better believe it my love.

We kissed each other once more. I was happy I was finally got to study. I left him and I went to finish up my cooking. Rajiv was going to be transferred to Cape Town. He was going to be paid more than he got in KZN. That meant we were leaving KZN and we were moving to Cape Town. We were going to leave in the end of March. I was more than happy. Once dinner was served. We were telling Heather.

Rajiv: Heather baby daddy got a transfer to Cape Town.

Heather: What does that mean dad?

Rajiv: It's means we're all going to live in Cape Town. We won't stay here anymore.

Heather: Everyone will be leaving with us?

Rajiv: No but we will visit them.

Heather: What? We can't leave them. Cape town is very far. I don't want to go.

Me: Baby we can't leave you behind.

Heather: Yes you can. Grandma will take care of me. I don't want to leave her.

Rajiv: Well just in case I didn't make myself clear. You will go with us. We weren't giving you a choice. And don't you dare think about leaving this table.

Heather didn't leave. I could see that she was very angry. She was crying. I looked at Rajiv. I didn't like it when my daughter cried.

Rajiv: Don't say it.

I didn't say anything. I stood up with Bradley. He was sleeping so I went to put him on his cot. That night I slept with my daughter because she was sad.

\*\*

Ever since Heather was told that we're leaving she wasn't on her usual mood. There was nothing I could do to help her because I couldn't leave her behind. I wanted all my children to be with me. It was Saturday. We were at the Pillay mansion. Rajiv have just told everyone that we are leaving. Others were happy for us.

Claudine: Heather is not leaving right?

Rajiv: She's leaving with us. We can't leave her behind.

Claudine: No. Please don't leave with her. Please.

Rajiv: We can't.

Garry: I think there's something mom is not telling us about Heather. She loves her more than her other grandchildren.

Claudine: We have a strong bond. And I don't want to loose Heather. You all don't understand.

Nadine: You won't loose her mom but she'll be away. That doesn't mean she won't visit, she will visit.

Claudine: No. I can't believe you're hurting me like this. I can't take this.

Claudine stood up and left. She was even crying. I wished I could understand what was going on with her and Heather?

\*\*\*\*\*

#### Claudine's Point Of View

When Heather was born I didn't care at all until Rajiv and his wife came to our house with her. The first time I laid my eyes on her. I saw my sister who ran away from home. She was my younger sister. We had a tough childhood. Our father was a very difficult man. And he was abusing mom. My sister couldn't take it when she was 18 years old she ran away from home. And I never saw her from that day. I had this guilt that I never protected her enough. Heather was just like her. Exactly like her. The love I have for Heather is something I have never felt before. I tried to put the pieces together and I asked my husband how Rajiv's mother looked like. They way he explained it sounded like my sister. I asked for her name and I contacted people I knew in India to research about her. Though she was dead but her profile must be there to people who knew her. When they gave me feedback and her picture. It was my sister. Rajiv was my sister's son. And Heather was just like my sister. I made a vow to myself that I will correct every wrong I did to Rajiv and not protecting my sister through Heather. Now they want to take her away? I couldn't deal with that. I wanted to see her grow and be more beautiful. I wanted to see her be whatever she wanted to become in life. I had to do something that was going to make them stay. I had to....

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

I arrived at home before 11am. I went straight to my room. I could hear mom singing inside her room. I locked myself up in my room. I unpacked my things. I put the box with Sphephile's aeroplane on top of my drawer. I then tried to sleep. I didn't know what this meant! Did Thapelo just broke up with me. Just like that? Or he's angry? Maybe he'll come around. I didn't know what to think really. If he broke up with how will I get over him. I wiped my tears and I took the ring's box. I opened it and I took out the ring. I put it on my left finger. This ring was the kind of ring I loved. I smiled, it looked really good on my finger and it fitted perfectly. I sighed and took it out. I placed it back on the box and I put it on my bedside drawer. I then tried to sleep. Finally I fell asleep. I was woken up by my phone ringing. I took it, it was beside my bed. Nkululeko was calling. I answered. I was still sleepy. I slept late on the previous night and I woke up really early than I should have.

Me: Hello.

Nkulu: I thought you loved the guy.

Me: What are you talking about?

Nkulu: I am talking about Thapelo. You said "NO"?

Me: Wait you knew that he was going to propose?

Nkulu: Yes silly! I even helped him choose the ring. Last night he was with me and mpendulo telling us how nervous he is to propose to you. You remember those pictures we were looking at on Facebook. You loved that ring the most.

Me: Yes. Now that you have mentioned it I remember correctly. You did a great job the ring looks beautiful.

Nkulu: So what should Thapelo do with the other piece of the ring because he was going to put that on the wedding day.

Me: Nonkululeko I didn't say I don't want to marry him at all. I said I just don't want to marry him now.

Nkulu: Come on, you'll make him wait for you. Three years. At least say yes and wait while you're engaged. Or do you still want to have other men?

Me: Come on you know Thapelo has been the one since grade 11.

Nkulu: Then I don't see why you should refuse.

Me: Can you please give me time to breath.

Nkulu: You'll end up like your aunt yazi.

Me: What's wrong with my aunt?

Nkulu: She can't find a stable relationship. Yet she has everything but she just can't find true love. Even her baby sister Simthande is married now. She doesn't even have a baby.

Me: Well not all of us are meant to get married.

Nkulu: Some people just like you are meant for it and they do get a chance at true love but they just don't grab it with both hands. And some like your aunt they really need it and crave it but it just doesn't come. So please don't throw this away.

Me: NoNkululeko can I think about this. I want to do it, when I know that I will stay with him no matter what. Because angifuni ukuphaphela umshado Kanti down the line I will get divorced.

Nkulu: Alright. But Thapelo loves you and I know that you love him too. You didn't even entertain other guys who wanted you because you had him. Even after he cheated when you guys got back together you were still loyal to him. There's nothing that's going to change when you're married except for the fact that you'll have to be part of his whole family.

Me: You see? That's the scary part.

Nkulu: Just think about it okay and call him. He's really sad. And he's thinking that it's because he cheated ka first year. That's why you don't want to marry him. But don't tell him that I told you that.

Me: Alright. Bye my friend. Thanks hey.

Nkulu: Okay sure.

I hung up. I sighed. Just so you know Nkululeko did go for transgender. So now he looked like a real girl. In fact she was a girl. People who did not know him before they didn't know that she was once a boy. She was pretty shame. So I will be addressing him as a she. I looked at the time and it was almost 3pm. I had missed calls from mom. I got off the bed and I went downstairs.

My son was crying. He was with my mom, Uyathandwa, Mesuli and Alupheli. He was sitting on the floor crying. They were eating. Sphephile was a real cry baby. He cries when he doesn't get his way.

Me: Really guys? My baby is crying and you're pretending like he's not here.

Mom: You know that when Sphephile cries. You can't stop him until you give him what he wants.

Where were we suppose to get you?

Alupheli: He wants his mom not us.

Me: Mxm uyaphapha wena. Woza my slovithi.

I picked him up.

Uyathandwa: You shouldn't be carrying him.

Me: He's my only child so please leave him alone. How are you baby?

Mesuli: (mimicking Sphephile) Spepiye wanted his mother.

The others laughed at him. That made him cry more

Me: Ngizokuphoxa wena Mesuli. Nezibuko ezinkulu.

Mesuli: Clearly you don't know the size of something big. My specs are not big.

Mom: Tell her baby.

Me: Mxm you guys are boring. Let's go baby.

I went to the kitchen with him.

Sphephile: Spepiye thought his mom was not coming back.

Me: Your mother was sleeping. I wasn't going to do that to you.

Mom: (shouting) Please start cooking your father will be home soon.

Hhayi ke. I didn't like this about being home. Having to cook regularly. I didn't respond.

Mom: Uzwile kodwa we ngane? (Did you hear me?)

Me: I heard you mom.... Guess what? (Talking to my son)

Sphephile: What?

Me: Go to your mother's room and you will find something big.

He laughed and I put him down. He headed upstairs. I wore an apron and I started cooking.

Sphephile came back with his aeroplane.

Mom: Come here, I want to see it.

Sphephile: No. I am going to Spepiye's mom.

I laughed. He indeed came to me. Alupheli followed him. He took the box from him and he cried.

Me: Ngizokusakaza ngempama wena. Mnike. (I will slap you, give it back to him)

Alupheli: I just want to look that won't hurt.

Me: So he must cry because you want to look?

Alupheli: Mxm. Uyatefa lo. When I was your age I was a tough man. I wasn't crying like you always do.

Me: Phela vele wawusibanga iskhundla. Nibaningi kumama wakho. Sphephile akabangi namuntu.

Alupheli: Uyaphapha wena Alondwe.

Me: Hamba la.

He left. I laughed at him. I opened the box for him and I gave it to him.

Me: Go and show ugogo.

Sphephile: Ugogo?

Me: Yes.

He nodded and left. I finished up cooking and I set up the table. Dad was back. He was with me on the kitchen. We were just talking. He was sitting on the dinner table while I was preparing it for dinner. We were talking about horse riding.

Dad: I should try and ride a horse too.

Me: You're too old for horse riding. It's for us young people.

Dad: Ayi wena usindwa umzimba. Uyafana nje nomama wakho that horse can be paralysed.

Me: You're cruel shame. I will have them on my farm house.

Dad: What farm house?

Me: The one my husband will buy for me.

Dad: Husband? What husband? There's no husband you'll have beside me.

Me: Hehehe soke sbone. You took my dog and gave it away three years ago. To people who didn't care about it. My dog died dad so you can never stay my husband sorry.

Dad: The dog didn't get along with Sphephile. I had to take it away. The dog felt that Sphephile was now more important.

Me: Ayi. That's a lie. You never liked it anyway. You and your wife. You never liked my dog.

He laughed and I went to call everyone. They settled down, Sphephile prayed and we started eating.

Sphephile: Malume uMesuli you can't see chops as you're wearing your specs at the dinner table?

Everyone laughed at Mesuli.

Uyathandwa: That one is for mimicking him Brah.

Alupheli: Ayi mshana you're savage.

Mom: Musa ukuphaphela ingane yami wena Pepiye.

Mesuli: Thanks mom.

Dad: Okay. Order please before some of you chokes.

Sphephile: Some of us like Malume u-Alupheli.

Everyone laughed. My son was just like that. When you make fun of him. He won't take your shine, he will let you make fun of him. He'll even cry but that doesn't mean he'll forget. He'll get a moment where you have forgotten about making fun of him then he'll return the favour. He'll not even laugh after making fun of you. He'll shut up like he didn't say anything. Alupheli usually chokes on his food on the dinner table because he likes talking. He didn't say anything to Sphephile. We finished up eating and they washed the dishes.

I went to bath my son and we went to bed. When I am not home he sleeps with my parents or Uyathandwa. He doesn't like to sleep alone. Sphephile was already sleeping. I was on the phone with Thapelo.

Thapelo: I called you and you didn't answer your phone. You didn't even tell me how was your trip?

Me: I am sorry okay. I didn't ignore your calls I was cooking and my phone was in my room. When I arrived at home I was tired. I went to bed straight.

Thapelo: Okay. Goodnight then. (There was a knock on my door)

Me: Oh. Just like that? (It was my mom who came inside my room)

Thapelo: What do you want me to say? I have nothing more to say to you. (Mom sat on my bed)

Me: Oh goodnight then.

Thapelo: Sure.

He hung up the call. I sighed.

Mom: Who was that?

I stood up and I went to my wardrobe.

Me: It was just a friend.

Mom: Bursary?

Me: Mom? Please. What do you want?

Mom: I was just asking. But I want my straightener.

Me: Oh. I am sorry I didn't bring it back. It's on the bedside drawer.

I took my hair cover doek and I covered my hair. I turned back my mom was opening the wrong drawer. I quickly went to her.

Me: Mom! Not that drawer.

Mom: What is this?

She had already saw my ring box. She smiled and opened it. She was hell surprised.

Mom: Bursary proposed.

Me: Mom please bring it back to me.

Mom: Who is he?

Me: No. I won't tell you.

Mom: I am going to tell your father if you don't tell me who is he?

Me: Okay! It's Thapelo.

Mom: Thapelo? Thapelo? The boy from high school?

Me: Yes.

Mom: Hell No! You're not marrying that boy.

Me: Why not?

Mom: You won't be happy if you marry him. His parents don't like you.

Me: I love him mom and you can't choose for me.

She opened another drawer and took her straightener. She went to the door.

Mom: I am keeping this ring so that you can see that, you're not going to marry that boy.

Me: No. Mom bring it back.

Mom: There's nothing you can do about it because you won't tell your father. I know.

I tried to go and take it but she closed the door. I clicked my tongue....

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

My wife came back from our daughter's room with this thing she use to make her hair look more beautiful. She had a small box on her hand.

Me: What is in that box? Alondwe bought you a gift without buying me one too.

Thandeka: Jealous is too much here.

I laughed. She threw the box at me. I caught it. I opened the box. It was an engagement ring. Not just an engagement ring(nyana). It was a very beautiful ring and it looked expensive.

Me: Woah! She bought you a ring?

Thandeka: No baby. (she joined me in bed) She didn't buy it. Do you remember that boy from high school. The Sotho boy. Thapelo?

Me: Oh yeah that one I remember him.

Thandeka: Yes. He proposed last night.

Me: What the fuck! He did what?

Thandeka: He proposed with that ring.

Me: What did Alondwe say because there'll be no wedding. Over my dead body my daughter is not getting married. Like hell she isn't.

Thandeka: Calm down okay, please don't tell her that I told you. She'll be angry. I shouldn't have told you.

Me: Did she say yes?

Thandeka: I don't know. But I think she didn't say yes because when I came inside her room, she was talking to someone on the phone and it didn't look like they were happy. I think she said no and the boy is mad at her.

Me: She did the right thing.

Thandeka: I also don't want her to marry that boy. His parents don't like Alondwe.

Me: What do you mean?

Thandeka: His mom called me more than twice telling me that I should tell my daughter to stay away from her son. She doesn't want her to be with him. I think it was their first year in varsity. The boy must have come back to Johannesburg for Alondwe. He was visiting her. His father called and he wanted to speak to you but I refused.

Me: Why didn't you tell me all this?

Thandeka: I confronted Alondwe and she said they broke up so I thought maybe she was telling the truth there was no need for me to tell you.

Me: She's not going to marry that boy. She's too young to get married. She'll turn 22 years old and already someone wants to make her a wife. No wonder she was talking about husbands.

Thandeka: That's true. We're not letting her get married. Not in that kind of family who doesn't want her. I think even Sphephelo is way better than that boy. Alondwe doesn't need drama in her life.

Me: Yeah Sphephelo is a good boy. And he comes with less drama.

Thandeka: I repeat please don't show her that I told you about this engagement.

Me: Alright. I promise I won't show her that I know. Boys want to take my baby girl already? No they better chill.

Thandeka: Let's pray and sleep.

I nodded. We got off the bed. We kneeled down and held each others hands. We prayed together. We then sleep after that.

\*\*\*\*\*

Every month end my wife and I go out for dinner. We leave the kids behind. We just have our own time alone. When Alondwe and Uyathandwa are at varsity we leave the kids with our part time helper. She doesn't work everyday. She works certain days. I didn't want my wife to do any house work anymore. I just wanted her to relax. But she was only cooking and

taking care of my washing. Everything that concerned me was done by her. So we were coming back from our dinner date. We headed to our room. The house was quiet. The kids were asleep. I opened the door and Alondwe was inside our room. She was searching for something.

Me: What are you doing here?

She turned back and looked at us. She came closer.

Alondwe: Mom I want it back.

Thandeka: You want what back?

Alondwe: I want my engagement ring back mom. I want it back.

Me: What engagement ring?

Alondwe: A dad stop pretending like you don't know. I saw the way you were looking at me that you knew something. You forget that you're bad at pretending. So parents can I have my engagement ring back now?

Me: You're not getting it back.

Alondwe: What? It belongs to me. Thapelo didn't buy it for you guys. He bought it for me so I want it back please.

Thandeka: We have decided that you're not going marry that boy baby sorry.

Alondwe: That is not your decision to make mom. It's my decision to make.

Me: And what decision did you take?

Alondwe: I haven't made a decision yet. And even if I make a decision. That's between me and Thapelo dad. Please mom I want my ring back.

She was pretty mad now I could see that by her nostrils. They were moving up and down.

Me: Well you'll need our blessings to get married. You can't just get married.

Alondwe: Well with or without your blessings. If I want to marry him I will marry him.

Me: Hheyi Alondwe don't talk to us like that you're not that old. I can still beat you.

Alondwe: Nobody stopped you from getting married but you want to stop me? Why?

Thandeka: Because we're thinking about your happiness.

Alondwe: I know my happiness is with Thapelo and I will marry him. Whether you bring back that ring or not. It won't take him a century to buy another one.

She then left us speechless. I looked at my wife. She sighed.

Thandeka: I will give her back the ring.

Me: No you heard what she said. The boy will buy another one. It won't take him a century to buy it.

Thandeka: But I must say, he has a good taste. That ring is beautiful.

Me: But he's not marrying my daughter. Where is the ring anyway?

Thandeka: It's in my handbag.

She gave it to me. I looked at it once more. It did look expensive.

Me: I think we need to pay the parents of this boy a visit. Once Alondwe leaves on Monday. You'll call them on Friday and we will request a meeting with them on Saturday. At least we have one thing in common with them. We don't want our kids to marry each other.

Thandeka: Yeah. We will do just that.

She kissed me and went to the bathroom. I sat on the bed and looked at this ring..

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay

There was nothing we could do for Claudine. We weren't going to leave our daughter behind just because she has this love we don't understand for her. We didn't go back to the house with Heather. She was going to spend the week with Claudine. After that week ended I was going to see my parents. I had to tell them that I am leaving. I couldn't go with my husband because he had reports to write. So I was going to leave with the boys. Heather was coming back the following day.

Me: Baby please help me. I can't buckle them both at the same time.

Rajiv: Alright.

He stood up and we went to their room. They were on their cots sleeping. They usually sleep everytime after bathing.

Rajiv: They love sleeping. These two.

Me: Tell me about it. I don't even know who they take after.

Rajiv: I bet they take after Heather.

We laughed and we went to buckle them on their seats in my car. Rajiv went back inside the house to take their bags and my bag. I went to take the groceries that I bought for my parents. It wasn't too many things just a few things that they love the most. I bought them in the morning because I didn't want to stop at the malls with the kids. We packed everything in the car.

Rajiv: Don't stay too long. Come back before five.

Me: Really? It's not winter. I can even come back at eight.

Rajiv: Don't even think about it. You'll leave me alone here. How can you say that.

Me: Okay I will come back before five.

Rajiv: That's more like it. I love you Precious. You mean everything to me.

Me: I love you too baby and I will always love you.

He kissed me deeply. I held on to him. We broke the kiss and he kissed my forehead. He opened the door for me. I stepped inside and he closed it.

Rajiv: Drive safe with our babies.

Me: You know I am always keeping it safe.

I started the engine. He waved his hand. I drove off and hooted.

I made it to my parents house safe. Sakhile and Sizwe were home so they assisted me. My kids were still sleeping so we put them in my sister's kids beds. I went to make something for my parents and brothers then I went to the lounge.

Dad: What happened?

Me: What do you mean dad?

Dad: Hope is the only person who visits us. You come here when there is trouble.

Me: That's not true.

Sizwe: Dad is telling the truth.

We all laughed.

Mom: So tell us what happened?

Me: Okay. My husband and I are moving to Cape Town.

Dad: Why?

Me: He got a promotion. He will earn more so that means he'll finally take me to school.

My mom allulated and my brothers blew whistles. They knew how important it was for me to go to school so they were happy for me and I was also happy.

Dad: That means you'll be close to your sister.

Me: Yes I am happy.

Mom: We are happy for you baby.

Sakhile: This calls for celebration. Eyadini or what?

Sizwe: Yeah let's go.

Me: Okay. Let's go.

Dad: Bring back the meat for us.

Us: We will.

Sakhile drove my car and he drove us straight to Eyadini. That place was always vibing. It had the ekasi spirit that I liked. I was having a great time with my brothers. We took some videos and sent them to Philisiwe. I even lost track of time. The time was 17:30 when we headed back home. My husband must have been going crazy by then. And my phone's

battery was dead. We arrived at home and mom was shouting at me.

Mom: This was the last time I let you go to that place because everytime you go to that place you just loose control and you forget that you're a wife.

Me: Mom I am sorry. It won't happen again. But we came back with the meat.

Mom: Aysuka man.

My brothers assisted me buckle the kids. They were awake but they were crying.

Me: How will I drive while my kids are crying like this?

Dad: Sakhile drive your sister. You'll come back using a taxi or come back tomorrow.

Me: No this one has been drinking. Sizwe please drive us please. I will be with them and you'll drive.

Sizwe: Alright Sisi.

I said my good-byes to my parents and we left. My kids couldn't stop crying. I just didn't know what to do. They were making me cry too. They cried until they fell asleep.

Sizwe: What was wrong with them?

Me: I don't know. They usually cry like this when their father and I are fighting.

Sizwe: Maybe you will fight. That means I won't sleep in your house.

Me: Come on don't be silly.

He laughed and we continued to have a neutral conversation.

We made it to my house safe. Brandon woke up and started crying all over again.

Me: Please take this one before he wakes up too.

Sizwe: Alright.

He took him. The lights inside the house were off. Maybe my husband was not home. I took Brandon and their bag. I locked my car and followed my brother. He went inside. I turned on the lights after him. My husband was on the couch sleeping. He must have fell asleep while he was watching TV. Because there were biscuits in front of him and a cup of coffee.

Brandon was still crying.

Me: Baby we're back.

I put the bag on the couch and I sat on the couch with Brandon. Sizwe came back.

Sizwe: Do you need anything else before I leave?

Me: Yes my bag is in the car and the other baby bag

Sizwe: Alright. Ayi ulala kabi umuntu wakho. Ulala ekhamisile.

Me: Musa ukuphapha.

He laughed and went out. I put Brandon down. I went to Rajiv. I tried to wake him up.

Me: Baby wake up and help me with Brandon. He can't stop crying. I don't know what to do.

He didn't wake up. I shook him, but he didn't wake up. He was awfully cold. I called Sizwe.

He came inside the house.

Me: He doesn't wake up I don't know what is wrong with him.

Brandon couldn't stop crying. I took my son. Sizwe shook him. I started to get worried. What was wrong with my husband. I took my phone.

Sizwe: Sisi? Nobuhle!

Me: What? I am calling the hospital maybe something is seriously wrong with him.

Sizwe: Your husband is no longer breathing.

Me: What do you mean he's not breathing?

I went closer to him and I tried to touch his pulse. Brandon was crying. He was still in my arms.

Me: No, we're taking him to the hospital.

Sizwe: Nobuhle he's dead.

Me: NO! MY HUSBAND IS NOT DEAD. HE'S NOT DEAD. RAJIV IS NOT DEAD. He is supposed to stay with us forever right? That what is supposed to happen. How can he die? He can't die. My husband can't be dead.

I cried. I didn't know what to do. My son was crying. My husband was just like a statue. My brother held me tight. I held my son tight. I cried. How was I supposed to live without Rajiv? Why did this happen to me? What have I done to deserve this? Is he really dead or I am having a bad dream.

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

When my mom took my ring I was really angry. I didn't expect her to say I won't marry Thapelo. Maybe dad was going to protest but not my mom. But I suppose I guessed wrong. I couldn't sleep I was thinking about how my life with Thapelo was going to be. I know for sure that I was going to be happy with him but his parents don't like me. How was I going to get through that? I couldn't make them love me, they dislike me and that's that. I sighed and cuddled my son. I fell asleep. In the morning, Mesuli and Sphephile were ready for school. We were having breakfast. I was quiet. My father kept on giving me wired stares. I didn't know what was going on with him. There was someone on the gate. I went to attend it.

Me: Yebo.

Sphe: Hey Alondwe. It's Sphephelo. Can I drive Sphephile to school today?

Me: Oh Okay. Wait.

I went to the table. Sphephile was not on the table.

Me: Mesuli where is Sphephile?

Mesuli: He went to brush his teeth upstairs.

Me: Alright.

Dad: Why are you so uptight. Is everything alright?

Me: Yes I am fine.

Mom looked at me and I looked away. Sphephile came back. I took his bag for him.

Me: Your father is here. He will drive you to school.

Sphephile: Yes! Let me go.

He headed to the door.

Dad: You don't say goodbye because your father is driving you to school?

Sphephile: Hawu . I am sorry Mkhulu. Goodbye everyone. Have a nice day.

Them: Have a nice day Pepiye.

He smiled and walked out of the door. I followed him. My son loved his father very much and I am quite grateful that my parents brought him to his life. Sphephile is just complete when he is with his dad. And I am happy that they had a wonderful relationship. I opened the gate for him. Sphephelo opened the door for him. But he picked him up first and hugged him. Sphephile giggled.

Sphephelo: Hello boy?

Sphephile: Hello dad, how are you?

You see? If he's talking to me. He speaks in third person all the time. But with others he speaks directly.

Sphephelo: I am fine boy how are you?

Sphephile: I am good too. I have a new aeroplane.

Me: Okay. You will tell him that on your way to school.

Sphephile: Spepiye's mom is disturbing Spepiye's moment with his father.

Sphephelo: She's jealous don't mind her.

Sphephile laughed.

Me: Hello Enhle?

Enhle: Hello Mama kaSphephile. How are you?

Me: I am fine dear how are you?

Enhle: I am fine too. Can you please tell the boys that I will be late for school. Whenever they are together, they just rule everything.

Me: Okay I will tell them baby.... Sphephelo you heard the lady please go. She's going to be late.

Sphephelo: Okay. I am sorry. Thank you for bringing him.

Me: It's alright. You're not taking him this weekend because I will be leaving on Monday.

Sphephelo: Oh. Alright. I will take him on Monday afternoon. Please tell your parents.

Me: Okay.... Bye Enhle.

Enhle: Bye. Thank you. At least they listen to you. I think I need another lady in that house just to balance everything. You see?

I laughed and said: I hope your father will give you the lady.

Enhle: I pray that he does. This one is lazy even to ask a lady out. (She said that in a whisper)

Sphephelo: I can still hear you.

I laughed and gave my son his backpack.

Me: Mama loves you.

Sphephile: Spepiye loves mama.

I kissed him and I waved goodbye as his father drove off. I smiled to myself and went back inside the house. I bumped into my mom.

Mom: What happened out there why are you smiling?

Me: Mom? Geez! Nothing happened.

Dad: You better not be kissing the father of your child outside my house.

Me: Dad? Sphephelo and I are not even together.

Dad: I was just saying. Let's go baby.... Mesuli!

Me: Ain't you supposed to be at home resting mom?

Mom: No. I am going to your father's company. Uyathandwa should come too. Please wake him up.

Me: Alright. Bye.

Them: Bye.

Mesuli came downstairs running.

Me: Ayakusinda ama specs!

Mesuli: Musa ukuphapha wena.

I laughed and I went to wake Uyathandwa up. He didn't want to wake up.

Me: Hheyi business man wake up. You should follow mom.

Uyathandwa: Oh shit! I forgot. Thank you for waking me up.

He kissed my cheek and said: Please make my bed.

Me: Hell No!

Uyathandwa: Please Brah!

He went to the bathroom. I made his bed and I went to check on Alupheli. He was eating. His teacher comes at 8. I left him and I went to my room. I wanted to sleep.

I woke up during the day and I went downstairs with my phone. The cleaner was cleaning on the lounge. I greeted her and she greeted me back. I then went to the kitchen, I made something to eat for myself. I finished up and I cleaned up my mess. The kitchen was already cleaned. I took my plate and I went to sit outside by the pool area. I could hear Alupheli reading a poem. The way he read it, it was like he understood clearly how the poet felt. And what state the poet was in. My littlest brother was just full of surprises. I took my phone and I called Thapelo. It was lunch hour so I was hoping he was going to answer my call. Surprisingly he answered.

Thapelo: Hello.

Me: Okay. I know that I have kept you waiting but I don't deserve this kind of treatment from you.

Thapelo: What treatment? What did I do now?

Me: Come on Thapelo can't you see that you are acting like a stranger.

Thapelo: I don't know what you are talking about. And I don't know how you want me to act? Should I be happy that you refused to marry me.

Me: So if I don't say yes this year. You'll be like this till when exactly?

Thapelo: I can't pretend like I am happy Alondwe. Is that what you want me to do? I am still trying to accept your response.

Me: Thapelo I love you okay.

Thapelo: I know and I love you too. That's why I am saying just give me time to accept this.

Me: No I won't do that. You'll accept it while you're talking to me. Ain't no space that I will give you.

Thapelo: You're stubborn. You know that?

Me: I am just like you. Me and you we're just the same thing.

Thapelo: Why are you so scared to marry me then?

Me: I am not scared. I do want to spend the rest of my life with you but our parents.

Thapelo: We're not doing it for them. They know nothing about us. So please just think this through.

Me: I am and I am close to saying yes but –

Thapelo: My parents are keeping you?

Me: Not just yours only. My mom told me that I won't marry you last night. She saw my ring.

Thapelo: It will be alright. I don't know how but it will be do not stress.

Me: I love you my chocolate man.

Thapelo: I love you too Milky woman.

Me: Okay bye.

Thapelo: Bye.

We hung up the call.

Voice: Who's chocolate man?

I got a fright and looked back.

Me: Geez wena. You gave me a fright.

Alupheli: Sorry. It's lunch time. Please make something to eat for me. And tell me who's chocolate man.

Me: No! Uthanda izindaba hawu.

Alupheli: Okay I will tell dad then.

Me: Okay! Okay. It's a guy who asked me to marry him. Eat with me because I am lazy to make more food.

Alupheli: So you are going to get married?

Me: Not now. And please don't tell dad.

Alupheli: Don't worry I won't. Why he's chocolate man?

Me: That's a pet name I gave him. What's up with so many questions?

Alupheli: I just want to know chocolate man. Show me his picture please.

Me: No! Hell No!

Alupheli: Come on, big sis please.

Me: Uyahlupha wena.

He smiled and I showed him his picture.

Alupheli: He's not bad.

Me: I didn't ask for your opinion.

Alupheli: Well I gave it anyway. Thanks for lunch. I will paint you and chocolate man for your wedding gift.

Me: (laughing) Okay. Thanks.

He went back to his class. I face time Nkululeko and we gossiped about people we knew. He was updating me about what I was missing. And I was just laughing. After that I went to take the available car keys. I knew how to drive. So I drove the car to the mall and I went to buy dinner for us. Mom and dad were going out since it was month end. I wasn't planning on cooking.

\*\*\*

When everyone was sleeping I went to look for my ring. My parents came back while I was still searching. I was really angry. How can they do this to me? What did I do to deserve all this? Why can't they let me be happy. I couldn't stop crying. I took my phone and I went to sit outside. I called Thapelo. He answered on the third ring.

Thapelo: Little pudding?

Me: (crying) My mom took my ring and she doesn't want to bring it back. They told me I

don't have their blessings. They don't want me to marry you. I want to marry you.

Thapelo: Did you just say you want to marry me?

Me: Yes. I want to be your wife. I don't care what our parents say. I just want to be with you.

Thapelo: We will find a way don't worry. Once you're back here. We'll work together to find a way to get married. You've just made me the happiest man on earth.

Me: And I am the luckiest woman on earth.

Thapelo: I love you my little milky bar.

Me: I love you too my chocolate brownie.

We hung up the call. I wiped my tears and I sat outside for a few minutes looking at the sky....

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

Uyathandwa and Alondwe were going back to varsity. It was a Monday morning and they were leaving that morning. Alondwe was just Chicky because we did not want her to marry that boy. She found the ring and took it. I thought I have hidden it very well but I was wrong clearly because she found it. The way she was so certain that she wanted to marry this boy didn't sit well with me. Alondwe was still a child. I didn't want to lose her to a boy that I don't know. I don't even know if this boy was a good boy or he was just a boy who didn't even know what love was. Who didn't even understand how serious marriage is. It was hard looking at your kids grow and soon enough you realise that they are big enough that they can leave you. Alondwe was the only girl that I had and I seriously didn't want her to get married. Not now not in the future. I was going to make sure that she doesn't get married.

Me: We won't say the same thing every year. You know what you came to do on campus. Do that. Firstly do something that will make yourself proud then we will also be proud. And take care of yourselves.

Thandeka: And stop wasting money.

They both laughed.

Uyathandwa: Mom is always complaining about money.

Thandeka: Yes I have to. Specially you Uyathandwa. Not every fashion trends that comes you should buy. Just have some class baby not fashion.

Me: Most business men have class. They don't go with fashion. You're on your final year now you must start living your life as a business person. Strategies and always have a budget.

Uyathandwa: Okay. I will try.

Me: And you Dr Ndunakazi. Drop the attitude. You'll start doing your residency soon.

Alupheli: Awu bakithi dad. Dr Ndunakazi wants her chocolate man.

Alondwe: Alupheli!

Alupheli: What? I am trying to help.

Alondwe: But you promised.

Alupheli: Okay. I am sorry.

Me: Okay. Who is chocolate man?

Alupheli: I don't know too.

Thandeka: You know. You can't speak about chocolate man you don't know.

Alupheli: Well I am sorry to disappoint but I don't know. I don't know serious.

Me: Alondwe?

Alondwe: I don't know too dad. Can we go now?

Mesuli: You can't go just yet we want to know about chocolate man.

Alondwe: Ngizokuphoxa wena zizokumpintsha izibuko ngiyakutshela.

The others laughed. Mesuli didn't respond. I looked at my wife and she shook her head.

Uyathandwa: But I think it's only fair that we know about this chocolate man. Alondwe has been moody to everyone except Sphephile and Alupheli.

Alondwe: If you seriously don't know what to talk about, please let me know. I will just take a cab.

Me: Okay travel safe. Alondwe.

Alondwe: Thanks.

She picked up her son and headed to the door. Sphephile was just quiet. He does that everytime when his mother is leaving. He just keeps quiet.

Thandeka: She doesn't even hug you?

Me: Chocolate man is ringing on her mind.

Thandeka laughed and hugged Uyathandwa. I was driving Uyathandwa to his campus at PMB. Thandeka was driving Alondwe to the airport. I was driving with Alupheli. Thandeka was going with Mesuli and Sphephile. We then went our separate ways. My daughter was mad for now but she was going to understand one day why we refused to let her marry chocolate man.

\*\*\*\*\*

After the older kids have left. Sphephelo came to take Sphephile for the whole week he was going to be with him. Thandeka called the boy's parents and they agreed to see us. Alupheli and Mesuli went to visit mom because we didn't want to go with them. The parents of the boy had given us their address. So when we arrived in Johannesburg. The cab drove us straight to that place. They had a really beautiful home. They had other two kids who looked like they were of the same age. Their house had more family pictures and the pictures of an older boy on his graduation gown. I figured the boy must be "chocolate man". His parents looked decent but I must say the wife was mnqumakhanda. Hhaybo. That woman was ugly. Well ugly in our eyes as human beings but to God I know that she is beautiful. They welcomed us and offered tea and biscuits.

Mr Moloi: So how can we help you Mr and Mrs Ndunakazi?

Me: I don't know, if you know but your son has proposed to our daughter.

Them: He did what!?

Thandeka: Yes. He did that. My husband won't repeat himself. I told you Mrs Moloi that talk to your son clearly you didn't.

My wife was starting with her attitude of "you don't mess with me" no wonder Alondwe was so Chicky.

Mrs Moloi: I won't let my son marry your daughter.

Thandeka: The problem with you is, you're good at talking but you fail to act. If this chocolate man boy of yours can leave my daughter alone Alondwe can get over him. And none of this would've happened.

Mrs Moloi: You say my son is a chocolate man.

I looked at Thandeka with eyes that said "Did you have to bring up the C word". It's like she read my mind because she just shrugged her shoulders.

Me: Excuse that mam. That's not why we're here.

Mr Moloi: I believe we should know why is our son called chocolate man.

Thandeka: There's something called pet name. Don't you know a pet name?

Mr Moloi: You even know pet name they use on each other. And what kind of a pet name is chocolate man?

Thandeka: That pet name is sweet for all I know. But I wouldn't know for you. What do you call your wife. Ugly sexy mama?

Me: Thandeka!!

Thandeka: What? Can't you see that –

Me: Stop it. Stop.

She sighed and stopped. I was supposed to come alone here because my wife is just balls of fire. She's a dragon. She just wants to destroy.

Me: Okay. We're not here to speak about pet names. We are here to find a way on how are we going to stop them from marrying each other.

Mrs Moloi: We need a traditional healer who will just stop them from loving each other.

Us: What!?

Thandeka: Uyathakatha Kanti futhi?

Mr Moloi: That is unnecessary. This is simple. They can't get married if they don't have our blessings. They need our blessings to get married. So we deny them our blessings then they won't get married. They really do need us if they want to get married. There are things like lobola negotiations. And all those things that needs to be done.

Thandeka: Now you have a good point Sir. I couldn't have said it better.

Me: I have to agree with you on that one Mr Moloi.

Thandeka: But they can't know that we met.

Mrs Moloi: Now that's impossible because as soon as you leave that door. I am calling my son. I won't have him have in-laws that are so rude like you are.

Thandeka: Woman please don't start with me. Please. I will knock your head –

Me: Thandeka please man!

Thandeka: I am sorry baby but she's making me loose my morals. It's not my fault that I have a beautiful daughter that her son wants to marry.

Mrs Moloi: I won't deny it, she is beautiful but she's not the one for my son. Where is she now? I bet she has another baby.

Me: Mr Moloi please tell your wife to mind her tongue when she's talking about my child in front of her mother please.

Mr Moloi: Well I would also like to know what your daughter has achieved. Because our son has achieved something for himself.

Thandeka: We are not here to discuss our daughter's achievements.

Mrs Moloi: That's clear that she's nothing.

Me: She's a student. In three years to come she'll be a Doctor. Who knows maybe she'll treat your kids one day. Thandeka our job is done here let's go.

They didn't say anything at all. We left them. We waited for a cab.

Thandeka: Yhu! Siyangicika lesiya salukazi nobubi ngathi intothoviyane. Ayi inhle kabi intothoviyane ngathi ihlokohloko. Imboma yoqobo.

I just laughed. I had a wife that was, I don't even know what to say about her. She called a spade a spade when she wants to.

Me: Yazi if I can partner up with you ngingashawa njalo. How does Muzi survive?

Thandeka: Hhayi baby don't say that please.

I laughed and said: I love you though.

Thandeka: I love you too white chocolate man.

We both laughed and kissed each other....

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay...

I sat on the couch holding my husband's body. I wasn't crying anymore. Brandon was finally asleep and his brother was still sleeping. Sizwe was outside making calls using my phone.

Sizwe came back. He sat on the couch close to me.

Sizwe: Sisi please let go of the body. I am sorry that your husband is dead but don't have to hold his dead body.

Me: This is my last chance okay! This is my last chance to actually hold my husband. They'll come in here and take his body. Then I'll never see him again. Do you know how does that feel?

Sizwe: No I don't. I am sorry.

Me: He left me with three kids with no good qualification. Just an Educare diploma. How am

I going to survive without him. What will I tell my kids? That they'll never see their father again. He's gone to heaven? I don't even know what happened to him. How did he die? He choked himself to death? How!?

Tears started all over again. The pain was unbearable. It just couldn't stop. I held him more tighter than before. Who was going to take this pain away from me? Who was going to tell me they love me and make me feel special when I feel down. When I am sad he was the only one who lifted my spirit up. He made me laugh, his touch was everything. He looked after me and took care of my needs. He loved our kids. To him we came first, there was nobody that compared to us. Even his father didn't take the place that our kids and I held in his heart. I lost my soul mate. My true love. My happy ever after.

His parents and siblings came inside the house. Nadine was crying.

Nadine: My sister.

I looked at her and I didn't say anything. Even her couldn't bring my husband back. Nobody was going to bring him back.

Claudine: What happened Precious?

I didn't say anything. I didn't answer her. Answering her wasn't going to bring him back. I wasn't going to get my husband back and my whole life was just a mess. My life without Rajiv was I don't know what?

Sizwe: We found him here on the couch. We thought he was sleeping but he wasn't moving. He was dead.

Mr Pillay: My son is dead?

Claudine: I am so sorry. I am sorry my love.

Claudine hugged him. The kids woke up and they were crying.

Mr Pillay: My wife please take them and go home with them. Gary drive your mother home. We will stay here with Precious.

Garry: Okay dad.

Me: Where is my daughter?

Mr Pillay: She's at home with Garry's wife.

I nodded. Claudine and Garry left with my kids. After a few minutes the undertakers came. I stood up and I looked at them covering my husband's body. I sat on the floor and wailed.

Nadine held me tight. I couldn't stop crying. Why did God let this happen to me? What did I do to feel this pain? I cried until he was taken away. I stopped crying and I just sat there on the floor looking at the spot where he died. The police were also there. They asked questions and Sizwe answered them. They took the biscuit and the coffee. Then they left promising to come back.

Mr Pillay: Precious, we must go.

Me: I am not leaving.

Mr Pillay: You can't stay alone.

Me: I said I am not leaving!

Nadine: Dad I will stay with her. You can go.

Mr Pillay: She needs to be with the whole family and we will mourn together.

Me: I will mourn my husband here and I will mourn him my way. According to my culture. I won't do it your way. Can I at least get that?

Mr Pillay didn't say anything. He brushed my shoulder and he left.

Sizwe: Should I move things here?

Me: No but you can in my bedroom. I will stay there.

He nodded and went to my bedroom. Nadine and I sat in silence.

Me: I was so happy that he was going to take me to school. I was finally going to be a Qualified Teacher. And I was going to teach older kids. He was very excited about his transfer. Now my husband is dead. I just wonder who did this to him.

Nadine: You think someone must have killed him?

Me: Don't you think that? We found him here on the couch dead. He was sitting on the couch dead. He killed himself? No! Someone did it to him.

Nadine: I can't believe he's really dead.

My mom and dad walked in and it started all over again. The tears and the pain just went deeper.

Mom: Oh my little baby girl.

She sat on the floor with me and she held me on her arms very tight.

Me: I feel like it's the end of the world mama.

Mom: Don't say that? God is still with you.

Me: No he isn't. He's no longer with me. He has left me, he just –

Mom: No. The moment we feel like God is far from us. That is the time when he's more closer. If God isn't here you were also going to die of heart attack. Loosing a husband is no joke. Specially because you're still young. But God will make a way for you. He will heal you. He'll make everything alright.

When you're feeling pain, every talk about God seems like a fairytale. Like it's a lie. Like there's no God. Like God didn't give us Jesus. Like there are no heavens to mend broken souls. Pain and suffering makes us question the existence of God. I wanted God to take away my pain...

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

The day I was going back to school came. I didn't want it to come sooner because life was going to be tougher again for me. Being a student might look easier but it isn't. Life away from home is hard but at least I was used to it. I was done packing my suitcase and bags in my mother's car. I went back to my room. I found Alupheli busy on my phone. He was writing something, from my phone to the paper that he had on his hands.

Me: Okay little man what are you doing?

He jumped up and looked back at me.

Alupheli: Geez dude you gave me a fright!

Me: What are you doing with my phone?

Alupheli: I was just getting a name of the game. I want to download it on mom's tablet. He put the paper on his pocket and he gave me my phone back. I took it and looked at the history of the things that he was doing but he was clever enough to remove the history.

Me: If I found my airtime gone –

Alupheli: Don't worry about your airtime. I didn't use it. Don't worry big sis.

He headed to the door. He didn't leave, he turned back and looked at me.

Me: What?

Alupheli: What is the name of chocolate man?

Me: What? Can you drop that please!

Alupheli: No come on I am just asking.

Me: No! I won't tell you.

Alupheli: Okay. Send my regards to chocolate brownie.

He gave me a silly side smile while he was twitching his eyes.

Me: Hheywena where did you get that?

He laughed and ran away. I sighed. I wondered why he wanted to know more about Thapelo. He must have went through my WhatsApp chats. Thapelo's number was saved by "Chocolate brownie". I laughed at that. Maybe it was silly of me to save his number like that. But hey I didn't care. I took my handbag and I went downstairs. I sat next to my son. Who was just quiet. He was sad that I was leaving. But hey I had no choice. My parents had advices to give us. I listened. Then Alupheli ruined it by revealing the word chocolate man. My littlest

brother was just something else. I didn't give my father my ring. The ring was mine and nobody was going to take it away from me.

At the airport. Sphephile started crying.

Me: Don't cry okay. I will come back.

He shook his head and cried some more.

Me: Hey look. Your father will come and get you. You will spend a week with him and you can call me as much as you like Okay?

Sphephile: Really?

Me: Yes. My love. Don't cry.

I kissed his face all over and he kissed mine back.

Me: Bye Sphephile wami. I love you.

Sphephile: Bye mama wa Spepiye I love you too.

My mom took his hand and they left. I looked at them until they disappeared. I couldn't wait to finish school so that I can take my son and live with him.

In Johannesburg I went straight to my flat. I put my bags there and I went to the mall to buy groceries after I have told my mom that I arrived safe. Nonkululeko and I met there. We planned to. I saw her and I ran to her. I was so happy to see my friend. We hugged each other for a long time then we kissed each others both sides on our cheeks.

Nkulu: Someone is going to be a madam soon.

Me: You can say that again.

Nkulu: You know what I have an idea.

Me: Yes?

Nkulu: We will drive to his workplace. And we will wait for him by his car then you'll give him the ring so that he can put it on. I know that he'll be happy.

Me: Yes! My friend that's the best idea.

Nkulu: Yes. So let's hurry up.

We did the groceries fast because it was almost 5pm. That was the time that he knocks off at work. Nkululeko had a car and she was already working. She was on the fashion industry. She was trying to make her own clothing line. But that was something that she did aside. We finished up and she drove me back to my place. We put the groceries in my place. I didn't unpack them. We were running out of time. Nkululeko unpacked the things that needed the fridge while I changed. I wore a white figure hugging dress. It was above the knees. It had a lacy open back. I wore black stilettos. I had a straight up on my head. I added a pink lipstick. I took my handbag and I went to Nonkululeko.

Me: How do I look?

Nkulu: You look perfect. Let's go it's 16:30 now.

We then headed to my future husband's workplace. That was kind of wired. To think of Thapelo as a future husband. All my life he has been my boyfriend. I never thought he was really going to end up as my husband. We arrived at the parking lot in time. We spotted his car and we went to it. Nkulu and I were giggling like kids. It felt really good to be that happy and to do such things with my friend. We waited.

Me: So tell me. What's going on in your love triangle?

Nkulu: That is the story for another day. You know that ngimadoda ami mina. (I laughed) here's your man mngani.

I composed myself. He was walking with two ladies and one guy. They were talking and laughing. He wasn't even aware that there were people outside his car. The guy alerted him. He looked at us and stopped walking. He smiled, I looked at Nkululeko, she wiped my tears. I giggled and smiled back at Thapelo. He walked closer to us but he was walking slowly. I stepped aside and I met him halfway. Nonkululeko was already taking a video. Thapelo gave his bag to the guy who was with him.

Thapelo: My ring please.

I laughed and I gave it to him. He then went down on his knee again.

Thapelo: Once again, my lady, my little milky bar. Will you marry me?

Me: Yes I will marry you.

He put the ring on my finger. The others clapped hands and that guy blew whistles. Thapelo kissed me deeply. He even lifted me up and my feet left the ground. I was happy. They congratulated us.

Us: Thank you.

Thapelo: I didn't expect to see you here. You look beautiful.

Nkulu: Well the plan was mine.

Everyone laughed at her. I kissed my bae once again.

Nkulu: Okay. That's enough you'll stir some feelings that are sleeping to some of us.

We laughed.

The lady: I can't believe you're getting married man.

Thapelo: Well you better believe it.

The lady2: Well that means Nomzamo must stop dreaming.

The other lady and the guy cleared their throats. I looked at Thapelo and he didn't say anything.

Nkulu: Please tell that Nomzamo to stop.

They laughed and I didn't. My mind was no longer there, well not because of Nomzamo but I just wanted to go already. We then said our good-byes and they left.

Nkulu: Okay. Let me leave you two. You have some catch up to do. Bye.

Me: Bye my friend. Thanks.

We hugged each other and she gave me my bag back. Thapelo and I went to his car. He opened the door for and I stepped inside. He took his seat and we drove off.

Thapelo: Before you ask about Nomzamo and be mad about it. She's just a colleague whom I was told that she has a crush on me.

I didn't say anything. I wasn't going to talk about some Nomzamo girl that I don't know.

Thapelo: Alondwe did you hear what I just said?

Me: I heard you and I have nothing to say. Nobody said girls won't crush you. I understand.

Don't try and explain it harder because it will look like you also have something for this Nomzamo.

Thapelo: I didn't want you to ask yourself unnecessary questions.

Me: I know.

We decided to have dinner on the nearest by restaurant. The restaurant was near his apartment. After dinner we then went to his apartment. I unlocked the door and I went in. He was following me behind. I threw my bag on the floor. It's been two months since I last had him. I grabbed him by shirt and I kissed him right on the door. He closed the door using his foot. I unbuttoned his shirt and he unzipped my dress. We didn't stop kissing each other and we didn't move from the door. Once we were completely naked. He carried and pinned me against the wall. I was all ready for him.

Thapelo: Protection?

Me: Baby there's no time for protection.

Thapelo: We ain't ready for kids Alondwe.

Me: I ain't stupid Thapelo come on.

Thapelo: Alright.

He held me tighter and he tried to get in. It was a little bit uncomfortable and tight but once he was inside. I was seeing stars. I tell you it was a Moloji heaven. That's how we say it.

When we reached climax, we switched position and we took it to the floor. I was on top. We finished up and passed out on the floor.

Thapelo: Okay. I think I saw a pink star today in our heaven.

Me: Are you sure it was pink? I thought it was purple.

Thapelo: No I am sure that it was pink.

Me: Come on let's go and take a shower. I want to see a white butterfly now.

We laughed and we went to take a shower.....

\*\*\*

My first week on campus started and it was crazy. Everyone was talking about residency and how hectic the year was going to be. I felt the pressure. That week I didn't see Thapelo. I was busy trying to plan how I was going to keep everything up to date that semester. On Saturday Thapelo's phone was off. So I took my books and I went to his apartment. He was sleeping in. I woke him up. I took a break from my school work and we spent the day together. Sunday we weren't going to church. So I woke up and started working while he was still sleeping.

Thapelo: Good Morning there Dr.

Me: Good Morning Mr Moloji.

Thapelo: Have you had breakfast?

Me: Yes, it's 11: 30 am now. Yours is on the microwave.

Thapelo: Alright, thank you.

Me: My pleasure baby boo.

He went to have his breakfast and took a shower. He came back wearing his boxers only. He sat on the couch and switched on the TV.

Me: The last time I checked, we were both students here?

Thapelo: Yeah but I am not a kid. I am an adult. That means I am a part time student not a full time.

Me: Okay baby it's 1 pm now. I need distraction but not TV.

Thapelo: Come get your distraction before you get it next semester after your books have buried you.

Me: The distraction will pull me out?

Thapelo: Yes baby come my little pudding.

I laughed and I went for my distraction. I was busy distracting myself then there was a knock on the door.

Me: Really?

Thapelo: You're almost there little pudding. You'll open the door after this.

I didn't say another word. I finished up quickly and I got off him. I wore my panties and my short. I wore my shirt and I went to the door. I looked at Thapelo before I opened and he raised his thumbs up. I giggled and I opened the door.

Me: Holly Shit!

I closed the door fast and I looked back at Thapelo.

Thapelo: What!?

I ran faster approaching the bedroom door.

Me: It's your parents dummy!

Thapelo: What? What are they doing here?

Me: I don't know!

Thapelo: Ah be the wife and open the door. This is your house.

Me: Huh? Hell to the No! Go and open it. You're supposed to be the husband.

Thapelo: No silly! It's the wife who opens the door.

Me: No dumass! The husband opens the door.

His mother opened the door and they both walked in

Mrs Moloji: Why are you keeping us waiting Thapelo!?

I quickly closed the bedroom door... He was going to deal with that one on his own. He's supposed to be the husband. Hee....

3rd Person narrator (How it happened)

Claudine was very hurt and she felt hopeless when Rajiv and Nobuhle told them that they were leaving. So when they left Heather behind to spend the week with her, she saw an opportunity that she was going to use to make Rajiv and Nobuhle stay. The plan was to make Rajiv sick so that he won't go to Cape Town. The company wasn't going to allow him to work while he was sick. So what did she do? She got the powder that going to make him sick and to give it to him, she had to bake. She then baked biscuits for Rajiv. She called the house to check if Rajiv was home. Apparently Rajiv was home alone. So she then sent Heather and the maid to get a dress that Heather was going to wear at the temple. She gave the maid biscuits to give to Rajiv. It was just a small lunch box with five biscuits that are big like crunch biscuits. When Heather had taken the dress she left with the maid after the maid gave her father the biscuits. Rajiv had the biscuits with coffee. His body wasn't that strong to resist the power of the powder. He was supposed to eat at least one biscuit but they were good so he ate more and they killed him, leaving his wife a widow and his children orphans.

\*\*\*\*

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay....

The family respected me enough to allow me to mourn my husband in my culture and in my house. My children were always restless special Brandon and Bradley. They were always crying. It's like they could feel that their father was gone. It was hard for me to accept that I was never going to see my husband again. My mom was always trying to bring me back to reality because there was a part of me that was still in denial. You know that small part that just doesn't want to believe that something happened it was like that too for me. I wished that Grandma Pillay was still alive maybe she was going to help me get through this. But she was also dead. When she died I was the one who helped my husband get through it but now he's not here to do it for me like I did for him. I started crying louder as Claudine walked in with Heather.

Mom: Nobuhle don't cry like this you will scare the child. She doesn't know what is going on.

I couldn't stop crying though. Heather came to me and she held my hand. She cried too because I was also crying.

Heather: Mom why are you crying?

I looked at her and I couldn't answer her. I wish I could but I couldn't. I just couldn't.

Heather: Should I get daddy so that he can make you stop crying? I know he always has the right thing to say to you if you're sad. Don't worry I will get him.

Heather stood up and she tried to walk away from me but my mother held her.

Mom: Heather baby sit down.

Heather: No grandma. I should go and call daddy. His wife is crying.

It was like the pain is being renewed all over again when I heard my daughter say that. I wanted it to stop. I looked at my sister.

Me: Philisiwe, it's painful. How do I make it stop? The pain doesn't stop. Please help me Sisi.

She hugged me. My daughter sat down.

Heather: Grandma.

Mom: Nobuhle baby please be strong and talk to her. It will be better if you can tell her.

Me: No mom I can't do it. Please do it.

My mom sighed. She made Heather sit on her lap.

Mom: Heather, mom is crying because she is heartbroken.

Heather: Why? We should call daddy. He will help her.

Me: I will never see him again my baby.

Heather looked at me and I took her from my mom.

Me: Your father left us.

Heather: Where did he go? He left because I didn't want to go to Cape Town? Okay mom I am sorry. Call him and tell him that he must come back. We will go together.

Claudine asked to excuse herself. She was also crying. I took my daughter's hand.

Me: No baby. It's not your fault. God wanted him back so he took him away from us. That means we will never see him again.

Heather: No. My father is dead? Like in the movie? Those people who die and never come back?

Me: Yes baby he won't come back.

She buried herself in my chest and she cried. I cried together with her. I still didn't understand what did we do to deserve this. There are people who have been together with their husbands for about 35 years but still their husbands are old and alive. Mine was still young. Our love was still young. Why God had to take him so early. Why?

\*\*\*

Everyday hearing people telling me how I had to be strong for my children was me reliving the pain. How was I supposed to be strong? Who was going to teach me how to be strong. They lost a father and I also lost a husband. We needed someone to be strong for us because I wasn't strong. I was going to fail. Rajiv didn't teach me how I was going to live without him some day. He was always there for me. He was my rock. At his funeral my head was buzzing. I felt like I was going collapse and never wake up. Heather was sad and she didn't leave my side. My boys were with their nanny and Nadine. At the cemetery I asked to stay behind after everyone was gone. Heather was asleep so they left with her. I sat on the ground next to the grave.

Me: I remember when you fought with your brother for me. By then I thought I can't handle this drama. But when I realised that I was in love with you. I knew I couldn't let you go. We've been through so much together. I remember when Sandile captured you. I thought I was going to lose you. You made me your wife. You stood by me when your family was against me. You always put my happiness first. Then you left me without warning. I was supposed to go with you to my parents house. None of this would've happened. How will I go on without Rajiv? You left a burden in my shoulders and I don't even know who will uplift it.

I laid my head on his grave and I cried. The driver who was going to drive me back home came closer. I stopped him. He let me be.

Me: I want you to rest in peace my love. If there is peace in the after life. But I can't let you go. I don't know how to do it Rajiv.

I couldn't do it. When is the right time to let go.

Driver: Mam your husband will always be with you in your heart. And you have to trust the Lord. He will look after you. UNkulunkulu uyindoda yabafelokazi aphinde abe ngumondli wezintandane. Right now you don't know what to do. But God will make a way. Uyayidala indlela ehlane. Don't doubt him. Say goodbye to your husband and let him find peace.

I couldn't be selfish with my husband. He has been loving and over protective of us.

Me: Rest in peace my love. My soulmate. We will meet again.

To the loving father, son and husband

REST PEACE RAJIV PILLAY.

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

I changed my short and I wore a dress. I sat on the bed. I could hear his mom shouting, telling

him how am I bad for him. How I am making him live reckless.

Thapelo: (shouting from the lounge) Alondwe come here. Please.

Me: I am kind of busy baby.

Thapelo: Alondwe. We're a team. What kind of a wife are you?

Mrs Moloi: You're already calling her your wife.

Mr Moloi: Forget it boy it won't happen.

I sighed. I stood up and I went to the lounge. I couldn't let them roast him while I was in the house. This was my ride or die. My soldier in the arm. I went there and I sat next to Thapelo.

Me: Hello mother in-law and father in-law.

Mrs Moloi: Don't call me that because this boy, that boy I carried in my womb for nine months is not going to marry you.

Me: I was just greeting you nothing personal.

Mrs Moloi: Believe me little girl this is personal.

Thapelo: Mom I love you but you can't choose who I marry. I love Alondwe and I will make her my wife. And we will have a family together.

Mr Moloi: Well boy you'll need our blessings to do that and you little girl your parents have to give you away. You need their blessings.

Thapelo: That is in the Bible?

Mrs Moloi: Don't disrespect us because of the this girl. And you think you'll marry her?

Thapelo: Mom and dad why are you here?

Mrs Moloi: This girl's parents came into our house.

Me: What? My parents?

Mr Moloi: Yes your parents.

I felt betrayed and hurt. How can mom and dad do this to me? Why?

Mrs Moloi: And it seems like they don't want this marriage as much as we don't want it.

Thapelo: Well I am sorry to disappoint you but I don't want any other girl besides her.

Me: And I don't want any other boy besides him.

Mr Moloi: You will just throw your life away like that? For what exactly? For a girl who has no morals?

Me: What is the definition of morals? If I may ask.

Mrs Moloi: Don't disrespect us girl.

Mr Moloi: Thapelo. This girl is not right for you.

Thapelo: Then who is right for me dad? Who is right for me.

Mrs Moloi: Cassandra was the best baby. She was the best. Why can't you see that?

Thapelo: Cassandra wasn't the best for me.

Mr Moloi: And how do you know that?

Thapelo: Because she puts herself first before our relationship. Isn't that what you taught me?

That a relationship should matter to both partners? Cassandra was selfish. Everything was

about her. I was always the one who was supposed to check up on her. Call her, remind her

how special she is. Tell her I love her. But she never returned that back. She was sucking my

love. When I asked her to put our love first and not go to London. She said her happiness

comes first. But this one here, she only wants what's best for me. Our relationship is

important to her as much as it's important to me. The feeling between us is mutual. She

motivates me and she always reminds me what is important. In varsity, first year was the

hardest. I wasn't used to being on my own because growing up you kept me under a shell.

Adjusting to life in Durban was hard. And whenever I felt like giving up she was the only

person I could call. She's doing Medicine and that course alone is hard but she'll sacrifice her

time just stay up late listening to me telling her how am I struggling with my studies and the

new city life. I mean I was the boy coming from the suburbs. Those busy streets everyday full

of all different types of people was too much for me. The words that made me get my

diploma in time were “the struggle doesn’t matter right now. Look at the price. When you feel like giving up just lift your head up and look at the price.” She wasn’t saying keep pushing because tomorrow I want you to buy a house for me. She was saying keep pushing so that you can be proud of yourself. And that was her not putting herself first. That was her wanting what’s best for me not being selfish. I am sorry but blessings or no blessings. I am going to marry her.

Mrs Moloi: This girl Thapelo has no morals. She has no respect. You should have seen her mother. She’s so rude. She doesn’t act like a lady. She acts like a retard. You can’t possibly marry a girl who comes from a family that is like that. She got pregnant at 16 years old.

Where is self-respect in that?

I was crying. Not because of what his mother had said but because I never realised the impact I made in Thapelo’s life. I didn’t realise that he took everything I said to heart. I didn’t realise I was making him a better person. I always thought he was the one who was making me a better person. I always thought he was the one who brought too much in our relationship while I gave less. I was grateful for his love. For our love.

Thapelo stood up and he went to the door. He opened the door.

Thapelo: Mom and dad I think you should leave.

Mr Moloi: You’re throwing us out?

Thapelo: No. I am asking you to leave. You’re disturbing my peace. Clearly it is not me who you care about. It’s only your reputation. So please leave.

Mr Moloi: Let’s go my love.

His father held her hand and they headed to the door.

Mrs Moloi: I am so disappointed in you Thapelo.

Thapelo: I am disappointed in you both, mom and dad. Goodbye. I will see you when I come visit. But please don’t come here. I love you.

They looked at him and they left. Thapelo closed the door.

He came back to the couch. He hugged me tightly. I felt safe and loved.

Thapelo: Don’t cry.

Me: I love you Thapelo Moloi.

Thapelo: I love you too Alondwe Ndunakazi.

Me: Please pass me my phone.

He took it and he gave it to me. I called my dad. He answered. I put him on speaker.

Dad: Hello princess.

Me: Hi dad how are you?

Dad: I am fine and you how are you?

Me: Not so good. Are you with your “WIFE”?

Dad: Yes why?

Okay he didn’t get that I emphasised the word wife.

Me: Please put her on speaker. I need to speak to you both.

Dad: Alright. (he did that)

Mom: What is it baby?

Me: Mom and dad are you happy together?

Them: Yes, why?

Me: Did someone tried to stop you from getting married to each other?

Dad: Okay. Are you a lawyer now?

Me: No dad. I am still a Doctor. And the Doctor must ask her patients questions.

Mom: Okay. This is about you marrying chocolate man? (Thapelo looked at me. I shrugged my shoulders and gave him a short smile)

Me: You came to Johannesburg and planned with his parents that you’re not going to let us marry each other?

Dad: We are trying to do what's best for you.

Me: I am not a kid anymore dad. I am not 16 years old anymore. I am 22 years old and I can make my own decisions.

Dad: Well not if you're still my daughter.

Mom: We get that you're in love with the boy but we're thinking about your happiness in that marriage you want to start. They say you don't just marry a guy baby but you marry the whole family. And it's true. I have been there and I have seen it.

Me: Why do you always have control everything mom and dad? Isn't my happiness something that should matter to you? It's always about what you and dad wants for me. It's never about what I want for myself. When will I be free to live my life the way I want to.

Dad: You're already living your life the way you want to. You're sleeping with that boy right?

Me: Weren't you sleeping with mom?

Dad: Hey young lady! You will mind your tongue when speaking to me. I am still your father. Just because that boy bought that expensive ring doesn't give you a right to disrespect me.

Me: I thought I was entitled to my opinion.

Mom: When you have something valuable to say.

Me: I love him mom and dad. I love him. And that's valuable.

Dad: But you're still not going to marry him.

Mom: And we mean it.

Me: Mxm.

I hung up the call and I screamed. They called again I didn't answer.

Thapelo: So your mother calls me chocolate man?

Me: Apparently yes and she calls you bursary.

Thapelo: Bursary?

Me: Yes, remember the bursary stunt? (We laughed)

Thapelo: What are we going to do?

Me: Let's not get married?

Thapelo: What? So that we can have a civil union? We'll keep on smashing each other without being married for the rest of our lives? I love you and I respect you enough not to do that.

I sighed and I called my grandmother from KZN. She answered the phone and we greeted each other.

Grandma: I believe you're calling because of the marriage issue?

Me: Yes grandma please help me.

Grandma: I am sorry baby but I have to agree with your father on this one.

Me: What?... Wait grandma. Don't say anything. Thank you for nothing.

I hung up the call and I cried. Thapelo held me tighter. We ended up crying together. Why are they doing this to us. Why?

Me: You know what, let's just go to court and get married chocolate brownie.

Thapelo: What?

Me: Yes. We'll get married in court. We'll sell my flat and we will live together here.

Thapelo: I want to pay the bride price for you. I want to have that dignity that I took you rightfully. Then I can say you're rightfully mine.

I sighed and tried to think.

Me: Okay! I am a Ndunakazi right?

Thapelo: Yes.

Me: So that means if a person from a Ndunakazi family can accept the bride price. It doesn't necessarily have to be my father right?

Thapelo: Yes that's true. Do you have someone in mind?

Me: Yes, my grandfather had a brother who kind of didn't achieve a thing in life. I think I can ask him to accept the bride price together with my uncle. My uncle is my father's half brother. I know that he can do anything for me.

Thapelo: Where does your uncle lives?

Me: He lives here in Johannesburg, Soweto. But my grandfather's brother is at Egugulethu. But we can bring him here. What do you think?

Thapelo: I will speak to my father's older brother too. Well for them it's a different story because they don't get along so he can do anything just get under my father's skin.

Me: Yes! And once you have paid the bride price. We can get married. Find a priest, invite our friends to be witnesses then boom!

Thapelo: We are Mr and Mrs Moloi.

Me: Yes. I only need my son's blessings.

Thapelo: I guess I will need my siblings blessings.

Me: Yes. I love you Mr Moloi.

Thapelo: I love you too Dr Ndunakazi.

I kissed him....

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay....

Life got real tough after the funeral. This is where you see that now I am really alone.

Everyone went back to their families. I was with my mom and my children in my house.

After the funeral Heather was just quiet like she was thinking long and hard. The pain didn't end. I thought it was going to get better after the funeral but it didn't end. Every night in my room I would wake up at night and call his name thinking that he was in the room with me but he wasn't. He was gone and I wasn't going to see him ever again. My bed was so cold without him and my heart was empty. Heather had went back to school. During the day I was in the lounge with my mom. The boys were sleeping.

Mom: The police haven't said anything?

Me: No. I am starting to think they are useless.

There was a knock on the door. My mom went to open the door. Two police officers came inside the house. My heart started beating very fast. I was hoping and praying that they will tell me what was going on. Who killed my husband.

Police1: How are you mam?

Us: We are fine and how are you?

Before he could answer, I thought about what I just said. Was I really fine? Sometimes we say we are fine to people while we're not fine. Basically we lie. So it's pointless to ask each other how are you? If we gonna lie and say we're fine. Maybe if you tell that stranger that you're not fine, he or she might help you. But hey we don't do that because that's how we were raised. You just say you're fine even if you're not. Don't let people in, they will see your pain and take advantage of you. We no longer think of people as good human beings but we think of them as animals that want to hurt each other. Maybe that's because we've been hurt so much to trust even a single soul that is not our family.

Me: Actually I am not fine, I just buried my husband a week ago. I don't know how to carry on. I have three kids and it's hard. I can't even go to work because I just break down so I am not fine.

Police2: I am sorry mam about your loss. We are working on finding out what really happened. Because your husband didn't die of natural causes.

Mom: So what do you think happened?

Police2: It's food poisoning. So mam. We will need you to come down to the station with us.

Me: Am I the suspect?

Police1: We are going to question everyone just to find out what really happened.

Me: Is it possible that you question me here because my daughter will be home soon and I have to be here when she comes back.

Police2: Alright. Can we talk somewhere in private.

Mom: I will leave you.

Mom stood up and left.

Police2: Mam where were you the day your husband died?

Me: I was at my parents house.

Police2: What were you doing there?

Me: My husband got a promotion so we were moving to Cape Town. I was going to tell my parents that.

Police2: Why did you leave your husband behind? Weren't you supposed to go with him?

Me: My husband had to write some reports. So he told me to go with the kids. He will stay behind and work.

Police2: You're the only one who cooks for your husband in this house?

Me: Yes Sir.

Police2: Your daughter was also with you. Or it's just the boys?

Me: My daughter was with her grandmother Claudine. She didn't want us to go with her to Cape Town and Heather didn't want to go so we left her to spend time with Claudine that week.

Police2: Alright. Thanks mam. We will come back if we have more questions.

Police1: And we promise you. We will find the person who did this to your husband.

Me: Thank you officers.

They nodded and left. I sat down and my heart was beating really fast. I went to my room, I locked myself up. I took one of his shirt, I went to bed with it and I cried myself to sleep....

\*\*\*\*\*

Claudine Pillay...

I didn't know what I was going to do. I didn't mean for my sister's son to die. I just wanted to keep him in Durban but my doing killed him. I couldn't stop crying after the funeral I was struggling to sleep. I couldn't possibly imagine what Precious might be going through. And Heather was also hurt. I didn't mean to hurt them. My husband walked in our bedroom while I was crying. He asked me what was wrong. I had no choice but to tell the whole truth. I mean the WHOLE TRUTH. He didn't say anything for a while.

Pillay: Rajiv's mother was your sister?

Me: Yes, I am really sorry my love. I don't know what am I going to do. The police will figure this out and I will go to jail.

Pillay: You killed my son.

Me: It was an accident. I only wanted him to stay. I couldn't loose Heather. I love her so much. Please help me. Please understand.

Pillay: It's alright. Don't cry. The police doesn't know that Heather and the maid went to see Rajiv. Obviously they will think Precious baked those cakes and she will be arrested. We will then take our grandchildren to live with us. Heather will be here everyday and you will help her heal. And she will also heal you.

Me: You won't tell the police?

Pillay: No. If I do that girl will hate us and she will take the kids away from us. They are the only thing that is left that can help me connect to my son.

Me: Thank you. I am sorry.

Pillay: It's okay now. Everything will be alright.

He hugged me and I felt my weight lifted off in my shoulders. This burden I had was off my back...

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

End of February Thapelo and I wanted to start consulting our extended families. They were our last hope. If we really wanted to do this marriage thing the right way, talking to them was going to help us. I wanted to speak to my son first before talking to my uncle. The first weekend of March I went home. I arrived Friday night. Everyone was sleeping they didn't hear me come in. Saturday morning I was woken up by my phone ringing. Thapelo was calling. I answered the call.

Me: Good Morning future husband.

Thapelo: Good Morning my future wife, are you still sleeping?

Me: Yes, I am still sleeping but I will wake up now. Are you at your parents house already?

Thapelo: No I am on the road. On my way to their house.

Me: Do you think your siblings will allow you to marry me if your parents don't want to.

Thapelo: I know they will and if I say they mustn't tell them. I know they won't tell them.

Me: Alright. I will speak to my boy too.

Thapelo: He's home?

Me: I told his father yesterday that he mustn't take him this weekend because I will be home.

Thapelo: Alright. Good luck then. I love you.

Me: Good luck to you too. I love you.

We then hung up the call. I stood up and I fixed my bed. I went to take a shower. I went back to my room and Alupheli was in my bed.

Me: Geez, what are you doing here?

Alupheli: Hey big sis. I thought I head the shower running so I wanted to see who was here then I saw your phone here.

Me: Oh. Remind me to put a password on my phone. I don't want you snooping around my phone.

Alupheli: Relax I won't. The ring is on your finger?

Me: Yes as you can see. Please leave I want to get dressed.

Alupheli: Okay. Do you think chocolate man can let me be his best man?

I looked at him and I laughed. I laughed really hard. He didn't laugh he just looked at me.

Me: Are you for real?

Alupheli: Yes. I am serious.

Me: Well I don't know. You'll have to ask him yourself. He will tell you what he will want.

Alupheli: You will let me speak to him?

Me: Why do you like him so much?

Alupheli: I don't know. I just have this good feeling that me and him will get along.

Me: Alright. Please leave I want to get dressed. I want to see my son.

Alupheli: Well so that you won't be surprised. Your son has lost his front teeth.

Me: What?

He laughed and said: Yes. Relax it's natural.

Me: Argh. Just leave please.

He then left. I moisturised my body. I wore a white short and a navy tanky top. I wore my sleepers then I went downstairs. Sphephile was the first one to see me. He got off the dinner table and he ran up to me. I laughed and picked him up.

Me: Ah! You're heavy!

Sphephile: Spepiye is eating. He does not starve.

He looked kind of funny without his front teeth.

Me: That's good my love. How are you doing baby?

Sphephile: Spepiye lost his teeth. He doesn't look good anymore.

Me: Who told you that?

Sphephile: They are laughing at him at school. He knows he doesn't look good.

Me: That is a lie, even if you can loose all your teeth. You'll always look good my love.

Sphephile: Mncwa.

I pouted and he kissed me. He clapped his hands. I laughed and I went to the table with him. He liked acting like a baby sometimes.

Me: Good Morning everyone.

Them: Good morning.

Mom: I thought Alupheli was lying when he said someone is in your room.

Me: He wasn't lying.

Dad: You're still talking to us. That's good.

Me: Well I don't have a choice.

Mom: That means you do have choice not to answer our calls.

Me: Well I am busy. I don't have time for my phone.

Dad: I can see you're wearing the ring.

Me: I can see you're wearing yours too.

Mom and dad looked at each other and they didn't say anything.

Mesuli: Ain't you supposed to be at school studying?

Me: Ain't you supposed to be eating your breakfast?

Mesuli: I was just asking.

Me: I was just asking too. How are you doing?

Mesuli: I am fine and you?

Me: I am fine. How are your eyes?

Mesuli: I am going for another test on Monday. The Doctor changed my specs.

Me: I hope they are no longer big.

Mesuli: Well they are much bigger now.

Alupheli laughed and said: He's lying. They are good Alondwe. They are better than the last ones.

Me: Alright thanks Alupheli for telling the truth. The scientists here likes to lie.

Mesuli: Sorry Doctor I thought we were just joking.

Me: Uyaphapha wena le nkawu.

Mesuli: Nawe vondwe.

We laughed and Sphephile laughed after us.

Sphephile: You're funny Mesuli. You're funny.

Mesuli: Your mom started it.

Sphephile: I didn't ask.

I laughed. Mesuli was trying to protect himself.

Dad: Why are you home?

Me: I need a reason to be home?

Mom: Yes, because you should be studying.

Me: I wanted to see my son. And I am planning on having a vacation with him this year for his birthday. We will go during June holidays.

Sphephile: Spepiye's birthday is next week not June.

Me: I know baby. Mom will be at school so we will celebrate during June holidays.

Dad: Where are you planning to go?

Me: I don't know, Paris or Maim. I haven't decided yet. But I will decide.

Dad: Who will pay for that vacation?

Me: Don't worry yourself about that.

Alupheli: Is chocolate man rich?

Me: Alupheli! Please?

Alupheli: What? I was just asking. I want to go with you too. We need to talk about the wedding too.

Dad: What wedding? There'll be no wedding.

Alupheli: Why not dad?

Dad: It's none of your concern.

Mesuli: The Doctor is getting married?

Dad: No scientist. She's not getting married but she wants to.

Mesuli: Oh. How sad.

Mom: So bursary will pay for vacation?

Me: Mom, his name is Thapelo. He's not Bursary.

Dad: But he is chocolate man.

Me: Mxm.

I stood up with my son and I took his food. I went outside with him. We sat there just the two of us and I fed him.

Sphephile: Mama waSpepiye?

Me: Yes baby.

Sphephile: Who is chocolate man?

Me: I will tell you baby but not now alright?

Sphephile: Alright.

When I was done feeding him I went to wash the dishes and I made breakfast for myself. I ate my breakfast while listening to my son telling me about school. After breakfast Mesuli wanted us to go to the beach so we took dad's car and we left. We didn't go with them it was just us.

We came back home late. Our parents were watching TV. They were all lovey dovey on the couch. They were watching a romantic movie. We have already had dinner at the beach.

Alupheli tried to sit on the couch but mom stopped him.

Mom: Don't even try it. Go upstairs and take a shower. All of you.

Them: Yes mom.

I went to bath my son while I was speaking to Uyathandwa on the phone. He was on speaker.

Uyathandwa: Mom told me that your boyfriend proposed. You didn't even tell me.

Me: I knew she was going to tell you and besides, things have been really hectic at school. I also had to deal with the fact that they don't want me to get married.

Uyathandwa: Don't you think that maybe they have a point. You know my dad's wife was miserable because my grandfather didn't want her. When we moved to Cape Town. It got worse because grandpa was always in my dad's house. They spent a lot of time together. He was treating her like shit. She only had peace when grandpa died. And I don't want you to be unhappy. Your husband can make you happy but his parents will also contribute in that happiness.

Me: I won't stop marrying the man I love because his parents don't like me. That's not me.

Uyathandwa: Okay. So what are you going to do?

Me: I don't know yet.

Uyathandwa: Look I have to go. My girlfriend Okuhle is here now.

Me: Okay. Where's the dramatic one?

Uyathandwa: Ah. Cebo. She's working now. Do you think I was going to date Okuhle if Cebo was still here.

Me: Ihee usudla imali Ka mam nje?

Uyathandwa: Ay sugeza wena yesses! Okuhle is on the door man!

Me: Okay chow her good so that she won't leave your ass. You cheating brother.

Uyathandwa: How so?

Me: You know what they say about a good dick. Even if the boyfriend is bad but if the dick is good. It's hard to leave.

Uyathandwa: (laughing) Futsek man!

Me: Serious.

Uyathandwa: Don't say it like that. And don't think what I am doing is good. Don't cheat. That is a husband to you. Me? I don't think I will settle down.

Me: Argh sies! Hamba man!

He laughed and hung up. The girl was already banging the door. I laughed, my brother was a bad ass in the inside. But he looked innocent. I finished up bathing my son and I went to shower too. I left him playing a game on my phone. When I came back it was time for me to speak to him because in the morning when I leave he would still be sleeping. I was going to leave early. I was using a bus not an aeroplane.

Me: Baby mommy wants to tell you about chocolate man now. (He nodded) You see chocolate man is a very good friend of mommy. And he makes mommy happy. He wants to marry your mother.

Sphephile: He wants to marry Spepiye's mom and it will be like Gogo and Mkhulu?

Me: Yes baby.

Sphephile: Spepiye won't kiss his mom when chocolate man marries her?

Me: What? Sphephile will always come first to his mother. He will kiss his mom everytime when he wants to.

Sphephile: Really?

Me: Yes my love.

Sphephile: Chocolate man will love Spepiye?

Me: Yes, he will. But mom wants your permission to marry chocolate man okay?

Sphephile: Does chocolate man love Spepiye's mom?

Me: Yes, my love. He loves her.

Sphephile: Okay. Spepiye's mom can marry him. He will come and see me?

Me: Yes my love I will ask him.

Sphephile: Yes! Yes! I will eat all the chocolate in him so that he won't be chocolate man anymore. Yes!

He jumped up and down in excitement. I just got defeated. What picture did he have in mind of chocolate man?

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay....

My mom had left but she was going to come back again. She was slowly teaching me how to be alone with the kids. It was my first morning without her. The previous night was really hard, when the boys woke up at night and cried I had no one to help me. Heather was sound asleep and I couldn't wake her up. I felt so helpless and useless. But I tried my best until they finally went back to sleep. I was preparing Heather for school. I have made her breakfast and it was time to wake her up. I went to her room. I woke her up.

Me: Heather baby wake up. You have to go to school.

Heather: No. I don't want to go to school.

Me: Why not?

Heather: It's my fault that we will never see daddy.

Me: Why do you say that?

Heather: I think daddy was very upset and his heart stopped working because of me. It's my fault mommy.

She started crying. I held her close to me.

Me: Hey. It's not your fault. God decided to take him. It's not your fault. Don't even think about it. Daddy loved you and he will always love you. He's your Angel and he's looking over you. Don't worry my love okay?

She nodded and hugged me back. She kissed my cheek.

Me: Now let's get you ready for school.

Heather: Mom why are you wearing black clothes now?

Me: It's my culture baby. I am mourning your father's death.

Heather: You will wear them until when?

Me: Well for me, I will stop wearing them after three months because your father wasn't Zulu. I am just doing it to respect my culture.

Heather: I want to wear them too. I want to respect your culture.

Me: Kids don't wear them baby. They take a small black cloth but I don't want you to do it. I am doing it for the three of you. Okay?

Heather: Yes mom.

Me: Okay. Let's go and bath.

I went to bath her and I dressed her up for school. I had to feed her breakfast because she didn't want to eat. After breakfast she was all moody.

Me: Take your bag. Aunt Nadine will be here soon.

She took her bag and she went to sit on the lounge. I cleaned up my kitchen.

Nadine hooted. I went to Heather. I held her hand and we went to the gate.

Nadine: Good Morning family.

Me: Good Morning.

Nadine: We are angry again?

Me: Yeah you know. We are always angry.

Nadine shook her head and she opened the door for her. I kissed her cheek.

Me: Mommy loves you.

Heather: I love you too.

Me: Bye sis.

Nadine: How are you? I mean how are you holding up?

Me: I am hanging in there. Some days are good and some days are bad.

Nadine: Everything will be alright. The police are still investigating. They spoke to Rajiv's lawyer yesterday. His will won't be read just yet.

Me: Let me go back to the house.

She nodded and she stepped inside the car. They drove off. I sighed and I went back to the house. I started cleaning. I didn't even want to think about his will and the money. It wasn't going to bring him back. My day began when my kids woke up. They kept me distracted and busy.

My mom called during the day.

Mom: How are you holding up?

Me: I am trying, last night was really bad. I almost lost it in front of my kids. They just couldn't stop crying. I don't know if I can do this.

Mom: You're stronger than you think. You'll do it. I will come back tomorrow morning.

Me: Thanks mom. I don't know what I was going to do without you. Thanks for everything.

Mom: That's what moms are for. Bye baby.

Me: bye.

The boys were asleep so I went to put them in bed. There were people in my door. So I went to open up for them. It was two men.

Me: Hello gentlemen, how can I help?

Man: We're from your husband's workplace. We are here to deliver his personal belongings. I swallowed hard and took the box.

Me: Thanks.

Man: Have a good day mam. And Once again we're sorry for your loss.

I nodded and they left. I closed the door and I went to sit down on the carpet. I opened the box. It had his things like dishes, our pictures. Looking at them made me cry all over again. I couldn't do it anymore. I opened the cupboard and I took the brandy. I drank it. Maybe it was

going to help me. My husband used to keep a bottle or two for his home meetings with people he works with. Sometimes for him and his dad. I cried and drank it. There was a knock on the door. I just sat there and cried. I didn't open the door. After a few minutes the door was opened. Two police officers walked in. I looked at them.

Police: Mam are you alone?

I didn't answer him. I just cried. Why did Rajiv leave me. Why did he leave me alone? The police checked the rooms. They came back to me.

Police2: You're day drinking while your children are sleeping?

Me: What do you want me to do. What should I do to make all this pain I am feeling?

Police: Well you should have thought about that before you poisoned your husband.

I just went sober right there. Not that I was really drunk but the brandy was kicking in slowly.

Police2: Yes, Mrs Pillay. You're under arrest for the murder of your husband Rajiv Pillay.

You have a right to remain silent....

I didn't hear the rest because my mind just went numb like my brain cells weren't working.

The police man cuffed me. They walked with me to the door.

I screamed: My kids!

Just then Nadine's car pulled through with Heather. Nadine came out of the car and ran up to me.

Nadine: What's going on?

Heather: Mommy.

Police2: Your sister in-law has been arrested.

Nadine: This madness.

Police: Mam please. We're doing our job.

They put me at the back of the van. I couldn't stop crying as my daughter was rolling herself on the ground crying. Kanti where is my God?

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

The following morning I was leaving, my son was still sleeping. I was all dressed up and ready. I took my bag and I went downstairs. Mom and dad were on the lounge. It was kind of strange I thought they were sleeping.

Me: Good Morning. Bye.

Mom: Alondwe we're waiting for you here. Please sit down. We want to talk to you.

Me: Oh. I have an hour. And my driver will be here soon. So?

Dad: We won't be long.

I nodded and sat down.

Mom: We just want to say that we're sorry.

Me: For?

Dad: For going to your boyfriend's parents without your permission or knowledge. But Nana you won't understand for now. We are doing this to protect you.

Mom: Yes, Thapelo's parents will make your marriage life very hard. We know you love him but please just don't marry him.

Me: And how do you know that?

Dad: Those people don't want you to marry their son

Me: It's not them alone dad. You also don't want me to marry their son so stop hiding behind their hatred for me to cover your own true intentions.

Mom: Alondwe the first thing that woman thought about when we asked them what can we do to stop you guys from marrying each other. She thought about a traditional healer. Do you think if you marry her son she won't use such things on you?

Me: Don't you pray for me mom? Or you're doubting your God now?

Mom: It's not like that.

Me: (I cried) I love him mom and dad. He means so much to me. I won't be the first to marry into a family where in-laws don't like the wife. Please just give me your blessings. I beg you. Thapelo makes me happy

Dad: Sorry baby but we can't.

Me: (The cab hooted, I wiped my tears) that's my cab. I have to leave.

Mom: Alondwe please think about this.

Dad: We love you and we don't want to loose you. And right now we can see that we're loosing you. Your attitude towards us has changed. We don't want that.

Me: Nothing will change my love for you two. You're my parents but I can't lie and say I am happy about how you're controlling my life. Bye. I will see you soon.

I headed to the door and I stepped inside the car. I apologized for keeping the driver waiting. He forgave me and he drove off. I didn't care about whatever reason that my parents had. I just wanted to marry Thapelo and nobody was going to change my mind.

1:30 pm I was in my flat in Johannesburg. I texted my parents letting them know that I arrived safe then I headed straight to dreamland. Thapelo was at church with his family. I had a key to his apartment and he had a key to my flat. I wasn't planning on seeing him that day. I wanted to sleep, do my school work and search suitable places for vacation. I wanted to leave during June holidays because the weather overseas wasn't cold that time. I woke up the time was 17: 03. I grilled some pieces of chicken then I went to shower. I moisturised my body once I was done. I wore my pyjamas. I took my laptop, my books and phone. I went to the lounge. I put my things there. I went to take my chicken and bread. And a glass of milk. I did some notes while I was eating. I was used to that, eating and studying or making notes at the same time. I took a break then I searched for places that I was going to vacate to. I heard the key turn on the door. I closed my eyes and sighed. I wasn't planning on seeing Thapelo. I just wanted to see him on Monday or Tuesday. He walked in with a box of large pizza. I smiled, okay maybe he did the right thing by coming. My heart jumps for joy when I see food. He sat next to me and he kissed my cheek.

Me: You know I wasn't planning on seeing you today and tonight.

Thapelo: I know. That message you sent did tell me indirectly that I don't want to see you.

Me: But you came anyway.

Thapelo: Jesus said I must bring the pizza and this.

It was two cards. I took them and looked at them.

Me: This is?

Thapelo: Gym membership cards.

Me: No thank you but yes to the pizza. Jesus did a great job.

I kissed his cheek and took the box.

Thapelo: Why are you saying no to the gym?

Me: I don't have time for working out.

Thapelo: Yes you do. And you spend that time sleeping all the time when you get free time.

Me: That's because I don't get enough sleep.

Thapelo: What kind of a Doctor are you? You need to start working out. You must have a healthy body.

Me: Baby. Go to the gym and workout for me. Because I do want a sexy husband. But I am not working out.

Thapelo: Oh so I should workout and be sexy. While you eat, study and sleep? When are you going to be sexy for me?

Me: Hehehe me baby?

I gave him the box and I stood on top of the couch. I took off my pyjamas and I was left naked with my panties only. I had tiny breasts. I turned around letting him look at God's beautiful work.

Me: Isn't this sexy enough for you?

Thapelo: No. It's not.

I got off the couch and sat next to him. I took the box. And I continued eating while pouting.

Me: You're not serious right?

Thapelo: I am serious. Gym will help you have a fresh mind and an active body.

Me: I am not sexy so I won't go to the gym.

Thapelo: I didn't say you're not sexy.

Me: No. You said so. I will hold it against you.

Thapelo: Come on little pudding I was just kidding. I said not enough.

Me: Just shut up you're disturbing my peace.

He didn't say anything.

Thapelo: Well, there is some reason I want you to work out with me.

Me: What?

Thapelo: You're pretty heavy.

He took a slice of pizza and ate while stealing stares at my body. I pinched his ear.

Thapelo: Ouch! That hurts.

Me: I don't care. It hurts hearing you say I am heavy.

Thapelo: Well the truth does hurt.

Me: THAPELO!

Thapelo: Okay! I am kidding... Uhm You can wear your pyjamas my lady.

Me: No I don't want to.

Thapelo: But baby I am not really comfortable with you sitting naked like this next to me.

Me: Hee my body is not sexy. You have nothing to worry about.

He didn't respond, he stood up and went to the kitchen. I giggled. I got him nicely. All I could hear was the sound of the dishes. I don't know what he was doing.

Me: Are you breaking my dishes? (I shouted from the lounge)

Thapelo: No. I am looking for a glass.

I stood up and I went to the kitchen. I laughed at him. He looked so funny.

Thapelo: This is not funny you know.

Me: Well I know it is funny. Just like my unsexy body is not funny.

Thapelo: I didn't –

Me: Yeah. Save it. Shift.

He shifted. I bend over and I looked for the glass.

Thapelo: You put your glasses there now?

Me: Your eyes must be off my ass please. I can feel them.

Thapelo: I am not checking out your ass.

I got the glass and I gave it to him. He looked at me.

Me: You want water?

Thapelo: I will help myself. You can go.

I smiled and nodded. I left. I giggled, it felt so good punishing him for saying my body is not sexy enough and I am heavy. I continued looking for places to vacate to. He came to the couch. He was all good now.

Thapelo: Will you dress up or you need my help.

Me: I am busy. And you must get used to this husband because I don't like wearing my clothes in the house.

I really liked wearing my panties and bra only when I was alone. Or my pyjamas. I was comfortable like that.

Thapelo: What are you doing here?

He looked at the laptop. I didn't answer him.

Thapelo: What is this? Are you planning a vacation?

Me: Yes I am planning a vacation for my Pepiye.

Thapelo: Were you going to tell me?

Me: No I wasn't... Of course I was going to tell you. How was I going to leave without your permission?

Thapelo: You didn't even ask me if I like to go with you guys or not.

Me: Okay husband. Do you like to go with us?

Thapelo: You don't get this do you?

Me: Get what?

Thapelo: You don't get what you did wrong. You should have told me first. Before you even search for places you would love to go to. I was supposed to be the first person to know about this. But you didn't tell me you just started planning without telling me.

Me: Okay. I am sorry. I was wrong. I should have told you. I am sorry.

He took his keys and headed to the door. I stood up and followed him.

Me: So you're leaving now because of this misunderstanding?

Thapelo: You didn't want to see me today. I was just forcing it by coming here. So I am leaving.

Me: Don't go. Not like this please. Let's talk.

Thapelo: I wasn't going to sleep here. I am working tomorrow. Good night.

He kissed my forehead and he left. I closed the door behind him and I went back to the pizza and my laptop. Everytime I ask myself how Thapelo and I survived and how we've been together for Six years. I don't know how to answer myself. Arguing is our thing if a week ends without an argument that is a very big thing. I suppose our fights were equal to our love. Because if our fights were above our love we weren't going to make it. I stopped searching for vacation places. I finished up my notes then I went to bed. I took my phone and I called my mom. She answered.

Mom: Alondwe?

Me: Mom can I speak to Spepiye.

Mom called him. I could hear him running.

Sphephile: Mama waSpepiye.

Me: Hey baby how are you?

Sphephile: Spepiye is fine. How is his mom?

Me: His mom is fine too but she misses Spepiye so much.

Sphephile: Spepiye misses his mom too. He woke up and his mom was gone.

Me: I know my love and I am sorry. Mommy loves you Okay?

Sphephile: Spepiye loves his mom too.

Me: Thank you. Good night.

Sphephile: Good night.

I hung up the call and I smiled. His voice was so sweet and it made me feel whole. I called Moloji. He answered when I was about to hang up.

Me: Were you thinking not to answer my call?

Thapelo: No I was brushing my teeth in the bathroom.

Me: You didn't kiss me.

Thapelo: I am sorry.

Me: Uhm... You left before we could talk about what did your siblings say?

Thapelo: They were happy for me and they want to meet you.

Me: Oh Okay. How old are they now?

Thapelo: They are 12 years old. They are doing grade 7 now.

Me: Okay. That's nice.

Thapelo: What did Sphephile say?

Me: He said chocolate man can marry me if he loves me. And he asked if chocolate man will

love him?

He laughed briefly and said: And you told him that I love him and I will love him right?

Me: Yes I did. And he said he wants to see chocolate man so that he can eat all the chocolate in him.

Thapelo laughed really hard and I laughed too. I still had a picture in my mind of how beautiful and happy my son looked when he said that.

Thapelo: You should have told him that. He mustn't eat all the chocolate because they'll be nothing left for you to eat.

Me: (laughing) I am leaving that to the hands of Jesus Christ.

Thapelo: Amen first lady.

Me: So when are you sending the letter to my uncle?

Thapelo: I will send it before the beginning of April. Mpendulo and I will write it.

Me: Please don't let Mpendulo write his madness in that letter.

Thapelo: Relax my lady. I won't.

Me: Thapelo?

Thapelo: Yes?

Me: Please come and fetch me. I want to sleep in your arms. I miss you.

Thapelo: Alright baby I am coming.

We hung up the call and I waited for him. He showed up and we drove to his place. I left with my books because in the morning I was going to campus. That night I slept in his arms.

\*\*\*

Convincing my uncle was pretty hard because he had to hide this from his brother. But he saw how important this was to me so he agreed. He spoke to my grandfather's brother, well that also makes him my grandfather and he also agreed. But he also wanted some cash for himself. I didn't have a problem with that because he was just happy that I was getting married. He couldn't stop saying that my father is a fool for not wanting this marriage. "We're going to do what will make you happy muzukulu" he would say on his drunk voice. The weekend of the end of March they were in my uncle's house. It was my uncle, grandpa Ndunakazi, his son, his wife and my aunt Simthande and Melokuhle. Thapelo's people were coming. Like Thapelo said it was easy for him to convince his father's brother because he didn't get along with his father. But we asked him not to gloat just yet until we get married and he agreed. He was coming with his other brother, his wife and Mpendulo. My aunts and I were cooking. Nkululeko was also there. It wasn't going to be my day without her. I was hoping and praying that everything goes well....

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

After speaking with the Molois I felt like I have protected my daughter enough. I didn't want her to suffer I wanted her to have a good life and marry into a family that was going to appreciate her. She still had hope that I was going to change my mind but I wasn't. My decision was just final and I wasn't going to change it. She didn't even want to stop wearing her engagement ring. It was Monday of the end of March. I was at work, I got a call from Mesuli's school. I answered.

Me: Ndunakazi speaking hello.

Teacher: Good day Mr Ndunakazi. It's Mesuli's teacher. We need you to come and fetch Mesuli.

Me: What is wrong?

Teacher: He is sick. He says his eyes are painful. Please come immediately.

I hung up the call immediately. I took my car keys, I informed my personal assistant and I

left. I didn't call Thandeka. I wanted to see him first. We also didn't know what was really wrong with Mesuli's eyes. I arrived at his school and they let me in. I went straight where their rest rooms are. He was crying. I went to him.

Me: Boy what is happening?

Mesuli: They are itchy and it's like they are burning inside.

Me: They have never done that before right?

Mesuli: Yes they have never. They normally get tired but they don't hurt like this.

Teacher: He must see the Doctor, maybe the problem is with his new specs. Mine did that too.

Me: Okay. Let me take you to your Doctor. Thanks mam for contacting me.

Teacher: It's alright. Be better soon Mesuli.

Mesuli: Thank you.

Me: Can you see?

He nodded, I held his hand and we walked to my car.

Mesuli: Dad I am not a kid.

Me: I didn't say you're a kid.

He didn't want me to hold him but I wasn't going to listen to him. They all like saying they are not kids. They don't understand that no matter how old they become they will always be kids in my eyes. We made it to his Doctor and they gave us attention. We waited for his Doctor. My phone rang. Uyathandwa was calling. I answered.

Me: Boy?

Uyathandwa: Taima. How are you?

Me: I am good boy just that Mesuli is having a problem with his eyes. How are you?

Uyathandwa: I am fine. What is his Doctor saying?

Me: We're still waiting for him. How are things going there?

Uyathandwa: Final year is hectic. I need your help on something about finance. Can I email it you I will point out what I need you to help me with.

Me: Okay no problem. I will check it out when I go back to the office.

Uyathandwa: Thank you. Can I talk to my brother.

Me: Alright.

I gave Mesuli the phone. The doctor came to us. I stood up and I spoke to him. I told him what was wrong with him.

Doctor: Okay please follow me.

Me: Let's go.

He stood up and we followed the Doctor. He was still talking to the phone. The Doctor asked him to go in with him I was supposed to wait. Mesuli gave me back my phone. He was done. I waited. His mom called. I answered.

Me: Wife Ndunakazi.

Thandeka: You're not in your office. Where are you?

Me: I got a call from Mesuli's school.

Thandeka: What's wrong?

Me: His eyes. I am with him at the Doctor.

Thandeka: And I wasn't told because?

Me: I wanted to know if it's serious or not.

Thandeka: That's just wrong. You don't get to decide what to tell me and what not to tell me. She hung up the call. Oh I was just trying to protect her because she was going to panic. I get the anger reaction for that. I sighed, love is something else. My wife was my life and I couldn't really imagine my life without her. Not that because I was married to Thandeka I didn't see how beautiful other women were. Women are beautiful out there but it's all about realising that none of them can compare to what you have. Being married doesn't mean

you'll be blind and you won't see how beautiful other women are. You will see the beauty but it's all about respecting your vows. You will lust some of them, when you are angry with your wife you'll feel like you can bang just one chick, just to release your anger. But then you must be able to think about the after. You'll get girl, you'll bang her after that what happens? Obviously you might lose your family. Before you even think to approach another woman think about your wife/girlfriend, when she can find out, seeing her break, will it make you happy? If not then don't even go for it. Men should respect their women and respecting them means they should protect their hearts. It might be debatable but women should also give men something to respect. **Boys go with the flow but men wants women with a vision, standards, self respect and more.** I knew that in my wife I got those things and more. And attitude as a bonus. But I love her like that. I couldn't ask for a better wife. Thandeka was in front of me within thirty minutes after our call.

Thandeka: Where is he Samkelo?

Me: He's with the doctor.

Thandeka: I don't understand how can our son get sick then you don't tell me.

Me: I was going to tell you MaDhlomo. But I wanted to make sure what was going on with him.

Thandeka: You like taking me like a fragile little girl.

If she wants to argue further better let her argue alone. That saves me from lot of trouble. Otherwise argue further next thing she'll be sleeping giving you her back and ass without even kissing you goodnight.

Thandeka: I hate it when you shut up when I am talking to you. I don't know what does that mean.

Me: It means I don't want to argue.

Thandeka: I will tell Sphephelo to fetch his son because we're here.

Me: Yeah do that.

She took her phone and called the boy. The Doctor came to us. We both stood up.

Us: What is wrong?

Doctor: We will have to admit him to the hospital.

Us: Why?

Doctor: There was a mistake from us.

Me: What do you mean mistake?

Doctor: The nurse gave him the wrong specs. The specs are for a different patient with a different problem.

Thandeka: What? You're joking right? Was that nurse high or she was on social networks? How on earth can she give my son wrong specs huh?

Me: My love calm down.

Thandeka: Don't tell me to calm down! My baby is in there getting some –

Doc: Mam your son will be fine. He just needs a day or two in the hospital then everything will be alright. We will give him the right specs.

Thandeka: Can I see that nurse please.

Me: Thandeka that won't help. Can we see him Doctor?

Doc: We sedated him so he's sleeping right now. You can come back in the afternoon.

Thandeka: You better make sure that the owner of those specs is notified. I don't understand how can you guys make such a mistake. You're playing with people's lives man!

Doctor: We're sorry mam.

Thandeka: Tsk! (She left)

Doctor: I am really sorry Sir.

Me: It's okay anyone can make a mistake. But please tell your staff to be more careful.

Doctor: I promise I will. I will call and let you know which hospital we admitted him to. But

I think it will be city hospital.

I nodded and I headed to my car. Thandeka was gone. I sighed, stepped inside my car and I drove back to work. I remembered Uyathandwa's email and I read. I assisted him with what he needed then I sent the email back.

In the afternoon we drove to the hospital. It was me, my wife, Alupheli and Sphephile. We got to the hospital and we headed to his ward. He wasn't sleeping, he had a drip on.

Thandeka: Hey baby can you see me?

Mesuli: Yes mom I can see you. Can I have some real food?

Alupheli: Are you feeling pain?

Mesuli: It's better now.

Thandeka: You're still feeling pain?

Mesuli: The pain is gone but my eyes are still feeling a little bit hot.

Thandeka: These people are making me angry.

Alupheli: We should arrest them. Scientist is sick now. They are not professional.

Mesuli: It's not a serious thing.

Alupheli: You're in the hospital, of course it's serious thing. It's serious.

Thandeka: Alupheli is right.

Mesuli: Dad tell them that I am fine.

Me: Relax boy. You better understand that they don't have these chill genes that we have.

Thandeka: It his life we can't chill.

Sphephile: I remember Malume uMesuli asking for real food but nobody gave him.

We looked at him and we laughed.

Mesuli: Thank you mshana.

Thandeka gave Mesuli his food and she put the rest of his staff on the drawer. We stayed with him until it was time for us to go.

Me: You'll be fine. I love you.

Mesuli: Thanks dad. I love you too.

His mom kissed his forehead.

Thandeka: Goodnight baby.

Mesuli: Goodnight guys.

We left him and we headed back home.

I was in Bed with my wife. We were just talking. I was looking at cars on the internet.

Me: So my love which car are we buying for Uyathandwa's graduation present?

For us black people, when we do get our qualifications and a proper job. We face a huge work load of going back to our parents, build beautiful houses for them and give them a little bit of lavish lifestyle. That delays us from developing ourselves right after graduation. After extending my mom's house and my father's house. I told myself that it will begin with me, in my generation. I will have a beautiful house enough that my children after they have graduated they will work on upgrading themselves. That will multiply the riches in our family. The reason why white people kids reach success at an early age is because their parents are already rich. They don't have to lift them out of poverty before they upgrade their lifestyle. I really wish that every black men and women with jobs and qualifications can not waste their money. They'll work on uplifting their parents, then uplift themselves so that our children and grandchildren won't suffer from the same thing. They'll just look after us when we retire.

Thandeka: I don't know, I don't even know what type of cars does he like.

Me: Well he likes Mercedes, VW and Audi but we must look at our budget. We must also contact his father.

Thandeka: Why should we contact his father?

Me: Thandeka, it's his son and I know that he would also want to have a hand in buying a car

for his son.

Thandeka: Oh. There's a dark GTI that is on the wall of his room. We can buy that one for him.

Me: Okay. You will speak to Themba then.

Thandeka: I should be the one who will speak to him now? Why?

Me: I won't speak to him. He's not my baby daddy.

Thandeka: Ah Samkelo.

Me: Just do it.... At least we will have two years to buy another graduation present. That would be for the Doctor.

Thandeka: I don't even know what she likes that one.

Me: My baby loves AMG g63. The maroon one, well she's not really sure of the colour because she also likes black and the white one. I can only imagine her stepping out of that car. My baby girl.

Thandeka: One can swear that you're talking about a baby boy. She loves almost everything that men loves.

Me: Don't be like that. I know her. Even her taste in motorbikes. She loves superbikes. She has a taste of a boss. Uyathandwa likes sport cars the most. But hey we won't buy AMG g63 for Alondwe. 1.5 million Rands car, she'll buy it for herself.

Thandeka: Or chocolate man can buy it for her.

Me: They will probably break up because we denied them our blessings to get married to each other. They are probably fighting about it and they'll break up. She'll have to find someone else.

Thandeka: That can be better... Enough about kids and their cars. Can wife Ndunakazi get some attention?

I smiled and gave her attention...

Alondwe Ndunakazi...

My uncle had two houses. He was living there with his two kids. A baby girl and a boy. They had different mothers. He wasn't married, he was working. He had a girlfriend but I don't know if they were serious or what. We were cooking on the backroom because they didn't want us to hear what was going on. There were already at the gate. Mpendulo was the one who was praising our clan names. My phone rang. Thapelo was calling. I answered. I put him on speaker because I was busy.

Me: You're disturbing me. I am trying to cook food for your family.

Thapelo: I am sorry, I am just worried.

Me: Don't worry everything will be alright.

Thapelo: So you're not worried.

Me: Well I am kind of worried but one of us has to try and have faith if the other is worried.

Thapelo: Thank you.

Nkulu: Just sleep and have a glass of whiskey.

Me: Aybo Nonkululeko.

Nkulu: What? I am trying to help.

Me: My chocolate man don't listen to her.

Thapelo: Maybe she's right.

Me: Don't you dare do it okay?

Simthande: I feel for you Thapelo, you have a bully for a wife.

Thapelo: That is the story of my life. I have been bullied for six years.

They all laughed but I didn't.

Me: Are you serious? These people won't be there when it's me and you.

Nkulu: That alone is bullying.

Melo: Please leave my niece alone. How are you feeling husband?

Thapelo: Nervous. Can you please send my wife to make me feel better.

Melo: No. Just sit there and wait.

Thapelo: Are they there yet?

Me: Yes. Mpendulo is busy shouting at the gate. My grandfather is quite drunk. Just a little. I think he will open the gate late.

Thapelo: Alondwe are you serious. He's drunk.

Simthande: Well that man is always drunk.

We laughed.

Thapelo: This is not funny.

Nkulu: Ah man. It's cute. Don't worry by the end of this day. Alondwe will be yours.

Me: Did you hear that? I will be yours.

Thapelo: I can't wait.

Simthande: Yeah we can feel that.

Grandpa walked inside the room.

Mkhulu: Uhleko oluvuka la. Ubani le ndoda enikhuluma nayo la? (Who is that man you're talking to)

Me: You heard wrong Mkhulu.

Mkhulu: I will begin negotiations now. I don't want any noise coming from this room.

Us: Yes.

He then left. We giggled holding in our laughter.

Me: Baby. Bye. You heard that right?

Thapelo: But my lady. I –

Me: No. Bye.

I hung up the call. I wasn't going to work if I was going to give him my time.

Nkulu: He's just cute shame.

Simthande: Yes. Him being worried.

Melo: And the wife being a bully.

Me: Okay guys. Stop it.

They laughed and I reminded them Mkhulu and they stopped immediately. Grandpa's wife told me to get ready. Nkululeko was going to go with me inside. We got dressed. We waited and we were called in the main house. We both went there. We kneeled down and looked down.

Grandpa: Who in these two flowers is your son choosing?

Thapelo's uncle: The one with a red doek.

I was wearing red and black attire and a red doek.

Grandpa: Alondwe do you know these people?

Me: Yes I know them.

Grandpa: They have came to ask for your hand in marriage do you accept?

Me: Yes I accept.

Grandpa: You can go.

We stood up and we left. I sighed. I couldn't really say how the atmosphere in that house was. But it seems like things were going well.

\*\*\*

The negotiations were over. The wife of Thapelo's uncle asked to speak to me. They were outside the gate. They were ready to leave. I went to her.

Her: Hello Sisi.

Me: Hi mam.

Her: You're beautiful. And please call me mama.

Me: Thank you.

Her: I just wanted to see you. I don't understand what not to like in you.

Me: It's good to hear you say that.

Her: Well I am sorry that you got to marry in our family. Everyone don't get along. We are a big family but we're too divided. You know family feuds. But I hope you and Thapelo will have a good life together and don't mind everything that happens in this family.

Me: I hope so too. And thank you for telling me that.

Her: Please treat Thapelo right. He's the only child that doesn't mix himself up in the adults feuds. He gets along with everyone.

Me: I promise I will treat him right.

Her husband: Tell her about the ceremony.

Her: We will make a small ceremony in our house just to welcome you traditionally in the family. It won't be a big thing because of your situation with your husband. But we liked the fact you guys wanted to do things the right way. You didn't just go to home affairs but you asked for our help as extended family. That means something to us.

Me: Thank you mama.

Her: Okay bye. We're leaving now.

Me: Travel safe.

We did hand shake and I did with her husband and the other uncle. I fist bumped Mpendulo.

Her husband: And welcome to the family.

Me: Thank you.

Mpendulo: Sho Makoti.

Me: Mpendulo first thing you need to do, is to go and check on my husband.

Mpendulo: Don't worry I will make no mistake.

Me: Thanks.

Other uncle: I can't believe Thapelo has grown up and now he has a wife.

Uncle: It's really beautiful. He deserves it. He has been a good boy.

Wife: Thank you dear. Bye.

We said our good-byes and they left. I just wondered what family feud was between them.

Why were they divided. I sighed. I wasn't going to crack my head with that. All I wanted was to be happy with my Thapelo.

We were in bed with my aunt Melokuhle. The four of us were in one bedroom. Nkululeko was sharing the bed with aunt Simthande and I was sharing with Melokuhle. The others were asleep already. Melokuhle and I were awake. We were just talking.

Melokuhle: I wonder what will my brother say?

Me: I don't know but he'll be angry.

Melokuhle: You had no choice though. Yes it may not seem right but they are also your family. And I am just glad that Thapelo wanted you guys to do the right thing.

Me: Yeah. It did feel right. I just wish that my mom was here. Even if I get married she won't be there to tell me how does a wife behave and all those marriage talks mothers should have with their daughters.

Melokuhle: You and Thapelo will have a beautiful marriage though. You have come a long way together. You got a whole lot of history.

Me: (singing) We will be the best thing, that the world has ever seen. (We laughed)

Melokuhle: Yeah. I just can't believe that my niece is getting married. By this age I thought I would be married too. I have achieved it all and it doesn't mean anything without a family of my own.

Me: Maybe all along I wanted your life.

Melokuhle: What do you mean?

Me: I have always wanted to be independent, achieve everything that I want in life. Be career driven without kids and a husband. Then travel the world and have fun. But now I am here, I

guess some other things don't go as we have planned.

Melokuhle: Yeah. I wanted to achieve it all then start a family. But every man I date they just break my heart and they use me. They don't see me as someone whom they can build a home with.

Me: Maybe you can have a family but not the way you think you should. All I can say is, just travel the world a little. Move out of your comfort zone. The more you travel will be the more you meet new people. And maybe you need to start dating guys from other races.

Melokuhle: Yeah you're right and I think I will just have to accept that not all of us will get married.

Me: That's true, but it's hard if you're not meant to get married while you do want to get married. It's better if you don't want marriage because you'll be getting exactly what you want. Some women like to depend on men and have that protection that real men provide. They like that but it doesn't necessarily mean that they'll get it. I didn't think I was going to warm up to idea of marriage but I did.

Melokuhle: And you'll make a good wife.

Me: I hope I will.

Melokuhle: Bully wife.

Me: You're not serious right?

Melokuhle: Maybe a little.

We laughed and continued to have our conversation until we fell asleep..

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay...

I never thought that one day I'll find myself in a prison cell. That place was, I don't know what. I was with other ladies there who were giving me stares. I sat on my own corner and I couldn't stop crying. I couldn't believe that I was arrested for killing my own husband.

Maybe that's how the police system worked they just arrest you once they think you're the one who did it. I didn't understand. A lady sat next to me.

Her: Why are you here?

Me: I don't know. You?

Her: It's a long story. This place creeps me out.

Me: Yeah. I miss my kids.

Her: You have kids? How many?

Me: I have three, two boys and one girl.

Her: I also wanted to have kids but Peter started being abusive. That my late boyfriend. I actually killed him. Well I didn't mean to kill him but as you can see how damaged my face is.

Me: He did that to you?

Her: Yes. He was very insecure. I took a basketball bat and I hit him back in the head then he died. I called the police and they arrested me. They said they are still investigating.

Me: How long have you been here?

Her: It's been a week. If your case will be attended sooner then consider yourself lucky.

I nodded and wiped my tears. Everytime when I think I have bigger problems I just meet people who got some other deep shit on their plate. Mine was also big but so was hers. Being in an abusive relationship damages not only your physique but also your emotional state.

That night I couldn't sleep I was feeling very cold.

The following morning we were allowed to make one phonecall. I had no one else to call but my mother.

Me: Mama this is Nobuhle.

Mom: Nobuhle my child. We're doing all we can to get you out of that place.

Me: What about my husband's lawyer. He was our family lawyer. Can't he represent me?

Mom: Your in-laws have taken the kids. They are angry because they do believe that you killed your husband. Nobody baked those cakes beside you.

Me: Mom I didn't bake biscuits for Rajiv that weekend. I don't even know where he got them. How do they know that biscuits killed him?

Mom: Your mother in-law said they asked the police and they said the poison was in the biscuits. And you did agree that you're the one who cooks for your husband.

Me: My time is up. I will call you some other time.

Mom: We are trying the best we can to –

The call got cutted off just like that. I was taken to a different cell and I had to change my clothes because I was the prime suspect on this case. I didn't even know if I was going to be granted bail or not. My in-laws have taken my kids and they just believed that I killed my husband without question? Something was not right. I didn't even know what to think. How was I going to make it without a lawyer because having a public lawyer is the same thing like you don't have a lawyer. I couldn't spent my life in prison. I wasn't going to see my children grow? How was I going to survive?

After two days I was taken to the other room where I was going to speak to the detective who was going to handle my case.

Detective: Good morning mam.

Me: Morning.

Detective: I am Detective Mthembu. I will be handling your case. (I nodded) I have read your statement and I must say that things are not looking pretty good for you.

I didn't say anything.

Detective: Did you bake the biscuits for your husband?

Me: No I didn't.

Detective: Then if you didn't, who did?

Me: I don't know.

Detective: Mam those kind of answers won't help you. You need to give me detailed answers.

Me: I don't know where he got those biscuits. I didn't bake them. I wasn't home with him.

Detective: So the biscuits just baked themselves and your husband who left everything in your name and the kids name just died.

Me: Oh so I suppose you will say that is the motive? I knew he was going to leave his money in my name and the kids so I killed him so that I can have access to his money?

Detective: I couldn't have said it better-

The door was opened, a man walked in. He was wearing a fine suit.

Man: Detective can I please have a word with my client. I am her lawyer.

Detective: Oh. I can see you are affording expensive lawyers with preschool teacher salary.

Lawyer: I don't appreciate your words towards my client detective.

Detective: No I am on my way out don't mind me.

He then left. I was left with the lawyer.

Me: Who are you and who sent you?

Lawyer: I am your lawyer and Sandile sent me.

Sandile? Sandile. Jesus! How? I hope you all remember him.

Me: Sandile? Why would he send you to rescue me?

Lawyer: I don't ask questions I just go when I am sent to then I get paid for doing a great job. So let's talk about your case. They have a pretty strong case against you. Did you really do it?

Me: No. I didn't. My husband had just got a promotion and we were going to leave for Cape Town. He was finally going to send me to university.

Lawyer: And who knew about that?

Me: My in-laws. I was at home to tell my parents that we were leaving. I was really happy

and looking forward to starting a new life in Cape Town but more importantly I was going study. Then I found him dead in my couch.

Lawyer: Were your in-laws happy about this promotion?

Me: They were happy but my mother in law didn't want us to go.

Lawyer: Why?

Me: She has this love I can't explain for my daughter so she didn't want us to go.

Lawyer: Mmmm. The police know about that?

Me: No they don't.

Lawyer: So if you didn't bake the biscuits then who did? Can you think about that. Because there are no records on the phone that proves that your husband was expecting a visitor.

Me: Actually there is something.

Lawyer: Yeah.

Me: Do you remember the video of that nanny who was abusing the baby? That went viral on social media?

Lawyer: Yes I do but how does that help us?

Me: After my husband and I saw that video. We also installed a hidden camera on our lounge. We just had our boys and I was going to go back to work. He suggested that if we're going to hire a nanny we should also have those cameras because clearly we can't trust people.

Lawyer: So the cameras are working 24hrs?

Me: Yes and nobody knows about them except me and him.

Lawyer: So if someone did visit the house, the cameras will show us?

Me: Yes.

Lawyer: Good. I will be on it. In the meantime I will work on getting bail for you.

Me: Thank you.

Lawyer: Don't Thank me. Thank Sandile.

I sighed. SANDILE????

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

Sunday afternoon I was going back to my place. We were with the family.

Grandpa: I think we all know that my brother's son will be furious when he learns that this happened like this but there was nothing we could do. We couldn't turn our backs on Alondwe and sell her off just like that. We had to support her.

Uncle: Your boyfriend proved himself to be a real man. If he was just a boy, he was going to be happy that he doesn't have to pay lobola for you. You must be grateful that this boy respects you Alondwe.

Grandpa's wife(Gogo): He's officially your husband. You must respect him. As ubaba omncane wakho has said, this boy respects you so you must respect him back.

Me: How will I make my marriage work. I need to know that. What is the key to a successful marriage.

Grandpa: How long have you dated him?

Me: Six years. But Mkhulu dating and marriage it's not the same.

Gogo: You're right and it's a good thing that you want to learn. Firstly respect. Every good thing that you do to your husband, he will appreciate it. And he will respect you back. A real man does that.

Grandpa: Another thing mzukulu. Us old people, we grew up in times where we don't threaten each other with things like divorce and leaving your partner whenever things go wrong. You sit down together and you fix it.

Aunt Simthande: There is a song that says love is not a place to come and go as we please.

But it's a house we enter then we'll commit to never leave.

Gogo: You started this together and you will end this together. Things will get tough but nobody will make it better but yourselves. Don't mind the fact that your in-laws don't like you. My mother in-law didn't like me too but I married this man anyway. Be honest with your husband, don't hide things from him. They'll destroy your marriage. Be patient Alondwe. A husband is more like your older son. There are things that you'll always remind him to do. Love him, he'll love you back. Take care of him. He'll take care of you.

Uncle: And feed him please. (we laughed) yes food is important. Women should know that. Give your all to your marriage and you'll see you'll grow old together.

Aunt Melokuhle: And let Jesus be the guard. Put him in charge.

Gogo: That's the head office. My mom taught me like that. If things go bad report to the head office. And baby we are here for you. I personally respect what you and this boy did. You respected your culture. One can never deny support to a child who doesn't turn against his culture and values. We are happy for you and we wish you all the best. This is your choice, your life and if your parents thinks it's a mistake. It's your mistake baby don't even live to regret it. You did what is best for you.

Me: Thank you so much for everything. I really appreciate it. Mkhulu and your brandy I thought you were going to chase them out.

Everyone laughed and Mkhulu laughed too.

Mkhulu: Hhayi Kanti I was going to, if they start misbehaving. We are Ndunakazis and we take nonsense from no one.

Uncle And Gogo: Yebo.

We then prayed, said our good-byes and we left. We were aunt Melokuhle's car. She was the one who was going to keep the lobola money. We dropped them at the airport because they were going back to Cape Town. Aunt Simthande was also going back to her house. It was Nkululeko and I left in the car along with the owner.

Nkulu: The elders did speak wisely but they forgot to tell you that you must both satisfy each other.

We laughed. Nonkululeko laughed too.

Melokuhle: Nonkululeko I bet you couldn't wait to say that.

Nkulu: But it's true. Keep things fun my friend. Be sexy and adventurous.

Me: And to think, the husband said I am not sexy enough and I am heavy. (they laughed)

Nkulu: You must upgrade baby.

Me: He just wants me to go to the gym with him.

Nkulu: That's not wrong.

Me: I will think about it. I am lazy to work out.

Melokuhle: You'll be working out with husband. It will be fun believe me.

Nkulu: So when can I start planning the wedding. Please don't tell me you're still going to wait. Like those people who get engaged for years. That thing is so boring. (we laughed)

Melokuhle: It's really boring Nonkululeko and it's not really romantic. Five years engagement. Are you still deciding if you're taking each other or what?

Nkulu: On social networks they say it's witchcraft. (we laughed)

Me: Relax guys. I am planning on celebrating my birthday this year as Mrs Moloi.

Them: Woah!!!

Me: But I will have to speak to the husband first. If he's okay with it, then we're getting married this year.

Nkulu: You were really listening in there hey?

Me: Yes I was. I won't have that kind of talk with my mom so I better listen to those who care enough to give it to me and to allow me make my own decisions. Yes they didn't raise me but they are also my family. My blood.

Melokuhle: That's true. And don't worry. You'll make a good wife.

Me: Thank you.

My aunt dropped me off my place.

I went inside, first thing I did was to pray and thank God. I had to accept that my life was going to change now. I wasn't going to do as I please like I did before. I sat on my couch and sighed. I stood up and I went to take a shower. I finished up and I wore my pyjamas. I took my laptop and books. I went to the lounge. I texted Thapelo. "I am at my place, please bring yourself over here with food. You know food must always be there. Lol. Love, Aloe" I checked on my emails. I continued doing my notes. After a few minutes Thapelo was in front of me with food and drinks. He put the takeaway on the table.

Me: You're the best.

He smiled and went to my radio. He connected his phone to speakers. He came back and gave me his hand. I smiled. The song began.

Thapelo: (singing) Take my hand, take a breath, pull me close and take one step. Keep your eyes....

I smiled and stood up. I couldn't sing but I was good at dancing. We went to an open space and we danced to song.

Thapelo: (singing looking into my eyes) Take my hand, I'll take the lead and every turn will be safe with me. Don't be afraid, afraid to fall. You know I'll catch you through it all. And you can't keep us apart cause my heart is wherever you are.

We danced till the song ended. We held each other tightly and listened to each other breathing.

Me: I love you. It's really one in the million the chances of feeling the way we do.

Thapelo: It's like catching lightning the chances of finding someone like you. I love you too.

We will keep on getting better with every step together. It doesn't matter what the world says. I hugged him and he hugged me back. We went to sit down and we ate together after washing our hands.

Thapelo: I was really worried about your grandfather.

Me: (laughing) I was also worried I thought he was going to ruin everything.

Thapelo: I am just glad that everything went well.

Me: Yes husband. So if I may ask when are we getting married?

Thapelo: I think the winter wedding will be the best.

Me: Yeah because we won't have a big wedding. And we can do it on your lounge.

Thapelo: In my apartment?

Me: Yes. It's big and beautiful. Nkululeko will know how to decorate it perfectly.

Thapelo: That will also minimise the costs. If you want my apartment. I don't have a problem with that.

Me: Thank you. Your uncle and his wife are very nice people. I like them.

Thapelo: Yes they are. If I could change parents I was going to take them to be my parents.

Me: Buy your parents did raise you well. They did a very good job.

Thapelo: You think?

Me: I don't think, I know that they did. I think July is the best month we can choose.

Thapelo: No baby July is windy. That may ruin our pictures don't you think?

Me: Yeah. So June then?

Thapelo: Yes. What are we going to do about your vacation with Sphephile?

Me: You're not coming with us?

Thapelo: You didn't ask me to.

Me: Okay. Don't start. We will go together. Alupheli wants to go too. It won't be fair if I leave Mesuli behind.

Thapelo: What about the older brother?

Me: That one will be working during the holidays but if he wants to go with us he can go too.

Thapelo: If we go as a group it won't be expensive.

Me: Yes. So I think we must choose between Dubai, Miami and Los Angeles. I think Miami is the best though.

Thapelo: I love you. I was going to say that too.

Me: And I love you too.

Thapelo: You don't have to worry my love. Every year, we will travel a different country or city like you always wanted. I won't change that for you just because we will be married. The difference will be that, we will be travelling together with Sphephile.

I smiled and put everything that I had in my hands away. I took what he had and I sat on top of him and I kissed him. You already know what happened next.

The following morning I was getting ready for school and Thapelo was ready for work. I was getting dressed. Thapelo was having breakfast. I was dressed up in a white dress and black sandals. I was fixing my hair.

Thapelo:(from the kitchen) Alondwe I am going to be late for work. Please hurry up.

Me: I am almost done.

I packed my books and I went to the lounge to take the ones I left there.

Thapelo: You won't even have breakfast now.

Me: I will eat in your car.

Thapelo: I must teach you how to be fast because soon you'll be dealing with emergencies. You must always be on alert.

Me: Yes Sir.

I took my plate and we left. I was eating in the car.

Thapelo: Please don't spill anything in my car.

Me: Don't complain when the wife is eating.

Thapelo: I am not complaining. I am just saying.

Me: I won't spill anything.

He then dropped me off on campus. I kissed him.

Me: Have a nice day I love you.

Thapelo: You too have a great day. I love you.

Me: I am leaving my plate here.

Thapelo: No don't.

I giggled and left the plate in the car and I left. I went to my first class.

I was in my flat with Jade Williams. He was going to be my partner on the residency second semester. We were working on a project.

Jade: So tell me Twinkie, you and immaculate are friends?

Me: Not really why?

Jade: No I was just asking.

Me: We eat together and we hang out together on campus but we're not friends. I have one friend and I am cool with that.

Jade: I thought I could be your friend too.

Me: Really, it's better that you're my partner. I don't think being my friend is a good thing.

Jade: Why not?

Me: You're too cute to be my friend. You'll make my fiance feel insecure.

He looked at me and we laughed. Thapelo walked in while we were still laughing. We stopped, I smiled and looked at Thapelo. He looked exhausted.

Me: Hey my chocolate brownie.

Thapelo: Hey little pudding.

I stood up and we kissed each other for quite some time. Jade cleared his throat and we stopped. He kissed my forehead. We sat down and I took off his shoes. I untied his tie.

Thapelo: Thanks. Do you mind doing the introduction?

Me: Oh I am sorry my attention is on you now. My love this Jade, he's my project partner and my residency partner. Jade this is my handsome husband to be.

Jade: Nice to meet you man.

Thapelo: Likewise.

Jade: Twinkie I will go now. We will continue tomorrow?

Me: Yeah. Let me walk you out.

He packed his books, said his goodbyes to Thapelo and he left. I walked him out. We shared goodbye hugs and I went back to my place. I sat next to Thapelo.

Thapelo: You're Twinkie?

Me: Oh yeah. My lecturer gave me that name first year. You know the slang meaning of a Twinkie someone who looks beautiful and kind on the outside but they actually mean. So he named me Twinkie except for the part of being uninteresting. So everyone calls me Twinkie.

Thapelo: Alright Twinkie.

Me: No I didn't say you should call me like that too.

Thapelo: But I like it and I must say that I don't like you two meeting up in here. You should meet up at the library.

Me: I should have known. Fine we will meet at the library.

Thapelo: No I-

Me: Don't worry my love I understand. What do you want for dinner?

Thapelo: Dinner can wait, we need to talk.

Me: Okay should I be scared?

Thapelo: What type of a Doctor are you? I don't know that about your career.

Me: I am a neurosurgeon. That is a physician who specialises in the diagnosis and surgical treatment of disorders of the central and peripheral nervous system including congenital anomalies, trauma, tumors, vascular disorders, infections of the brain or spine, stroke, or degenerative diseases of the spine.

Thapelo: Okay. Thanks for clarifying. My love I have to go to Mpumalanga.

Me: What? Mpumalanga for what? Why are you going there?

Thapelo: It's work. There is a land that I have to survey. It's a one month project.

Me: One month? The whole April you won't be here?

Thapelo: Yes baby. I will come back. You won't get bored because you and Nkululeko will be planning our wedding and Easter holidays you'll be going home.

Me: I think it was better last year. You were doing one week assignments.

Thapelo: The problem is they did some mistakes so I have to go and fix them. But end of this year I will only be Johannesburg based.

Me: I will go and prepare dinner.

I stood up and I went to the kitchen.....

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay...

The lawyer managed to get bail for me. I was out. I was with him but that didn't mean that the charges were dropped against me. There was going to be a trial. I still didn't know why on earth did Sandile gave me his lawyer to help me out. The last time I saw him was the time when I left with Rajiv. After he thought that he broke my virginity while he didn't. After that I heard that he married his girlfriend Prudence and they had two kids a boy and a girl. I didn't know what was happening with his life after that. Nobody explained it to me. They actually didn't come to see me in prison. Not even Nadine. Well for my parents I understood that dad was sick. Mom couldn't come.

Lawyer: Should I drive you home or you want to go somewhere else?

Me: Drive me to my in-laws house.

He nodded and we drove off. We were both quiet in the car.

Me: So you won't tell me why Sandile hired you?

Lawyer: I don't know but he told me to get you out of prison because you are special to him.

Me: Oh okay. That's wired.

He didn't say anything. I knew that he was lying to me. He knew more than what he was telling me. We arrived at the Pillay mansion and I asked him not to leave me. I rang the gate intercom.

Claudine: Pillay residence how can I help?

Me: It's Precious.

Claudine: Precious? Uhm hi.

Me: Can you let me in I want to see my children.

Claudine: I am afraid I can't do that.

Me: What do you mean you can't do it?

Claudine: The children are scared of you. Specially Heather. You are a danger to them Precious.

Me: Excuse me. Are you hearing yourself right now?

Claudine: Yes. The social development services for children and families. Left the kids on our custody because you're not a fit mother.

Me: What? I am not a fit mother. What the fuck?

Claudine: Precious. Such language!

Me: I am sorry but you can't do this to me. Those are my kids.

Claudine: The police found you day drinking while the kids were sleeping. That really shows that you're not a fit mother.

Me: I was hurting. You know I can never hurt them.

Claudine: I am sorry but we can't let you in.

Me: Can I speak to your husband.

I heard her call her husband. Mr Pillay spoke to me.

Me: Are you guys really denying me my kids?

Mr Pillay: We're looking out for them. You need help.

Me: I need no help. I just want to see them.

Mr Pillay: I am sorry but you're not welcomed here until you sort your issues out. Bye.

He hung up on me. They sent the maid to give me the house keys. I took them and I went back to the car with my head buzzing. What was happening? What was the meaning of all this?

Lawyer: What is wrong?

Me: They don't want me to see my kids. They bloody denied me access to my children.

Lawyer: It must be alcohol incident?

Me: Yes. Can they really do that?

Lawyer: I am afraid yes. They just ruled you out as an unstable mother. So you won't see them until you are stable.

Me: How can I get them back?

Lawyer: Find some psychological help and get a family lawyer who can help you get custody.

Me: Wow! Where am I supposed to get that kind of money for a lawyer and a psychologist? I gave birth to them now I must claim them from the government and his system?

Lawyer: Sandile might help.

Me: Please take me to my house.

I just didn't understand Sandile's agenda in all this. Why was he nice to me now? Nobody was telling me what was happening!

Me: Did you find something on the camera?

Lawyer: I sent it to my guy. He was going to get the footage of the exact day your husband

died. Then I will look at it then get back to you.

Me: Alright. I hope we will find something.

Lawyer: Don't worry. We will because nobody knew about the camera.

I nodded and sighed. I never thought this kind of thing could happen to me.

The lawyer dropped me off my house. I went inside the house, the first thing I did was to take a shower. I wore my gown and I made coffee for myself. My phone, my sister was calling. I answered.

Me: Hello?

Philisiwe: Hey how are you doing? The lawyer just informed me that you are out of prison.

Me: Yeah. Out on bail. They took my kids.

Philisiwe: I heard that but let's hope Sandile will help you with that too.

Me: Maybe you can tell me. What's up with Sandile helping me out?

Philisiwe: I think you should ask mom and dad.

Me: Hee! Okay. How is Sqalo and Qalokuhle?

Philisiwe: They are fine. Their father was here to see them with their brother.

Me: Okay. Since when does he see them there?

Philisiwe: Well he wanted to come.

Me: No. There's something you're not telling me.

Philisiwe: No. I don't want talk about me.

Me: Believe me I want to hear it. I am tired of talking about my problems they are even starting to bore me. So out with it!

Philisiwe: Well we kind of got back together.

Me: What!?! The pastor's kid? And his wife?

Philisiwe: He doesn't love her. He's planning on moving to Cape Town after their divorce.

Me: Jesus Christ. All These years he couldn't get over you. Like hell!

Philisiwe: I just pushed my pride away and let him in my life. I hope everything will go well.

Me: No wonder mom was complaining before my husband's death. She was complaining about Philani not coming to church. His wife was the only person who was coming to church.

Philisiwe: He said he doesn't want to go back and preach until he sorts out all this mess.

Me: I am happy for you.

Philisiwe: I am happy too. But you should fight for your children.

Me: Yeah I will do everything I can.

Philisiwe: Alright. I might come home soon. I will see you then otherwise. Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight Sisi send my love to our children there.

Philisiwe: Will do.

We hung up the call and I called Nadine. She didn't answer her phone. I called until I gave up. Maybe she also believed that I killed his brother.

The following day on my way to my parents house. I got a call from the Lawyer. I answered his call through the car speakers.

Me: Talk to me.

Lawyer: Your camera is a life saver.

Me: What did you find?

Lawyer: Heather and the maid did come in the house. Though your camera doesn't detect sounds. But what important is we know that the maid gave your husband the biscuits. I will run this information by the police and I will question the maid. Because we can't make accusations without asking questions.

Me: Thanks. Please keep me updated.

Lawyer: Will do so.

We hung up the call. I also didn't want to make accusations but my mind couldn't stop thinking about Claudine being behind this. But I kept my cool and trusted that my lawyer was

going to work wonders.

I made it home and my parents were there. My brothers were not around. My mom was happy to see me. Actually both of them. I hugged my mom.

Mom: Oh my child. I can't believe half of the things you've been through.

Me: They just don't want to end.

Dad: I am just glad that you are out of that place and Sandile will make sure that you don't go back there.

Me: Just a person I want us to talk about. What's going with Sandile?

Mom: Tell her Baba.

Dad: My daughter. Sandile was the only person we could turn to for help. Otherwise if we didn't you were going to stay longer in that place.

Me: Why did he help me?

Dad: He lost his wife so he offered to help only if we can agree to let you marry him so that you can both look after your children. His children and your children. You'll be a family. We agreed because we were out of options.

Me: Mom and dad you did what!?

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

Thapelo does go to other provinces for work. The previous year he used to go for just one week or two sometimes. There is no province that he didn't go to. I had no problem with that I actually liked it sometimes because I didn't like it when we see each other all the times. So when he was gone that gave me some time to breath. I understood that it was his job but he has never left for a month. I didn't like that he was going to leave for such a long time. I was just sad. A month to me was like the whole year. But hey I had to suck it up. I was packing up his clothes. He was leaving on Monday. The day was Friday that I started packing on. My classes ended at 12 on Fridays. My phone rang. My mom was calling. I answered the call.

Me: Hello Mama.

Mom: Hey Alondwe unjani?

Me: I am fine mom and you?

Mom: I am alright. How are things at school. You hardly call us these days.

Me: I called yesterday mom.

Mom: Yes. You call only when you want to speak to Sphephile. It's like you have forgotten that we also have a relationship with you.

Me: I am sorry. I am just busy. Things are hectic. We are preparing ourselves for residency. How is Mesuli?

Mom: Who told you that he was sick?

Me: Dad told me the last time that he called.

Mom: He's much better. They gave him the right specs. So he's himself again. Your father told me how cold you were when he called and tried to have a conversation about the game.

Me: That's not true.

Dad: I am here and I can hear you trying to lie.

Me: I am not lying dad. I wasn't cold.

Dad: You didn't want to speak to me. I heard that.

Me: I always make time to speak about the game with you dad. You were just catching feelings that don't exist. Maybe you were feeling guilty. And you thought I have changed.

Dad: I wasn't feeling guilty and I can never feel guilty about doing the right thing for you. But you have changed towards me.

Me: Mom can you convince him that I haven't changed?

Mom: Well I can't because I know that if he says you have changed that means you have changed. My husband danced for you playing that song Gqi by that Kooklkat guy and you

didn't dance back. But you always sent the video back.

I laughed really hard. This was kind of funny though. I couldn't believe they were catching some feelings.

Dad: It's not funny. My dance moves were very good. You didn't even compliment them.

Me: Dad. I was going to download the song and dance. Then I was going to send it back. I am just busy.

Mom: You have never said that before. You see for us this is like a girlfriend who knows her boyfriend like the back of her hand. That girlfriend notices every changes on her boyfriend's behaviour. Even if the guy has changed and he doesn't use more emojis on their conversation she will notice because she loves him and she knows him.

Dad: So we also notice because we love you. You have changed towards us and it doesn't sit well with us because you're our first born.

Me: Okay. I am sorry. I thought I was being normal. I will fix starting by doing that dance. Hung up the call then.

Them: Alright.

Mom: Send it before our lunch hour ends.

Me: Alright.

They hung up the call. I shook my head. I had the song I just didn't want to dance back for dad because I was angry. I laughed, they were kind of funny though. I changed my clothes because I wearing a dress so I wore black leggings and a black vest. I took my tablet and I made the video while playing the song on my phone. I danced. I remembered his moves and I did them adding my own style. I finished up and I sent the video to him. He skyped me. I accepted his Skype call.

Dad: Did you just decorated my dance moves?

Me: Come on dad. I just danced better than you.

Dad: Usile wena uthatha umdanso wami. (We laughed)

Mom: Where are you because that's definitely not your flat? That bedroom is not yours.

Me: Mom do you always have to spoil the fun?

Dad: Aybo. Where are you vele?

Me: Ah. This is about the video. I am in my friend's room. Nkululeko's apartment. Tjo!

Mom: Oh. No it's no big deal I was just asking. Have a nice day baby.

Me: You too guys have a nice day.

Mom: Actually you dance better than your dad.

Dad: Awu Thandeka Kanti unjani nje?(I laughed)

Mom: It's the truth baby but I didn't say you're bad.

Dad: She's the one who made me the grandfather while I was still very much young.

Mom and I laughed at him.

Mom: Bye baby. I must attend my older son before he cries.

Me: Please do. Asfuni ukukhalelwa indoda endala bakithi.

Dad: Ubani indoda endala Alondwe?

I laughed and said: Bye guys I love you.

Mom: We love you too.

Dad: I don't love you ubani indoda endala?

Mom: Ayi awuyeke ingane umdala vele khehla.

I laughed and mom disconnected the call. My parents were just crazy. They had the crazy kind of love and they thought I wasn't going to like that in future? They must be out of their minds. I was glad that my brother was fine.

Monday morning came. Thapelo and I spent that weekend together. We were just having our own time. I was going to miss him shame. In the morning he was in the shower. I was already dressed up for campus. I was the one who wakes up first now because I took my whole time

to get ready everytime. I fixed the bed and I opened the windows. I saw his set of pens and notebook. I took them I put them inside his bag before he forgets them. There was a gift bag inside his work bag. I took it out and I read the card. It was written "To Nomzamo, Happy Birthday from Thapelo" He came out of the bathroom before I can even open it.

Me: What is this?

Thapelo: It's a birthday gift for a colleague.

Me: Why is it hidden in your bag? Were you hiding it from me? Can you explain that?

Thapelo: I didn't want you to you react like this because it's her. I knew you were going to react like this but you know that it's our culture at work we buy each other gifts on someone's birthday.

Me: Oh so you're hiding this one because? Are you guilty about something maybe. Something that I don't know.

Thapelo: No I am not guilty Alondwe. I just didn't want us to fight.

Me: If you didn't hide this gift. We weren't going to fight. But you hiding it is making us fight. So if Jade buy a gift for me I should hide it?

Thapelo: Does he have an annoying crush on you?

Me: No he doesn't but that's not the point. And when were you planning on giving this Nomzamo her gift because you're leaving today. Or you're also going with her and you didn't tell me about that too?

Thapelo: You know I don't work alone. She's on my team Alondwe. We were going to give her the gifts on the hotel. Because we are going straight to the airport from home. We won't pass by the office.

Me: Well have a nice trip.

I took my bags and I headed to the door.

Thapelo: You're leaving just like that?

I went back to him and I kissed him deeply.

Me: I love you.

I turned back and headed to the door.

Thapelo: You're supposed to drive me to the airport Alondwe don't you remember that?

Me: Nomzamo's gift will drive you to the airport.

Thapelo: Twinkie! Don't leave like this, specially not while I am still talking to you.

I shut the door behind me and I left. I took the cab and it drove me to the campus. My phone beeped. It was Thapelo. It was a text from WhatsApp.

{Thapelo}: I can't believe you left like that. How am I supposed to have a safe trip while I left you mad at me Alondwe?

{Me}: >>texting back<< I don't know ask Nomzamo and her hidden gift. {Thapelo}: Now you're being childish Alondwe. You're behaving like a child. Nomzamo is nothing to me and her crush means nothing to me. {Me}: She's not your colleague now? She's nothing? Wow! From hero to zero. He called me. I didn't answer his call. I was really angry at him. I didn't care about the crush what was making me angry the most was why did he hide the gift? Why exactly? He couldn't stop calling so I switched off my phone. I didn't want to speak to him any further because I was going to say things that I didn't want to say and I was going to regret in the end. He called on my tablet. I put it on aeroplane mode then I went to class.

After class I went back to his apartment. He had more food so I was going to stay at his place for a while. But I was also going to go to my place. I was watching a movie when someone knocked on the door. I wasn't doing anything I was just relaxing. I had a test in the morning I was going to continue with studying later. I went to the door and I opened because it was Mpendulo.

Me: Hey Thapelo is not here. Mpendulo: I know. I drove from here to your place to check up on you and you were not there. I then drove back. Why is your phone off Thapelo is calling you. Are you guys fighting? Me: No. I am charging my phones so they are off.

Mpendulo: Ey please call your husband I don't want to get involve in your fights. He's disturbing me. I am busy in my apartment. Me: Woah! I I wonder what you're doing. Mpendulo: Ay fonela indoda yakho. Me: Okay. Mpendulo: Goodnight. Me: Alright, have fun! He laughed and left. I went back to watching my movie. I didn't call Thapelo. There was another knock on the door. I stood up again and I went to the door. I opened the door. Me: Bitch what are you doing here? Nkulu: The husband is not home so let's go out clubbing! Me: Clubbing on Monday? I have a test tomorrow morning I can't. Nkulu: You're lying. You're watching a movie. Me: Yes because I have studied and I will continue later. Nkulu: Chomee you have to use chances like this before you get tied down by Thapelo. Go and change. I will bring you back in time. I laughed and I went to change.....

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay....

My parents looked at each other then back at me.

Mom: I know that it's a bad idea but baby he was our only option.

Me: You were supposed to ask me first mom. I used to call you and all you told me was we are doing the best we can while you were arranging a marriage for me. Another marriage. I just lost my husband for goodness sake.

Dad: So what were we supposed to do? Leave you in that prison to rot? Your in-laws neglected you. The first thing that the police told them. They believed it and all we did was to help you but you're complaining.

Me: This was supposed to be my decision dad. My decision. Now I am forced to it because I owe Sandile. I don't even know if my children will like him. I am just going to force him to them?

Mom: You'll take it one step at a time. They'll get used to him specially the boys. You can't do this alone baby. Three kids. It's too much.

Me: I was going to manage. But you chose my fate –

I stood up and I went to my room. I locked myself up and I cried. How did I get here? And how will I make it out? Do I marry Sandile so that he can help me not go back to jail? And he'll help me get my kids back? If I do marry him and he helps me out. Will my kids get along with him? Will his kids get along with me and my children? How will it work? I couldn't find answers. And I wasn't going to find them unless I marry him and see what happens. But if I don't marry him I will suffer. Because there was still a case that was going take place and after that I had to prove myself that I am a fit mother for my children. I ended up falling asleep in between my thoughts about my sorrows.

I was woken up by my phone ringing. It was Nadine. I sighed, I thought that she was also siding with her family. I thought that she was no longer on my side. I answered my phone.

Me: Hello.

Nadine: Hi precious how are you?

Me: I am alright. I thought you have neglected me too. I was very worried because I called you but you didn't answer my calls.

Nadine: Well I am still angry at you about what you did. I am really angry.

Me: You also believe that I killed him?

Nadine: No. I know that you wouldn't have done that but I am talking about day drinking while the kids were under your care. How can you do that Precious?

Me: I didn't know what to do to make the pain stop. You don't understand Nadine. Rajiv was my everything. He was my true love. My soulmate. He just left me without saying goodbye. Without even giving me a warning or sign. I wanted to numb everything.

Nadine: I am really sorry. I don't know what to say. You two had an amazing relationship. An amazing love. You were just inseparable buddies and everything that one needs in love. But I really think that the children must live with my parents for now just until you are

healed.

Me: I can't heal if they are not here with me. I need to be with them. See them everyday that way I will be certain that everything will be alright and that everything will go back to how it was. But not exactly because their father is no longer with us.

Nadine: I will try and speak to my parents because they are really convinced that you killed their father and that you are a danger to them.

Me: Thanks for that. And thanks for the call.

Nadine: My pleasure.

Me: How are they anyway?

Nadine: Well the boys are restless and they always crying but it's better now. Heather is doing alright. You know how she gets along with mom.

Me: Yeah I know. Please send my love to them.

Nadine: Alright. Bye.

Me: Bye.

We hung up the call. I stood up and I went to open the door. I walked out of the bedroom. My parents were with Sandile on the lounge. He was with his children. It was a boy and a girl. He looked at me and smiled. I didn't smile back. I just sat down. I didn't want this. I didn't love this man how was I going to survive?

Me: Sanibona.

Them: Yebo.

Boy: Dad is this our new mother?

Sandile: Vusi please let me speak to her first before you guys get to know her.

Girl: Why do you say that now dad. She's not going to love us?

Mom: Let's not rush to that my children. Come and help grandma in the kitchen.

The kids stood up and they followed my mom. Dad left with them.

Sandile: Firstly I want to apologize.

Me: For what exactly?

Sandile: Budging in your life like this. I know that the last time we saw each other it wasn't on good terms.

Me: At least you remember that. I don't know what do you want from me.

Sandile: You just lost your husband and last month I lost my wife. We will help each other heal.

Me: I see you have everything under control. You got it covered hey?

Sandile: Nobuhle don't be difficult please. Let's make this thing work. I believe we really can. And for you to get your kids back. We have to get married and we must stand together in court so that the judge will see that the kids will have a secured home.

Me: I do want my kids back but you're forgetting one thing. It's my in-laws who will give me away. Not my parents. What will that judge say? My husband just died and suddenly I am married to another man. Do you think magic will happen?

Sandile: You're forgetting one thing I know people in higher positions and I can be very persuasive. I will be helping you and you will be helping me. I need a good mother for my kids.

I looked at him without a word. I didn't know what to say. What should I do? Do I marry him? Do I turn him down? Lord please intervene!

Alondwe Ndunakazi...

The club was lit. It was fire, I just couldn't believe that on a Monday people were busy clubbing. Like yenzeka kanjani lento? I went to sit by the bar with Nkululeko.

Nkulu: Don't you want us to take some shots?

Me: Why not? Thapelo might be with Nomzamo on his bed right now. Just order them

please.

Nkulu: What did you just say?

Nkulu ordered four shots. I laughed sarcastically. I just felt like laughing. Like I had to laugh. Why did he hide the gift? Is there something going on between him and Nomzamo?

Me: I don't know mngani wami.

Nkulu: Where does Nomzamo and the bed fit in?

Me: They are a team. He bought a gift for him and hid the gift so that I won't see it. It was a birthday gift. I don't know. Nomzamo is there and I am here.

Nkulu: But he won't do you like that.

Me: Well he has done it before.

Nkulu: Alondwe don't be negative. Let go of that.

Me: You don't understand NoNkululeko what if he tries to resist and Nomzamo is serious about him.

Nkulu: You survived Cassandra.

Me: Because he was mad at her.

Nkulu: No bitch because he loves you. You're married to him. You're the one with the ring.

Me: That's the thing I don't want to be the "one with the ring" and be unhappy and insecure.

Nkulu: Alondwe come on.

I laughed, the alcohol was starting to take over. Whenever I start getting drunk I just laugh at my problems. It's the best way for me to deal with them.

Me: Who knows maybe I am not even meant to be with him. My mom dated my father. They had me and they broke up. She met my brother's father. He was loving and caring. Just what my mom needed. She married him and they got divorced after they had two kids. She went back to my dad and their marriage is forever. I doubt there is anything that can separate them now. Maybe I belong with Sphephelo. I don't have to act stupid like my mom. I must do the right thing and just date Sphephelo. Save myself from heartache and embarrassment of living the life that I can predict.

Nkulu: Maybe you're living this life because you have to correct every mistake your mom did.

I laughed again. Nkululeko wasn't hearing himself.

Me: That's bullshits.

Nkulu: Do you love Sphephelo?

Me: No I don't love him.

Nkulu: So why would you want to go back to him?

Me: I don't know! I have to play this life right. I have to live by the book. Maybe Nomzamo belongs to Thapelo that I think is mine.

Nkulu: Thapelo belongs to you. Just stop this madness or else I will leave you here.

I laughed and nodded. I took another shot. Was I rushing things with Thapelo? Where was this love going to lead us? Being in love with him? I am but I can't even share my joy with my mom because she thinks I will be unhappy. So what if I am unhappy because of my in-laws? My husband loves me right? But wait? Nomzamo? What about her? Is it just a nosy stupid crush. I laughed and shook my head. I went back to the dance floor. I hid the fact that I had problems I couldn't solve within the crowds. Almost everyone had a partner on the dance floor. I wanted a partner too. I grabbed one guy and we danced together. He smiled. The song was doing it for me and I was heavily drunk but not that I didn't know what I was doing. I knew it exactly. The guy was touching me seductively. I was enjoying every moment of it. He tried to kiss me but I backed away a little. He smiled. He had the dimples like my Thapelo. That wouldn't be cheating right? It's Thapelo's kind of duplicate. I am kissing Thapelo part 2. I grabbed him and I kissed him. The kiss was deep but it didn't stare any feelings or lust. Like I didn't even crave him. I kissed him deeper because I wanted to feel

something. Someone grabbed me by my top and they slapped me hard. I held my cheek. I looked up and it was Nkululeko.

Nkulu: I didn't bring you here to bitch around do you understand me? If you want to be a bitch go and be a bitch somewhere else not under my watch. Tsk!

He walked away. The guy was no longer there. I continued dancing. I ended up crying there and people didn't even notice because everyone was minding their business. I left the club and I went to sit outside and I cried. I just couldn't stop crying. Why would my parents do this to me? They denied me their support? Their assurance that even if the in-laws don't love you it doesn't matter. What matters the most is what between you and your husband. They failed to do that. For how long will they control my life and decorate it by saying they are trying to protect me!? Why did I kiss that guy? What is wrong with me?

Voice: Are you alright?

I looked up and it was just a guy. He looked much older than me. I tried to smile. He sat next to me.

Stranger: You don't look alright and you're crying.

Me: Well I am drunk. And I am crying because in two months I am getting married and I am doing it behind my parents backs because they don't want to give me their blessings. I just kissed a guy that I don't know. That's something to cry about. Don't you think?

Stranger: Hectic staff hey? You love this guy?

Me: With all my life.

Stranger: Then go for it.

Me: I am afraid it might go wrong without their blessings. I am just having second thoughts.

Stranger: Even if it goes wrong but at least you'll say I had that chance at true love. How many people have their parents blessings to get married but they're miserable and unhappy? Others are on the edge of getting divorced but they had their parents blessings. Others are on abusive marriages but the parents gave them their blessings. Just take this chance as long as you ride for your guy and he rides for you too. You have each others backs. That's all that matters. It's your relationship. You'll make it with or without your parents. Don't have second thoughts. And just forgive yourself for that stupid kiss it didn't mean anything.

Me: Did Jesus send you?

Stranger: I don't know maybe.

We laughed, I saw Nkululeko from afar calling for my name. I waved my hand. He came to me on full force.

Nkulu: What was I going to tell that husband of yours if you went missing on my watch huh?

Me: Chill! That slap was enough.

Nkulu: Don't tell me to chill! Your parents were going to burry me alive. You're busy here with Buffy strangers that you don't know!

Me: Nonkululeko chill!

Nkulu: Ay fokof man! The cab is waiting for us. Let's go before I drag you to that cab myself.

I didn't say anything. I stood up and I requested a hug to that guy. He looked at Nkululeko.

Nkulu: Don't look at me.

Me: Please.

He stood up and he hugged me tightly. We let go.

Me: Thank you.

Stranger: My pleasure.

I then left with my angry friend.

Nkulu: If I can tell Thapelo that you're busy hugging and kissing man that you don't know. Things won't be nice.

Me: Then you'll have to explain it to him that who drove me out of his apartment and went to

the club with me.

She didn't say anything. She wasn't talking in car. She was just quiet. I did the same too. I had nothing to say to her. The cab dropped me off Thapelo's apartment. I stepped out and I closed the door behind me. I didn't even say goodbye. I was mad too. I went straight to bed. In the morning I woke up at 9am with my head buzzing. I switched my phones back on and I went to look at my timetable.

Me: Shit! I have a test at 9am.

I was flying on my way to the bathroom. I took the aspirin and I took the quickest shower of them all. I wore black shorts and a grey t-shirt that belonged to Thapelo. I wore his flip flops which were bigger. I took my bags. I checked my face and hair. I was just fine. I took his car keys and I drove myself to campus. I arrived at the campus and my lecturer asked to speak to me.

Lecturer: You're 45 minutes late for the test.

Me: I know and I am really sorry.

Lecturer: You're a mess Twinkie. What happened?

Me: I over studied and I woke up late. Please let me write. Even if I don't finish maybe I can get a 50% then make up on the following test.

The lecturer granted me permission to write. Everyone was giving me stares. I didn't mind at all. I just wanted to write and finish. I looked at my question paper and my mind just went blank. I just blacked out. The clock was ticking and I didn't know what to write. I looked at the questions and I wrote the easiest questions. After everyone was done the Lecturer gave me more time but it was useless. I didn't want to disappoint her so I pretended like I was writing. The time was up so I had to go to lunch.

Lunch time I was with immaculate. I was really stressed about my test. That module was my major. I couldn't afford to fail it. I just couldn't.

Immaculate: You're a mess Brah. What happened?

Me: Eish I don't know.

Immaculate: Where's your beautiful ring. You know I like seeing it.

I looked at my finger, hell! My ring was gone. I never, I mean like I don't take it off. I took my bags and I left without saying goodbye. I drove straight to Thapelo's apartment. In the apartment I searched everywhere for it and I couldn't find it. I sat on the floor and cried. I have lost it obviously. What am I going to say to Thapelo. No, maybe Nkululeko took it. I called her. She answered.

Nkulu: What?

Me: Nonkululeko I can't find my ring. Do you know where is it?

Nkulu: You were dancing with men you don't know. Hugging and kissing them, do you think they didn't see your ring? Obviously they took it and they're going to sell it. And now you're asking me where is it? Ay awungyeke.

Me: Nonkululeko I am sorry. Ngiyaxolisa. I was wrong. I shouldn't have done everything that I did.

Nkulu: What if someone that knows Thapelo saw you and they tell Thapelo. He was going to hate me because I am the one who forced you to go to a club with me right? You know how insecure your husband is, our friendship almost ended because he was against the fact that I have more than two boyfriends. He was sure that I was going to influence you and now you go and do this?

Me: I am sorry. No one will tell him but now I have a much bigger problem where will I get my ring?

Nkulu: Seriously I don't know.

I hung up the call and I cried. I don't even know how much it costs!

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay.....

Me: Just give me time to think about this.

Sandile: Nobuhle there is no time to think about this. You may not see it now but this is the best thing we can do for our children. Raise them together.

Me: It's easy for you to say. You'll be working and I will be a stay at home mom. Looking after the kids and cooking.

Sandile: Of course not. I will give you an opportunity to upgrade yourself.

Me: What do you mean by that?

Sandile: What do you want to do?

Me: I want to be a Teacher. I want to teach from grade 10 to 12. Then further my education. I might even end up as a Principal or Lecturer.

Sandile: Then you'll have to register and study.

Me: Yeah well with the money that my husband left, I have to plan my kids future with that means I can't afford my studies.

Sandile: I will pay for your studies.

Me: What?

Sandile: Yes. I will support you in every way. I know when I told you this you didn't believe me but I love you and I want to see you achieving your goals.

Me: But Sandile I don't love you. I don't even want to lie to you and say I love you.

Sandile: It's Okay. I appreciate your honesty. But love is built so you will learn to love me. I will just have to be more patient.

Me: I hear you.

Sandile: I will give you tonight to think about it. If you agree I will organise a psychologist for you. Who will help you deal with grief.

Me: If I don't agree you won't let your lawyer handle my case?

Sandile: I won't do that. I will let him handle your case because I don't want to see you in jail. But I am afraid I won't be able to help with the custody of the kids.

Me: Alright. How old are your kids?

Sandile: Vusi is 5 years old and his sister Asemahle is 4 years old.

Me: How did their mom die?

Sandile: She had cancer and she didn't tell me about it earlier. By the time I found out she was sick it was too late to save her.

Me: I am sorry.

Sandile: It's alright. I will leave now. I hope I will hear from you soon.

Me: I hope so too. Well let me hide. I don't want the kids to see me. It will be awkward because I don't even know if I am their mom or not.

He smiled and nodded. I smiled and I went to my room. I sat there thinking about what I was going to do but I was just clueless. After they have left I went to help mom with dinner.

Mom: So how did it go?

Me: I haven't taken a decision yet.

Mom: Alright.

Me: He said he'll fund my education.

Mom: That's a good thing baby. You really need to accept his proposal. You always wanted to study.

Me: I want to take off these clothes after the trial. I want to go back to my clothes.

Mom: You'll continue and wear saris?

Me: I am still Rajiv's wife so yes.

Mom: Alright my child. We will organise it for you. After the trial you're taking them off.

Me: Thanks.

My brothers came back and we all had dinner together. I was glad that I was home and

having a decent meal. If Sandile didn't come to my rescue. I was going to stay in jail till I don't know when. I was probably going to be charged guilty of murder. I was really grateful because he came through for me. And my education? That was a real big deal. I was going to study and be someone if I choose to marry him. I was going to save all the money Rajiv left just to secure my children's future. Everything was going to be alright. Maybe I needed to accept.

The following day, I was with my mom on the lounge. We were watching TV. There was a knock on the door and surprisingly my sister in-law was the one who was at the door. I stood up and I went to hug her tightly.

Me: I can't believe you are here.

Heather: She's with me mom.

She appeared at the back of her aunt. I literally screamed in happiness. I kneeled down and I hugged her. I actually didn't understand which part of they are scared of me was this because Heather was just happy to see me like I was. I went to the couch with her. They greeted mom.

Heather: Mom. My brothers are sleeping in the car.

Me: Really? Nadine?

Nadine: Yes. My parents allowed me to bring them here to you. But we're leaving tonight. We won't sleep here.

Me: Okay. Let's go and get them baby.

I held her hand and Nadine assisted me. They slept in my room. Mom had made something to eat for them and she offered it to them. But Nadine was leaving. She was going to come back later to fetch the kids.

Me: How are you doing baby?

Heather: I was sad because you left too. But grandma said you left because you wasn't feeling well. Are you well now mom?

Me: Yes baby. Mom is well but I still need more time to heal.

Heather: I miss you.

Me: I know baby and I miss you too. You and your brothers. And I love you so much.

Heather: When you're much better, we will go to our house that we were living in with dad?

Me: Yes my love. I promise.

Heather: Alright. Police were at home looking for the maid.

Me: Really? Why?

Heather: I don't know but grandma said she's not home while she was there mom. Why did she lie to the police?

Me: I don't know baby. But we're not here to speak about grandma's lies. We are here to spend time together. Alright?

Heather: Yes mom. I love you.

Me: I love you too my Heather.

I tickled her and she laughed. I was so happy to hear her laugh and more importantly to see her. Her siblings woke up and cried. Mom assisted me with them. And once they saw my face they all wanted me. I sat down with both of them and I fed them.

Mom: They see you. I think it will be a big problem when they have to go because they won't want to go

Me: I will bath them. They will automatically sleep.

I spent time playing with the three of them. Until late my mom assisted me bath the boys. For the first time they didn't sleep. They wanted to see me with them. I wasn't really ready to see them cry when they leave so I gave them allegrax and they fell asleep immediately. Nadine came back and took them.

Me: I am really grateful for what you did. I was so happy to see them.

Nadine: It's my pleasure. Who helped you out?

Me: It's a guy who is a family friend. He organised a good lawyer for me.

Nadine: I am glad that you are out. Things will work out just fine. Just go and see a psychologist then you can try and fight for your kids.

Me: Alright thanks.

We hugged each other and she stepped inside the car. I kissed my daughter goodbye and they drove off. Now that made my day.

1st of May was the beginning of my trial. It's a month since my husband died. And this trial meant I was going to relieve the pain. I have been going to sessions with my psychologist and I must say that was helping me out a lot. It was better to talk to someone about how I feel and everything that I am going through. I was positive that I was going to get my kids back. Well that means I have accepted Sandile's proposal who was very supportive but I just didn't have feelings for him. In the morning we were at the court. The first witness was Nadine. The maid didn't want to speak the truth about where she got the biscuits. So the police were convinced that I sent her there to give my husband the biscuits. So it was me against murder and the state. Nadine was on the witness stand. The state lawyer questioned her first.

State lawyer: Miss Pillay how would you describe the relationship between your late brother and his wife?

Nadine: They had a great relationship and they were very close to each other. More like friends than married couple.

State lawyer: That's touching. Your sister-in-law wanted to further her studies and her husband denied it do you think she was angry enough to kill your brother?

My lawyer: Objection your honour!

Judge: What's your Objection?

My lawyer: She's cornering her with an accusation that my client is guilty.

State lawyer: It's a question your honour.

Judge: Objection over ruled.

State lawyer: Miss Pillay.

Nadine: My sister was pretty mad, actually that happened on their first year of marriage. My parents objected to it. And my brother agreed because he had no money to take her to school.

State lawyer: But after years, your brother had enough money to take her to school but he didn't.

Nadine: Yes. I don't know where you're taking this but my sister was happy, she had accepted that she'll wait for my brother. Then my brother got the promotion he was going to take her to school.

The lawyer didn't say anything after that. She said she was done. I figured maybe she didn't know about that. My lawyer asked Nadine questions and the judge ruled that we were going to come the following day to continue with the trial.

The following day I was on the stand.

State lawyer: Your husband left you a good deal of money. Enough for you to want it for yourself and your education.

Me: I would have wanted it for myself really? I am a mother. I have three kids, education is expensive and kids are expensive. I wouldn't have killed my husband and you think that money was going to be enough for four years degree and my kids education. I don't know if you have kids or not but a mother always put her kids first.

State lawyer: Mrs Pillay did you have a good relationship with the maid that works for your in-laws?

Me: I have a good relationship with all the workers.

State lawyer: They would do anything for you?

Me: I don't understand what do you mean by anything?

This lawyer was twisted. Her questions were structured in a way that you can end up

admitting everything that you don't know. My lawyer objected the question and it was dismissed. Then my lawyer asked questions.

Lawyer: When my client's husband got the promotion they told his family first now please tell me how was the reaction of the family members?

Me: They were happy for us. But my mother in-law was not happy at all.

Lawyer: Why is it so?

Me: She had a great relationship with my daughter that nobody understands because at first she didn't like me as her daughter in-law but all of the sudden she was fond of my daughter. She would do anything for my daughter.

Lawyer: Thanks.

He then sat down. I didn't understand why he wasn't asking any more questions. I got off the stand and they brought in the maid. She said the oath and took the stand.

Maid: There is no need to ask questions. I will confess everything....

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

I sat on the floor crying. I didn't know what I was going to do. Where was I supposed to get the ring? Who was going to help me because Nkululeko was angry at me. Should I just tell Thapelo the truth. I didn't know what to do. And I couldn't stop crying. I might fail my first test of my major module, then now the ring is gone. There was a knock on the door. I reluctantly stood up and I went to open. It was Mpendulo. I wiped my tears first before I opened the door.

Me: Uhm hey?

Mpendulo: Do you really want my friend to die of stress and pain?

Me: What's wrong?

Mpendulo: Have you been crying?

Me: Uhm no!

Mpendulo: Wait, did you even go to school?

Me: Yes. I was on campus this morning. I had a test.

Mpendulo: You were on campus wearing like that?

Me: Yes. What's up with the million questions.

Mpendulo: What's going on Alondwe. Between you and Thapelo. What did he do?

Me: He didn't do anything. I was just busy with my studying. I just told you that I had a test this morning.

Mpendulo: But you were watching a movie last night. Right? And when I came back later you were gone. Where did you go?

Me: Yes. I was taking a break. I took a walk because I wanted some fresh air. I will call him I promise.

Mpendulo: Please do. I hate being a messenger.

Me: Alright. Bye.

Mpendulo: Bye and stop crying please.

Me: I am not crying just go back to work please.

He nodded and closed the door behind him. I sighed. Oh dear God! I took my tablet and I searched for my ring and it price. I couldn't possibly believe the price of the ring. I didn't have that much money to replace the ring. What was I going to do?

Me: (crying) What was I doing!?

Nkululeko budged in while I was still crying. She sat next to me.

Nkulu: You're crying.

Me: I have to cry. What else must I do huh?

Nkulu: I don't know.

Me: In three weeks Thapelo will come back home and he will find my finger ringless should

I be happy about that?

Nkulu: I don't know. If you didn't act like a bitch none of this would've happened.

Me: Well you've told me that a thousand times. And you saying that won't help me. If you're here to make me feel worse please just leave.

Nkulu: You don't understand how angry I was to see you kissing that man.

Me: I said I am sorry.

Nkulu: I can organise someone who can give us the fake ring that looks exactly like your ring. Thapelo won't notice. In the meantime we will be looking for the original ring because I am sorry we can't afford to buy the original ring. It's too expensive.

Me: I think I must tell him the truth. What if he sees the ring and I will get in trouble.

Nkulu: Are you hearing yourself right now?

Me: Yes I am.

Nkulu: If you tell him the truth. He'll know that I was the one who dragged you out of his apartment and went to the club with you on a Monday. And that means we will kiss our friendship goodbye.

Me: I won't do that. I won't stop being friends with you because Thapelo said so. He can't choose friends for me just like I am not choosing friends for him.

Nkulu: The guy will hate me. Just trust me Alondwe. My plan will work. What we need to do. Is to act normal and start planning your wedding.

Me: Plan the wedding without a ring?

Nkulu: Please stop crying!

My phone rang from the main bedroom. I just didn't want to go and take it. Nkululeko went to attend it. She came back talking to whoever was on the phone.

Nkulu: Yes, she's here.

She gave me the phone. I looked at her.

Nkulu: It's Mr Moloji.

I sighed, wiped my tears and took my phone.

Me: Moloji.

Thapelo: Why are doing this to me? Do you know how worried I was about you last night. Mpendulo said you were gone.

Me: I know Okay. I just wanted some fresh air.

Thapelo: How was your test? You didn't answer my call in the morning I wanted to wish you good luck.

Me: My test was just fine. I didn't hear the phone. Maybe it was on silent mode after I switched it back on.

Thapelo: Okay. It's better if you wrote well. Alondwe when I left. I didn't like what you did. I didn't like it.

Me: I also didn't like what you did.

Thapelo: I knew you were going to act that way. That's why I didn't want you to see the gift.

Me: You don't understand Moloji I acted that way because you kept the gift hidden not because it was a gift for Nomzamo. You don't get it do you?

Thapelo: I am sorry my love. I am really sorry I thought I was just trying to avoid the fight.

Me: Stop justifying it Thapelo. It won't help.

Thapelo: I am sorry. I love you and I won't hurt you like that. You're my princess and soon you'll be my Queen. I won't do anything intentionally to hurt your feelings. I am not perfect but I love you.

I sniffed and wiped my tears. Guilt was taking over. It was not about the ring alone anymore. No! It was the ring, the kiss, going to the club and my test.

Thapelo: Twinkie don't cry please.

Me: I miss you Thapelo. I want you to hold me. I miss you.

Thapelo: I am sorry. I miss you too my little milky bar. I will come back home. I know it won't be soon but I will come back. Please take care of yourself.

Me: You too take care of yourself. I love you.

Thapelo: I love you too. I will call you later.

Me: Alright.

We hung up the call. I looked at Nkululeko.

Nkulu: Oh my friend I am sorry. Don't cry like this please. Everything will be alright.

She hugged me. I felt much better. That's what I needed a hug from her not anger.

Nkulu: Come let's go.

Me: Where are we going?

Nkulu: Back to the club. We will speak to the manager and ask him to look into the camera footage maybe it can show us something.

I nodded. I took my phone and the apartment keys. We left together. She was driving her car.

We arrived at the club. They let us in because Nkululeko knew those people who work there.

He also knew the manager.

Manager: Look who's here!

Nkulu: Yes baby it's me.

They hugged and kissed each other. Okay! I can never keep up with my friend. She's too much and she aims very high.

Manager: Who is this beauty over here?

Nkulu: This is my friend who lost her engagement ring last night.

Manager: You were here last night?

Me: Yes I was here with her.

Manager: Pumpkin you were here and you didn't tell me. How could you?

I looked aside and hid that I was laughing.

Nkulu: I always tell you not to call me pumpkin in front of people. Do you ever listen. Now Alondwe is laughing at me.

Me: Come on you used to laugh when Thapelo calls me little pudding.

Nkulu: Yes because he reminded me of Fk.

I didn't say anything. I just stopped laughing.

Manager: I am sorry okay. So how did she lose her ring exactly?

Nkulu: That's what we want to find out. You still got the cameras? She was on the dance floor with some guy.

Manager: Well people complained about the cameras pointing at the dance floor. So we removed them. We only have the cameras at the entrance. I am sorry.

Me: I can't believe this is happening.

Nkulu: Don't worry. We'll work something out. Thanks for your help love.

They kissed again and we left. She drove us to the person who was going to create the fake ring.

Me: You're screwing the manager?

Nkulu: What? No! It was just a friendly kiss.

Me: I see.

Nkulu: Oh. Come on I wouldn't do that. The guy is too old for my liking.

Me: I saw nothing wrong with him.

Nkulu: Really? So dating him won't be a bad idea?

Me: Woah! Don't tell me you want to date him!

Nkulu looked at me and we laughed. This girl was crazy. We arrived at that place and we showed that woman the ring. She took my finger's measurements and we left. I was going to pay after she was done creating it. Nkululeko and I went to grab dinner. And I spent the night at her place.

That week ended. The first term was over. It was Thursday and we were getting our scripts back. I was going home that day. At least it wasn't like in highschool where they call the pass mark from high to low. The Lecturer gave me my script.

Lecturer: You need to fix this.

I nodded, took my script and left. I looked at it and I got 37%. I wanted to scream. I just couldn't believe this was happening. I don't even think Sphephile was getting 37%. But here I was shaming him. I drove the car to Thapelo's apartment. When I get there I hidded my script. I took my bags and the cab drove me to the airport. I was going to get my fake ring when I get back from home. What really mattered that moment was the fact that I am going home to my son...

Nobuhle Mthembu Pillay...

The court room was all ears and I personally couldn't wait to hear what she had to say.

Judge: Let's hear your confession mam.

Maid:(crying) I didn't mean to hurt him. (Everyone made sounds because we were all shocked)

Judge: Order! Order in the court!

The noise died down. She continued.

Maid: Before Nobuhle came into the house. I was very much in love with Mr Rajiv. He used to come by the house and I couldn't even tell him about my feelings. Until he married Nobuhle. I was angry but I accepted it. I was happy though because they moved in and that meant I was going to see him everyday on my shifts. When madam Claudine told me that he was going to leave for Cape Town. I had to do something to stop him. I only wanted him to get sick not to die. I am really sorry. I didn't mean to kill him.

I couldn't take it in. It was all too much. I just wailed. My lawyer tried to comfort me.

Judge: Please someone help Mrs Pillay.

My mom came to me and she hugged me brushing my back. I cried silently. I couldn't believe this, my husband died because this woman was obsessed with him. I just cried until I was calm. The lawyers were given a chance to ask her questions.

My lawyer: If I may ask miss. Do you have a boyfriend?

Maid: No we broke up.

My lawyer: Do you have children?

Maid: Yes I do.

My lawyer: So your ex boyfriend knows that you were in love with your bosses son?

Maid: No he didn't know. But he suspected because I was always talking about how good he is.

My lawyer: So where did you bake these biscuits?

Maid: I baked them in my house.

My lawyer: Do you mind writing down the ingredients that you used.

Maid: I don't mind.

My lawyer took the pen and the paper. He gave it to the maid. The maid wrote down everything. My lawyer took it and read it. He shook his head.

My lawyer: Your honour this list doesn't match the type of biscuits that killed my client's husband.

Judge: Can I have the list. (He gave it to him)

My lawyer: Are you sure that you're telling the truth because lying in front of the judge in the court of law is also another crime.

Maid: I am telling the truth.

My lawyer: I am not trying to be racist or prejudice or whatever but I am also black. One thing I am sure about is that some black people just like me hardly throw away the till slips.

They leave them in plastic bags until they utilise the plastic bag. Do you have the till slip for those ingredients or can you tell us the retail shop that you bought those ingredients from. The date and the name of the retail shop.

Maid: I bought them in the tuck shop.

My lawyer: Mam you live in the township and you say your township tuck shop sells the kind of nuts used to bake those biscuits? (She didn't say anything) Your honour. I am done.

The maid wasn't answering the question. My lawyer sat down and the state lawyer took over. She asked her questions and she finished. The judge said that he was going to view all the evidence brought forward and all the witnesses testimony then he was going to take the judgment and the sentence. The court was dismissed. My lawyer drove us home. No one was talking in the car. We were all just shocked. Everything came back like it happened yesterday. The pain, my husband's memories. His love and everything.

We finally made it home. Mom prepared something to eat for us.

Lawyer: That woman summarised that story.

Dad: I didn't buy it too. She was in love with Rajiv but she made no move not even try to seduce him.

Lawyer: I think your mother in-law did it and she persuaded that maid to say that she did it. It's only make sense. She was the one who didn't want Heather to leave so now they are changing it and they're saying the maid didn't want Rajiv to leave. That is bullshit.

Me: Can I go and sleep?

My lawyer held my hand and looked at me deep in my eyes.

Lawyer: Are you sure that you're going to be alright?

Me: Eh... Yes I am sure. Thanks for everything.

Lawyer: If you need anything please don't hesitate to contact me anytime.

I smiled and nodded. I went to my room and I just cried. I felt so alone. I couldn't stop asking myself why? Why did he die? Why did he leave us alone. Nobody was going to answer me. I just had to hope that time will heal the wounds.

The big day came. The judge was going to say his judgement. We were all waiting for him to begin.

Judge: I have viewed all the evidence brought forward to me. And I tried to connect the dots and all the connections of this case. Mrs Pillay is not guilty of murder.

I sighed in relief when I heard the judge say that. This meant I wasn't going to prison. Sandile saved me. He really came through for me.

Judge: All the testimony and the evidence pointed one person whom we've turned the blind eye on but with the help of Nadine Pillay and her father. We have the slip that proves that the stepmother of the deceased Mrs Claudine Pillay was the one who purchased the ingredients that baked those biscuits. This woman forced her maid to confess to a murder that she didn't know. Under the supervision of her grandfather I managed to ask Heather some questions. She agreed that it's her grandmother who gave the maid the biscuits. The little girl even described the container that contained the biscuits and we in deed found the container in Rajiv's house. Mr Pillay testified to the police that his wife did kill his son and for that justice must be served. I hear by sentence Claudine Pillay with 27 years in prison with no chance to parole. This court is dismissed.

I couldn't stop crying, I looked at Claudine and she was crying. Her tears meant nothing. She kept on saying how sorry she was and how her husband played her for a fool. I couldn't take it all in. Everything just went blank....

\*\*\*

The day I woke up I was in the hospital. This day I will never forget. This is when the doctor told me that I have the problem of the heart failure. And I was going to live with this for the rest of my life.

## SO TO REFRESH YOUR MEMORY

This is not a story about a good girl.

Stories about victims of abuse have been told.

Stories about good girls who've been victims of rape, abused by evil stepmothers, ill treated by bad friends have been told.

What about our stories? Our thoughts? Our feelings? What about our motives?

I AM NO LONGER A VICTIM OF EVIL! BUT I AM THE PERPETRATOR!!!!

My name is NOBUHLE MTHEMBU (PILLAY)

THIS IS MY STORY.....

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

I arrived at home they were having dinner. Dad saw me first. Sphephile was busy eating.

Dad: Pepiye look who is here!

Sphephile: Who Mkhulu? (He looked where dad was pointing and he screamed getting off the chair) Sphephile: Mama wami. Mama!

I laughed and went down on my knees. I hugged him. Oh I was so happy to see him and hear his beautiful voice. I was surprised that he called me "mama wami" instead of "mama waSpepiye"

Me: Hello baby.

Sphephile: Hello mom.

Mesuli: Hahaha. People grow huh!

Everyone laughed and clapped hands for him. He hid himself on my shoulder. Alupheli was standing next to us.

Alupheli: Can you put him down. I want to hug you Makoti please.

I laughed and put my son down. I hugged my littlest brother.

Alupheli: It's good to have you back Doctor.

Me: I am happy to see you Artist.

Mesuli came to give me a hug too.

Me: I am happy to see you alive and kicking Scientist.

Mesuli: I am happy to see you too Doctor.

Calling each other by our profession is the tradition that we were given by our father. He believed in the power of the tongue. As the Bible would say the power of life and death is on the tongue. This helps us remember what we really want to become. What we want to achieve. When they call me Doctor. I feel it in my bones and I feel like I am living it even if I haven't reach to that point yet. This is what parents should do with their children. Call them by something positive. Avoid using negative phrases to your children because it will slowly make them Believe that they will be nothing in life. Believe in your children and be a positive reinforcement in their lives that is why God trusted you enough to give you a child. He saw that you can help the child grow in a way that he'll be something positive in the future. I then kissed my parents cheeks. I sat down with my son.

Dad: How are you my Princess?

Me: I am fine dad and how is everyone?

Them: We are fine.

Dad: I still have my ring on.

Me: Dad please don't start.

Dad: Okay. I was just asking.

Mom: You look beautiful.

I laughed and said: Thanks. I can see you're getting wrinkles now.

Mom: Alondwe!

Everyone laughed at her because she touched her face. She couldn't believe it.

Dad: She's just joking my love. You still look beautiful more than anything.

Mom: Thanks baby.

They kissed each other. We looked at each other with my brothers and we smiled. They stopped.

Sphephile: Mom eat with me. Please.

Me: Thanks baby. Who taught you to speak like this?

Sphephile: My dad said I am a man now. I shouldn't speak like a child. So he taught me that I should speak like this.

Dad: He was just joking. You're not a man.

Me: Dad!

Dad: What? He's still a boy.

Mesuli: Yes you're a boy.

Sphephile: No. I know that you're jealous that I am man now. A man like this, I don't blame you for being jealous.

They laughed at him.

Me: Yeah tell them boy. And let us eat.

Mom: I will dish up for you Doctor.

Me: Thank you mama. Uyathandwa is not coming back?

Dad: No he's not. We are going to church tomorrow. We were supposed to go tonight too but we couldn't leave you behind.

Me: It's not a church conference right? We will be going to our church?

Dad: No it's not a conference. It's Easter remember?

Me: Yeah. I get it now. I just have a lot on my plate.

Sphephile: Grandma gave you a lot of food?

Me: No baby why?

Sphephile: You just said you have a lot on your plate that's why you forgot about the Easter. Everyone laughed at him. He looked at me waiting for clarity.

Me: That means I was very busy baby that's why I forgot.

Alupheli: No it's means you have problems.

Me: Alupheli!

Sphephile: My mom has problems? Mama? Really? Are you sick? You're fine?

Mom: Alupheli! You see now my grandson is sad. Why can't you just learn to shut up!

Alupheli: I am sorry I was just telling the truth.

Me: Mxm!

I stood up with my son because he was crying.

Dad: Uyahoxa kodwa yazi.

Alupheli: I am sorry.

I went upstairs in my room with him. We sat on my bed. I wiped his tears.

Sphephile: Are you sick mama?

Me: No baby I am not sick.

Sphephile: You're having problems?

Me: No. Your mama meant that the school work was too much for her so she forgot some other things like the fact that it's Easter Friday tomorrow.

Sphephile: Okay. Mom you're not failing right because the school work is too much?

I sighed and held him close to me.

Me: No baby. Your mama is not failing. She will make it so that you have the best of everything that you want my love alright?

Sphephile: Yes mom.

My phone rang. It was on my jacket's pocket. I took it out. Thapelo was calling.

Me: I am sorry my love I have to answer this call Okay?

He nodded and I answered.

Me: Mrs Moloi speaking hello?

Thapelo: Oh I like the sound of that. But where are you?

Me: Where am I?

Thapelo: Yes. I wanted to surprise you because it's a holiday tomorrow. I wanted us to go to church together so I came back for the weekend. I am going back on Monday.

Me: You're such a romantic man. But my love I am home. You know the first term break.

Thapelo: Oh yeah that I forgot. Who you with there?

Me: I am with my little man.

Thapelo: Can you put me on speaker please.

Me: Someone wants to speak to you.

Sphephile: Okay. (I put him on speaker)

Me: You're on speaker.

Thapelo: Hello Sphephile it's chocolate man over here?

Sphephile: (laughing) Oh hey. Chocolate man when are you coming to see me. I can't wait to eat the chocolate. Please come.

Thapelo:(laughing) You're making me feel scared.

Sphephile: Don't feel scared. I won't bite the chocolate, that will hurt you. I will just lick it. We all laughed.

Thapelo: Twinkie what do you say about that?

Me: I think chocolate man must produce more chocolate so that both Sphephile and his mom will share him.

Sphephile: Yes! Mom that's a good idea. I love that idea. Mom will eat the other side and I will eat the other side.

Thapelo: And what will I eat in you if you eat me first?

My mom came inside my room.

Mom: I thought I should check up on you guys.

Sphephile: Oh hey grandma I am speaking to chocolate man here. Do not disturb...

Chocolate man we don't know what you will eat. You chose to be the chocolate.

Thapelo: (laughing) Then chocolate man will not see you because you and your mom wants to eat him.

Sphephile and I: That's so wrong!

We looked at each other and laughed.

Thapelo: It's nice to speak to you Sphephile.

Sphephile: Thanks. It's nice to speak to you too but I want to see you.

Thapelo: Don't worry you will see me.

Sphephile: Okay. Thanks. Goodnight.

Thapelo: Goodnight..... Twinkie I love you.

Me: I love you too Moloi. Goodnight.

Thapelo: Goodnight.

We hung up the call. Mom came to sit on the bed with us.

Sphephile: Mom you're Twinkie?

Me: Yes but not to you.

He laughed and nodded. He played with my phone.

Mom: Sphephile can you go downstairs. I want to speak to your mother.

Sphephile: Okay grandma.

I put him down and he headed to the door.

Me: Please don't give your uncle Alupheli my phone alright?

Sphephile: I won't give it to him.

He left and I was with my mom.

Mom: Twinkie do you think it's a good idea to let him speak to your boyfriend.

Me: Mom please don't call me Twinkie.

Mom: What? I like the name. He'll call you Twinkie and I won't?

Me: It's my lecturer who gave me that name. I don't have a problem with being called like that at school.

Mom: Well you'll suck it up because I think it's cute. Now back to my question.

Me: I don't see a problem because Thapelo is my future and my son likes him.

Mom: So you will just have a civil union with him? Because we've made ourselves clear that you're not marrying him.

Me: I am not having this conversation with you mom

Mom: I am trying to help you see what you are doing is wrong. You can't continue with him.

Me: You made it clear that you don't want him so don't get involved mom.

I stood up and I went back downstairs. I went to finish up my food. I was done fighting with my parents about Thapelo. I didn't even want to mention his name in front of them. I just had too much to deal with, now that my ring went missing. I just wanted to forget it for now and just spend time with my son and everyone else.

The following morning we were all ready for church. I was in the kitchen fixing a lunch box for my son. I heard different voices coming from the lounge. I finished up and I went to them because they were waiting for me. It was uncle Andile and his family.

Me: Sanibona.

Them: Hey.

I hugged my cousins and aunt shemah.

Me: Who's driving with me I am leaving now.

Dad: Who said you are driving?

Me: Come on dad, I am driving with the kids. You all are adults, you should drive alone.

The kids agreed with me so I drove with them to church. It was pretty packed when we got there. But there were enough seats. You know how our churches are on Easter. My phone couldn't stop vibrating. Thapelo was calling. I didn't answer. I waited and I texted him telling him I am at church.

{Thapelo}: >texting back< Yeah I know. I will hate to walk in there alone please come to me. Huh!? This man. I stood up and Sphephile followed me. I looked at him. Me: Go back to the others baby I will be back. Sphephile: No I want to go with you. I shook my head and I held his hand. We left the church. I spotted Thapelo across the road. God! I had no ring in my finger. We went to him and he smiled. I was pretty nervous. Me: I can't believe you, how did you find my church? Thapelo: You once came to this church with me before. Don't you remember? I even remember the name of the pastor. He was preaching strong Zulu not the one you taught me. I laughed and I hugged him. He kissed my forehead. Thapelo: This must be Sphephile right? Sphephile: Yes. You know me. Who are you? Thapelo: It's me, chocolate man. Sphephile: (laughing) No. You're lying. Mom? Me: It's him baby. He let go of my hand and he looked at us with his hands on his waist. Sphephile: You two lied to me! It's a month of Jesus and you lied to me. Where's the chocolate? Where is it????

Nobuhle Zulu....

FOUR MONTHS LATER..

After I was discharged from the hospital. I went back to my mother's house. I had to depend on medication and eating healthy food because it kept my heart on check. Though I was through some heavy things. I trusted God!? Wait did I just say God? Being in that hospital changed my life completely. The court case changed my life. My husband's death changed who I was. I hated Claudine so much. I hated everything about that family. I just wanted my kids back and I was going to cut ties with them that's what I was planning to do. The people

who mattered the most in my life were my kids nobody else but my kids.

The previous four months have been hell for me. My in-laws hated the fact that Sandile helped me with the case. When I told them that I will marry him. They all got mad. I was done mourning my husband that time. Sandile asked me to mourn my husband full period that I was going to mourn him. I took my time mourning him and I finished. Everyone, Mr Pillay, Nadine, Aunt Theresa, Garry and his wife. They wanted me to stay with them in the mansion and raise my kids there. I refused so Sandile assisted me with getting custody for my children. That case changed my life completely, it changed the last good part of me that I thought I had left. It was me against the Pillay family. They all wanted the kids to continue staying with them.

{FLASH BACK}

Me: I will give my kids a better home.

Mr Pillay: What do you mean by that? Isn't this home a better home for them huh?

My mom: That is not what she meant.

Garry: You gave Precious to our family. She's a wife in this family. So as the family we expect her to stay here and raise my brother's kids close to their family. Not with the man they hardly know.

Dad: Sandile is a good man from a very good family. He will be a father to the kids.

Garry: I am practically their father. Not him. They are my brother's kids.

Nadine: They shouldn't leave this house. I also disagree.

Me: My husband is dead. Can't you all see that? Why should I stay here. There's nothing left for me here.

Nadine: But precious you couldn't even wait a year then maybe marry him. What's the rush.

Me: I want to give my children a home. Sandile loves my children.

Mr Pillay: If you want to marry that man. Go ahead and marry him but my grandchildren are going nowhere. Please leave my house.

We had to leave the house. After that meeting I filed for custody of my children. And there was a court case. With the good reputation that Sandile has I managed to get the custody of my kids but we had to go to home affairs and get married first. My father in-law accepted the lobola money thinking that I was giving up my kids. But I came back and claimed them using the court. They gave Sandile and I full custody. They were going to visit their family when they want to see them and when the family wants them.

We were now living eMhlanga. Heather didn't like Sandile, but the boys loved him so much. They were calling him daddy. My boys were 1 year and six months old. Heather was five years old. Vusi was also five years old and his sister Asemahle was four years old. I applied through CAO. I was going to study the following year. I wasn't in love with Sandile. But I tolerated him. I was sleeping with him like I was having sex with him. I was doing it because I felt like I owe him too much not because I love him. But anyway I didn't care whether it's love or what I was just enjoying the sex because it was good. This was the new me, my life and new everything. Pain changed me it didn't make me stronger. It made me a beast. A monster. I only had a heart for my kids. I had no heart for Sandile's daughter not because she was rude but because Heather didn't like Sandile. So she had to pay for that. But I didn't show Sandile that. To Sandile's eyes I was the perfect wife. The good wife. I had no problem with his son. Everyone, someone had to pay for all the pain that I have felt. I didn't care whether they were more deserving or not. I was just doing what I had to do to survive.

It was now mid October. I was at the bank to deposit the money. There was a family account.

Basically the account was for me to use on the things that I need urgently in the house.

Because Sandile was a business man. Sometimes he goes on business trips so the money helped on the rainy days. I was on the line at the bank.

Voice: Mrs Zulu.

I looked back and it was the lawyer.

Me: Hello Mr Myeza. How are you?

Mr Myeza: Oh please. I always tell you to call me Ntando please.

Me: Alright. Ntando how are you?

Ntando: It's been a long time. Can I buy you coffee after this?

Me: Buying coffee for the boss's wife?

Ntando: Well as a friend. There are lot of things we need to catch up on.

Me: I supposed coffee won't be that bad.

He smiled, I smiled back. We did what we came to do at the bank and we went to have coffee.

Ntando: I can see Mr Zulu is taking good care of you hey. You look classy and beautiful.

Me: I feel like a Queen and I feel like I am already a Principal.

Ntando: That man loves you. He will make all that happens and as his lawyer and adviser I will make sure that he does. I will make sure that he takes care of you.

The way he looked into my eyes. I didn't understand whether he feels pity for me or he was just fond of me. I didn't understand.

Me: Thanks. It's good to know that someone has my back. I really appreciate it.

Ntando: I got your back.

My wrist watch beeped, it was a reminder that I had a meeting with my husband, a dinner meeting with his business associates.

Me: Oups! Duty calls I got to go and make sure that I get ready for dinner tonight.

Ntando: Alright let me not keep you.

I smiled and nodded. He walked me to my car. He kissed the back of my hand, opened the door for me and closed it once I was inside. Then I drove off to my house. Our kids had a driver. I went home and I got ready for the dinner...

Alondwe Ndunakazi...

Thapelo and I looked at each other.

Sphephile: No don't look at it each other. Where is the chocolate?

He said that making his way to Thapelo. He grabbed his hand and bite it. Thapelo groaned in pain.

Me: Sphephile!

Sphephile: There is no Chocolate. He's not chocolate man.

He cried and sat down on the ground.

Me: Young man get off that ground now!

Sphephile: I want the chocolate.

He rolled himself on the ground. This child was making me mad. He was seriously crying.

Me: Sphephile man! Stop it!

Thapelo: I will buy them at the garage just now.

I nodded and I tried to make him stand up but he cried some more.

Sphephile: He's leaving mom. He's leaving. Why did you lie to me?

He was now sitted on his butts his arms folded in front of his chest. I went down to his level.

Me: I didn't lie to you baby. But you got it all wrong. You see your skin colour. It's different to his skin colour right? (He nodded) You're like the milky bar chocolate. The white chocolate. You're?

Sphephile: I am the yellow bone.

Me: Good. So that man over there, has a smooth dark skin like chocolate. So that's why your mother calls him chocolate man. It's because of his skin colour. Not that you can eat him.

Sphephile: Really?

Me: Yes baby. It's the month of Jesus I won't lie to you. I won't lie to my baby boy.

He nodded and opened his arms for a hug. I hugged him and he got up. I dusted him off. Thapelo came back with the big cudburry chocolate.

Thapelo: This is for you little guy.

Sphephile: For me?

Thapelo: Yes. This is my way of saying sorry because you got the wrong idea about me being a chocolate man.

Sphephile: Well you're a chocolate man because you delivered the chocolate to me. Thank you.

He hugged Thapelo's legs. Thapelo carried him in his arms. Sphephile smiled. He liked being carried.

Sphephile: Well I believe as a man I must say sorry for biting your hand.

Thapelo: I see mommy, your father and the grandparents have raised a responsible man.

Sphephile nodded. I smiled and Thapelo kissed me.

Thapelo: Okay let's go back to church.

I held his free hand and we went back to church. I was kind of scared because people stare at you when you walk in while someone was on the front talking. We went to sit where I was with my brothers and cousins. They looked at us as we sat down. Thapelo placed Sphephile on his lap.

Alupheli: (whispering) Who is this?

Me: (whispering back) Shut up.

Alupheli: Can we have the chocolate too Sphephile?

Sphephile: No.

I told them to shut up and concentrate and they did but the others kept on looking at the chocolate. At 3'Oclock the service ended. There was going to be another service at 6'Oclock. The kids were already restless.

Luzuko: Let's go now Alondwe I am hungry.

Thapelo: Let's take them to Nandos by point (south beach)

Me: Aybo I don't have money.

Mesuli: She can never do it.

Thapelo: I will pay Alondwe.

Nonduduzo: Please say yes cousin please.

Alupheli: If she says no. We will go with him alone.

Others: Yes.

Mom came to us because now we were sitting down debating about this matter.

Mom: What's going on now Alondwe. Ain't you guys leaving. We are leaving now.

Sphephile: Go grandma. Chocolate man is taking us out for lunch.

Others: YOU'RE CHOCOLATE MAN!

Me: Hey! Why you're shouting now!

Them: Sorry.

Alupheli: I have been dying to meet you.

Luzuko: Yeah I heard my dad and aunt talking about you. Wow!

Me: Guys please.

Thapelo was just puzzled now. Everyone wanted to say something to him. It's like he was a celebrity.

Mom: Well I can see why you call him chocolate man. He's really cute (she mumbled that to me)

Thapelo: My name is Thapelo Moloji mam.

Mom: I am Thandeka Ndunakazi. The mother of this one that you wish to marry. Hey but I am sorry that it won't happen hey. Not that we have something against you but we're just trying to protect her.

Thapelo didn't say anything. He gave my mom a side smile revealing his dimple.

Mom: Mmm he has dimples.

Me: Mom please. (She stopped)

Alupheli: Don't worry chocolate man if they don't like you. I know they hardly like anyone except for Sphephile's father. (Thapelo looked at me) They are my parents I know them. But we like you right guys?

Others: Yes, we like you.

Thapelo: Thanks guys.

Mom: Alright. Well let me go and tell your father that his supposedly son in-law is here.

Me: Mom! (She left)

Mesuli: My advice, let's go with him before dad gets here please now!

Alupheli: He's right. Let's go.

We stood up quickly and we left.

Thapelo offered to drive the car.

Sphephile: No don't drive I want to stay like this in your arms. Let mom drive.

Thapelo: Alright.

We all stepped inside the car and I drove off with them. My father was calling. I answered him through the car speakers.

Me: I am driving Ndunakazi.

Dad: Why did you leave?

Me: You wanted me to stay dad so that you can roast my fiance?

Dad: He's still your fiance, I didn't see the ring when you came home last night.

I swallowed hard and Thapelo looked at my finger. His jaw tightened. Dad was just, Argh I don't even know. He just spoils everything.

Me: Just because you didn't see the it doesn't mean he's no longer my fiance.

Dad: Is he still there I want to speak to him.

Me: Nop! Bye.

I hung up the call. I looked at Thapelo. He wasn't looking at me. I could see that he was angry.

Alupheli: I can't believe we won't get to see the wedding happening. Our parents are unbelievable.

Luzuko: Yeah. It's not nice. You seem like a nice guy chocolate man.

Thapelo: Thanks boy.

Nonduduzo: I bet he is nice. He's with Alondwe after all. He has to be nice.

Alupheli: He's taking us to lunch. That alone is being nice.

Others: Yeah.

Thapelo opened my hand bag and he gave me the tissue. I thanked him and took it. I wiped my tears. Hearing them talk like that. It was just painful.

Sphephile: Don't cry mommy it will be alright.

Me: Thanks baby.

We arrived by Nandos and we parked the car there.

Mesuli: You know dad, might follow us so I suggest we go somewhere else because they know that we are coming here.

Thapelo: Let's go to wimpy then by the beach. If you like it.

They all agreed and I drove to the beach. I found the parking spot and I parked there. We went to wimpy. We sat down and read the menu.

Me: Sphephile sit on your chair now.

Sphephile: No.

Me: Thapelo won't eat well if you're sitting on him.

Sphephile: She's telling the truth?

Thapelo: Yes but you can sit on me until the food arrives Okay?

Sphephile: Okay. Thanks.

He gave me his chocolate. I took it and put it in my bag. We then had drinks.

Mesuli: You don't mind if I ask you questions?

Thapelo: No I don't.

Mesuli: You and my sister where did you meet?

Thapelo: We met in highschool.

Mesuli: You have loved each other ever since?

Thapelo: Yes. We have.

Mesuli: How do you handle her because she's her. Like she's Alondwe. You know what I mean?

Thapelo: Yes I know what you mean.

Me: No wait, what do you mean by that Mesuli?

Alupheli: He means you're Ndunakazi's first born so you took the most stubbornness and I don't take nonsense from no one syndrome.

Thapelo laughed and I gave him the eye. He stopped

Mesuli: That's what I am talking about, how do you handle that?

Me: What did I do now Mesuli?

Thapelo: Ah. Mesuli. Don't worry. I can handle her very well. Though sometimes it gets out of hand and I become angry but I am strong enough to take it and deal with it. And more importantly I try to calm her if she's acting like that.

Mesuli: So you don't hit her when she makes you angry like those men on TV?

Thapelo: No I don't do that. I can never ruin her pretty face. I love her and if a man loves a woman he protects her. He doesn't destroy her.

Mesuli smiled and gave him his hand. They did hand shake. I smiled.

Alupheli: Well I want a hand shake too.

Luzuko: Me too.

Nonduduzo: Me too.

Thapelo did the hand shake with the boys and he kissed the back of nonduduzo's hand. She smiled.

Sphephile: Since everyone asked for it. I want it too.

Thapelo laughed and gave him the handshake.

Mesuli: You're good for her. If I could I would have made my parents agree to let you marry her. But hey our father is a very difficult man. It would have been better if my mom wasn't siding with him. He was going to let you marry her because dad is too soft on mom.

Thapelo: It's Okay man. We will survive.

Alupheli: Why don't you just go and marry each other behind their backs!

Mesuli: Alupheli, don't be crazy.

Me: Okay enough about my marriage can we talk about something else. Something fun.

We agreed on that and we spoke about something else. The food arrived and we started eating. Sphephile was now on my lap because I wanted to feed him. We were all having a conversation while eating. We finished up and Thapelo paid. We went to the car. Thapelo asked to speak to me outside the car.

Thapelo: Where is the ring I gave you?

Me: Thapelo it's in my things at home. Look let's not fight about this. I am going home now.

Thapelo: You're going to spend the night with me right? I booked a hotel room here at Garden court please.

Me: My parents saw you if I lie, they'll see that I am lying. I just want to be with you.

Thapelo: Come on Twinkie just try. Please. I haven't seen you in two weeks and there's still another two weeks coming up. I won't be with you.

Me: Okay I will try.

Thapelo: And please do wear the ring when you get home. I didn't give it to you so that you can take it off whenever you feel like it.

I smiled and nodded. I didn't know what was i going to do about this matter. I dropped off him to the hotel. He stepped out of the car. Sphephile was sleeping.

Thapelo: Okay bye guys.

Them: Bye chocolate man. Thank you.

Thapelo nodded and he left. They spoke about him and my mind wasn't even there. I wanted to tell him the truth without selling my friend off.

We arrived at home and the parents were watching TV while eating snacks.

Dad: Where is the boy?

Uncle Andile: I also wanted to see him.

I took my son from Mesuli and I went upstairs with him. I didn't want to answer their questions. Nkululeko was in my room pacing up and down. I put my son in my bed.

Me: Okay. What's going on? The whole Johannesburg is here.

Nkulu: Thank God you're here. I am going back just now. Thapelo called me and asked whether your church was going to have a conference somewhere else or in Durban. I told him. I figured he wants to come to Durban. I went to the lady and I asked her to finish up the ring because it was urgent. She did and I paid her. I am here to deliver your ring. I hope you haven't told Thapelo the truth.

Me: No but I think I should.

Nkulu: Please Alondwe don't do this to me. Please.

I just nodded. She thanked me, kissed my cheek and she left after giving me the ring. I looked at the ring and it looked legit but because I know my old ring, my real ring. I could see the difference in the diamond specially. I sighed and sat down on my bed....

Nobuhle Zulu

I arrived at home, the kids were watching TV. They all came to me and hugged me except for Asemahle.

Me: How was school my children?

Them: It was good.

Me: Okay. Go and sit down.

Me: Asemahle why didn't you greet me when the others were greeting me?

Asemahle: I am sorry. Hi mom.

Me: You better act like a child in this house do you understand me?

Asemahle: Yes I understand.

I clicked my tongue. I just didn't get it my daughter didn't like Sandile but his daughter liked me. All I wanted was her not to like me so that Sandile and I can be even. I tried in all directions to take my angers out on her but she didn't even tell her father that I was mistreating her. I didn't care about the damage I was doing in her life. I was tired of fighting with Sandile about how Heather is disrespecting him. What was I supposed to do. He wasn't her father and Heather recognised that unlike the boys. I didn't want Sandile to know that I was mistreating his daughter. I wanted it to look like she didn't like me too like Heather didn't like her father. I suppose I had to try and make sure that Sandile sees that so that I can settle the score with him. I couldn't wait for his daughter to tell her father because obviously she wasn't going to do it. I had to stay longer as Sandile's wife so that he can pay for my studies. I called Heather. I went upstairs with her in my room.

Me: Baby I want you to help mom choose the dress for tonight.

Heather: Where are you going?

Me: I am having dinner with your father and his business associates.

Heather: He's not my father. Stop calling him like that! Mom please.

Me: Okay, fine I am sorry. Now will you help me?

Heather: No I won't help you.

She left the room. I sat on my bed and sighed. How was I going to make Heather love Sandile? Because Sandile was going to explode anytime soon and he was going to leave us. Then I wasn't going to get my Degree. Oh maybe I have to steal his money and make sure that he doesn't see? I sighed and I stood up. I looked for an outfit to wear. I took it and I placed it on the stand. I went to take a shower. When I came back Sandile was with Asemahle on the bed. She was untying her father's shoes. She does that every day when Sandile comes back from work. I went to kiss him.

Sandile: How was your day?

Me: It was a good day. But it got ruined when I got home.

Sandile: Why? What happened?

Me: Asemahle didn't greet me like the others when I got home. She just sat there and pretended like I wasn't there.

I faked some tears and that made it look real. What I have learned about a man in love is that he is weak. He can do anything for the woman he's in love with. Sandile came to me and he hugged me. Just what I wanted him to do.

Sandile: I am sorry my love. Asemahle why did you do that to your mother?

Asemahle: I am sorry daddy. I didn't mean to.

Sandile: Apologize to her.

Asemahle: I am sorry mom.

Me: It's okay.

Sandile: No it's not okay. What you did is not right. Do not do it again. Alright?

She nodded and Sandile told her to go her siblings. She left. Sandile kissed me and I kissed him back. He lifted me up and continued to kiss me.

Me: You want some snack before the actual dinner?

Sandile: That won't be a bad idea.

I giggled and kissed him. He threw me on top of the bed and I laughed. He got on top of me and he did me very good. It was just perfect. Then we went to shower together and we dressed up. We went downstairs to say goodbye to the kids.

Me: Please be good to your nanny alright?

Them: Yes mom.

I kissed them all goodbye. I could see that Asemahle was happy but that's not what I wanted. According to me she was supposed to refuse my kiss but hey I couldn't force it down on her otherwise Sandile was going to notice. I didn't want him to leave me. I wanted him to take me to school. We then left and he drove straight to the restaurant where we were meeting. We arrived and everyone was there. Even Ntando was there. I didn't expect him to be there. We greeted them one by one. I made it to the lawyer.

Me: You didn't tell me you were coming.

Ntando: What? I was supposed to tell you?

Me: I supposed, yes.

Ntando: Don't worry. You look beautiful.

I didn't say anything. I looked at him and he smiled. I proceeded to the others. And it was time to have dinner. I was next to my husband.

Some woman: Mrs Zulu I have to say you are lucky.

Me: Why do you say that?

Her: Your first husband was a good man and your second husband is a good man.

I swallowed hard and said: How do you know my first husband?

Her: He worked with my husband. But my husband is not here because he's not a business

partner.

Me: Oh. Uhm excuse me.

I stood up and I went to the bathroom. I looked at myself in the mirror and I blocked my tears. I didn't want to cry. It's been a while since I last thought or spoke about Rajiv. I wanted to keep his memory buried. I wanted to block the pain forever. There was a knock on the door.

Sandile: Honey are you alright?

Me: Yes I am fine.

Sandile: We can leave if you're uncomfortable.

Me: Yes I think we should go.

Sandile: Okay come out then.

I wiped my face and I went to him. He hugged me tightly.

Sandile: I am sorry.

Me: It's not your fault. Let's go.

He held my hand and we went to the table to take our things.

Ntando: You guys are leaving already?

Sandile: Yes. Nobuhle is not feeling alright.

That woman: Oh what's wrong is it what I said?

Ntando: Obviously it's your fault. Sandile go well. And be well Mrs Zulu. (I nodded)

Sandile: Thank man.

We left. We arrived at home and I changed my clothes into my night dress. Sandile brought a cup of soup for me and my medication.

Me: Thanks.

I took my medication and the soup then I slept after that. I just didn't want to think I wanted to sleep.

In the morning, we were having breakfast with the kids. Sandile was telling them he's leaving for a business trip just for one week.

Heather: You shouldn't have told us. We won't even notice that you are not here.

Sandile: Young lady I don't appreciate that kind of attitude you're using when talking to me.

Heather: I was just saying what is important.

Sandile: Nobuhle?

Me: What?

Their driver came to take them. They said their goodbyes and they left. Sandile was looking at me. I didn't say anything. I just didn't want to fight.

Sandile: Your daughter won't stop disrespecting me if you don't tell her what she is doing is wrong.

Me: I can't control what comes out of my mouth.

Sandile: When you told me that Asemahle didn't greet you. I spoke to her and I tried to make her see that what she did was wrong but whenever Heather does something wrong. You don't say anything to her. You just shut up like you didn't hear her. How will she know if what she's doing is wrong?

I didn't answer him. He clicked his tongue and left. I smiled. At least now we were even.

Monday morning Sandile left. We were still fighting when he left. He wanted me to admit that I am wrong but I didn't want to. I wasn't going to accept defeat. At night I was sleeping alone in the bedroom. There was someone buzzing the gate. The kids were sleeping. I went to check and it was Ntando. I couldn't believe it! What was he doing in my house at that hour. I opened the gate and the door. He came to the door after stepping out of his car. I looked at him.

Me: What are you doing here?

Ntando: I just wanted to make sure that you're safe.

Me: What!?

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

I went back downstairs. I left my son sleeping on the bed. My siblings were outside playing.

Mom: Please cook dinner for you guys.

Me: Alright.

I went to cook dinner. I didn't protest because I wanted to leave at night so I just had to do everything that mom says I must do. I finished up cooking then I cleaned up the kitchen. The parents were no longer on the lounge. They were upstairs. I went upstairs to check up on Sphephile and he was sleeping. The time was about 17:30 when uncle Andile and his wife, and my parents came downstairs all dressed up.

Me: Are you guys going somewhere. You look beautiful.

Aunt shemah: Thanks dear.

Uncle Andile: We are going to church. The 6 to 6 service.

Me: Eish.

Dad: What's wrong you wanted to go too?

Me: Uhm, no but I had some plans with Andiswa.

Mom: Really?

Me: Yes. It's been a while since I last saw her so I wanted to spend the night with her.

Dad: You're lying. That boy didn't leave?

Me: What boy?

Mom: Your boyfriend. You want to go and spend the night with him not Andiswa.

Me: No I am telling the truth.

Dad: Well if you don't have a child. I was going to allow you to go and be with that Andiswa friend of yours but you know that you have a child so you can't leave. And don't bring any friend in my house. Sizoxabana kabi.

Me: But mom you can call your maid. She always look after them when you and dad went out.

Mom: Too bad it's short notice and maybe she's also at church.

Me: That woman doesn't go to church.

Uncle Andile: Don't you know that even people who don't go to church regularly do go to church on Easter.

Yoh! I wanted to cry shame. I was really looking forward to spending the night with Thapelo. I even got in mind the lingerie I was going to wear.

Aunt Shemah: I can stay with the kids then she can go to her friends.

Mom: No skwiza you will do no such thing. We are going to church to pray for our children. So she will stay here and look after the kids.

Aunt Shemah: But it's sad. She wants to cry now.

Dad: She has a baby so no going out for her. And these are the kind of things we should pray for, in our children. Lies. They lie too much. Bye. Baby. And I do wish to cross paths with your boyfriend.

My father kissed my forehead, my mom kissed my cheek. My aunt Shemah and tapped my shoulder.

Uncle Andile: Sorry hey.

I nodded and they left. I banged the table. Geez! My father. If I was evil I was going to kill him and bury him. He was so difficult! I sat there thinking. The service was a whole night prayer so that means they were going to come back in the morning. I took my phone and I took the maid's number on my mom's emergency phone book. I called her and she answered.

Maid: Hello.

Me: Is this Sisi Thandi who works for Thandeka Ndunakazi?

Maid: Yes it's her. What's wrong?

Me: No. Nothing is wrong. It's Alondwe here. I need your help, my parents are at the church

and I need to go somewhere. Can you please look after the kids. I promise I will pay you. Please.

Maid: I am resting and you are disturbing me.

Me: I know and I am so sorry. I will pay and I will call the cab to come and get you.

Maid: I can't say no to extra cash so send the cab.

Me: Thank you so much.

I hung up and I called the cab. The book had her address so I told the driver the address. In the meantime I went to get ready. My siblings were watching TV. I finished up and I wore my red knee coat. Underneath there was my lingerie only. I wore black heels and I packed an overnight bag. I kissed my baby's forehead and I left the chocolate next to him. I went downstairs to dish up dinner for the children. I called them to the table.

Alupheli: Where are you going?

Me: I am going out with my friends. The maid will look after you guys.

Mesuli: You shouldn't have called her. I was going to look after them. That lady will make us sleep very early. Alondwe dude.

Me: I am sorry. I didn't know. Please be on your best behaviour guys. I will come back before our parents come home.

Them: Okay. Bye.

I took my bags and I headed out. The cab came. I gave the maid her money and I told her that my son was still sleeping. I paid the cab. I took my mom's car and I drove straight to the hotel.

I arrived at the hotel. Thapelo have told me his room number. So I went there straight. I had my fake ring on my left finger. I knocked at the door and he came to open.

Thapelo: (smiling) I didn't think you would make it.

Me: Stop talking.

I pushed him back. He smiled, his dimples just turned me on. I took off my coat.

Thapelo: Woman, you're dangerous. You are driving around wearing nothing.

I kissed him and closed the door behind me. We walked to the bed. I made him lay down and I ripped off his clothes. He smiled looking at me. He wanted to talk again.

Me: You left me bae less for two weeks and you come back here wanting to talk. You ain't gonna do that to me. Stop talking. I want you not your talks.

Thapelo: Okay. Take all of me.

He nodded. I took control of everything. I went down on him and his hands were all over my body. He pulled my hair as I started going faster. I was enjoying every second. He came and I took turn to take a ride. I rode him like my life depended on it. Actually for that moment it did because I didn't want him to speak about the ring. I wanted his penis. I finished up and we switched positions. He was now taking control of everything. After that we dozed off. The drug was too intense.

In the morning I was woken up by my alarm at 4 am. Thapelo woke up too. He held me tight.

Thapelo: Do you have to go this early?

Me: Yes I have to. My father will be home after 6.

Thapelo: Can I at least get one morning glory.

I giggled and agreed. We went to shower together and had our morning glory. After that I dressed up properly. Thapelo went back to bed.

Me: It's 5 am now you're not supposed to go back to bed Thapelo.

Thapelo: I will wake up at 6. My flight leaves at 8.

I finished up and I went to kiss him.

Me: Please tell me when you wake up.

Thapelo: Okay. Let me walk you out.

Me: No sleep.

Thapelo: I want to see you leave.

I nodded and he stood up. He wore his pyjamas and the hotel gown he put his phone on the gown. We left the hotel holding hands. We got to the car and we stood beside it.

Thapelo: I will miss you.

Me: I will miss you too. And thanks for coming here.

He kissed me. I let go of my bags, I wrapped my arms around his neck and I kissed him deeply. We stopped when someone beat us with a belt. I screamed because it was painful. We looked at the direction where the belt came from.

Dad: Is this Andiswa?

It was my father, he was with uncle Andile.

Me: Dad what are you doing here?

He slapped me. Thapelo tried to defend me but dad punched him.

Dad: Boy I told you that I am not giving you my daughter but you continue following her.

Thapelo: I love her.

Dad: You love her? You're calling this thing love! She's going against my word because of your fucken penis and you're telling me that you love her.

Me: Daddy –

Dad: Shut up! Shut up Alondwe uyangizwa? (Do you hear me) I told you not to go and leave the kids alone. You took the money that I give to you. You pay the maid so that you can have sex with him?

Thapelo: Sir can you please –

Dad: I am not talking to you. I will break your bones boy and you will live to regret it. I mean it.

Thapelo: I was going to make things right. I was going to make your daughter my wife but you refused, we love each other and –

My father kicked Thapelo, it was a side swip kick and he fell on the ground. He groaned. I went down on him.

Me: Thapelo?

Thapelo: My leg Alondwe.

Dad pulled me by my hair. Uncle Andile took my bags. Dad started walking with me to his car. I cried looking back at Thapelo. He looked like he was in great pain. Uncle stepped inside my mom's car.

Me: Dad we can't leave him like that.

Dad: He's none of my business and he's none of yours too. You are disrespecting me because of that boy's penis. Today I will show you who is the parent and who is the child.

Usungijwayele kakhulu.

I was crying all I could think about was Thapelo. My heart was with him. I couldn't imagine the pain he was feeling. Dad put me at back of his car. I took my phone out of my pocket and I called the ambulance. I explained everything to them, dad was very mad. I didn't care. Why would he be so heartless and leave Thapelo while he was injured. When we got home. He went to the back room with me. He used the other room that Alupheli wasn't using for school.

Dad: Why are disrespecting me Alondwe?

My mom came inside the room with the bags that uncle Andile took. It was my bags.

Me: I am not disrespecting you.

Mom: Yeywena ungasidakelwa thina. Just because we are friendly to you we want you to be able to approach us with anything without fearing us it doesn't mean you'll do as you please. This is our house and you will not do as you please. Awumfazi wamuntu la (you're nobodys wife)

Me: You refused to let me marry him. I wouldn't be doing this if you accepted that I love him

and I want to be with him.

Dad: It's love when are sleeping with him? You left tonight because sex was on your mind?

Me: I wasn't sleeping with him.

Dad: Open that bag Thandeka.

My mom opened the bag and she took out everything that was in there. She took my lingerie.

Mom: Isn't this for sex?

I didn't say anything, my dad started beating me with the belt. I cried because it was painful.

Dad: Uhamba uyojola ngemoto Ka Nkosikazi wami ukuze uzolala nalowa mfana. (You leave using my wife's car to sleep with that boy) The car I bought with my money. You're using it for dirty things. You thought I wasn't going to track it down? Huh?

I didn't say anything. I just cried.

Dad: Answer me danmit!

Mom: Give me that belt Ndunakazi.

Dad gave it to her and she took her turn beating me. It was very painful.

Mom: You're not even saying sorry. Uyivule kahle phela imilenze namuhla. You'll get pregnant again and you will give that child to us. We tell you not to behave like this but you go on and do it. The first time you got pregnant we told you not to go to the after party but you went to the party because you are stubborn. You got pregnant. You left your child for us to raise. You want to do it again!

I didn't say anything. She beat me until dad told her to stop and she stopped.

Dad: Lalela ke Sisi. You will break up with that boy and stop this madness otherwise I will have to talk to your bursary holder and tell them to transfer you to Durban at UKZN. Don't even try to test me. And you will not take your things and leave this house like you always do. If you do just know that you'll be on your own together with your son.

He clicked his tongue and they both left. I took out my phone and I called Thapelo. Luckily he answered.

Thapelo: Twinkie?

Me: Baby where are you?

Thapelo: I am in the hospital. My left leg is broken so they are going to put on that leg cement thing. I am waiting for it now.

Me: I am sorry for everything.

Thapelo: It's not your fault. Where are you they didn't kick you out?

Me: No but they whipped me hard. My whole body hurts. I don't even know if I will be able to sleep.

Thapelo: I am sorry baby don't cry. We will be alright. We are stronger together. We will be alright. I love you Alondwe.

Me: I love you too Thapelo. I will come to the hospital to see you today.

Thapelo: Alright I will send the name of the hospital and my ward and room number. Go get some rest now.

I agreed and I hung up the call. I texted Sphephelo asking him to come and take Sphephile. After hearing them say all those things about him I didn't want him to live with them anymore. I wanted him to live with his father and his sister because clearly my parents felt like they are forced to raise him. Sphephelo wasn't going to fail to raise our son so I was going to give him to his father until I am ready to take him. After I have spoken to Thapelo. I took my things and I headed to my room..

Nobuhle Zulu....

Me: My husband is not here and you've come in my house to make sure that I am safe?

Ntando: Yes. You're my boss's wife and I care about you. I really care about you.

Me: My children are sleeping so please leave.

Ntando: Nobuhle.

Me: No leave.

He grabbed me softly but fast and he kissed me. I couldn't help it I kissed him back. He was making my heart beat in a different way. It was making those wired feelings. I pushed him away and I slapped him.

Me: Sandile is your boss and I am his wife. I demand you respect that now please leave.

Ntando: I love you Nobuhle.

I looked at him without a word. Something about his eyes meant it. But I didn't want that love shit. Love destroy a human being.

Me: Leave my house now!

He left. I went back to my room and I couldn't stop thinking about that kiss and how it made my heart feel. But No! I wasn't going to do it. I wasn't going to give in not to him and not to love. I tried to sleep even though my mind was all over the place.

The following morning the kids went to school. I was alone in the house. The maid was doing ironing on the back room. I was in Sandile's study room. I was on Facebook on his computer. I was bored. I wished that it was the new year already so that I can start studying. There was a knock on the door. I sighed. I wanted no company. I just wanted to be alone.

Me: Come on in.

The door was opened and Ntando walked inside the study.

Me: Really!? Who opened the gate for you?

Ntando: Your maid did and she told me you're here.

Me: I think I should tell her not to open the gate for you if your boss is not here.

I stood up and I went to the door. He held my hand softly. He looked into my eyes. I looked back at him. I don't know there was something about him. I couldn't describe it, I couldn't put my finger around it. But there was something about him. He kissed me again and I kissed him back without question. He carried me and we went to the couch. We stripped each other naked. I was soaking wet. I just want him. I wanted to feel him inside me. I needed him. I stopped him.

Me: We must use protection.

Ntando: Do you have it?

I told him where to get it in my husband's drawer. He went to take it and we had an amazing sex. I don't know maybe I was a crazy woman now. Why did I sleep with my husband's lawyer. We did second round and I was on top of him.

Voice: Oh Shit! Nobuhle!

I quickly got off him and it was my sister standing in my door. What the hell was she doing in my house, how did she get in? Oh the bloody maid might have let her in.

Me: Philisiwe man. What are you doing here?

Philisiwe: You're not talking to any of us. I had to come and see you before I go back to work. Isn't this man your husband's lawyer?

Ntando took his clothes and he wore them. I wore my clothes too. Ntando left immediately. I sighed and I left the room. My sister followed me.

Philisiwe: Our father is sick and you didn't even come once to visit him.

Me: I don't care. I don't care. Dad sold me to Sandile.

Philisiwe: Well to me it doesn't seem like you're miserable in this marriage.

Me: Says a woman who is going to get married to the love of her life.

Philisiwe: Sandile loves you and he cares about you.

Me: Well I don't love him. Okay. I don't. I am in a love less marriage because our father chose Sandile for me. He forced me into him.

Philisiwe: So is that why you're fucking his lawyer under his roof? At least respect the man. He's taking care of you after all. The boys will grow up with a father figure and you're doing

him like this after everything he has done for you. And the things that he continues to do for you.

Me: Philisiwe. I am in no mood for your lectures. I just don't care what you have to say to me. Go and tell your father that I wish him well. He stopped being my father the minute he brought Sandile back into my life.

Philisiwe: Who are you and what have you become?

Me: I am Nobuhle Zulu and I have become this human being that you see. Now can you please leave I want to take a shower and prepare lunch for the kids. They'll have to eat when they come from school.

She wiped her tears, shaking her head and she stood up.

Philisiwe: You're doing this to mom?

Me: She sided with dad and they sold me. And you! You didn't even help me. You have money but you did nothing to get me out of prison. Maybe if you did help me there wasn't going to be Sandile.

Philisiwe: You needed him for the custody of the kids. You needed him.

Me: after Claudine was arrested I was going to go and stay with my in-laws and raise my children there. If there wasn't any Sandile feeding me the nonsense of custody. You're my sister but you didn't help me with your money. You don't earn peanuts you did Clinical technology. But you failed to help me. Forgive me but I hate you. So please leave me in this love less marriage and don't think about coming back to my house.

Philisiwe: Fine I will leave but at least have the little respect for Sandile. Fuck his lawyer outside his roof not in his house.

She clicked her tongue and left. I screamed and I went back to the study to clean. I finished up and I went to take a shower upstairs.

I went back downstairs and I prepared lunch for the kids. My phone rang Sandile was calling. I sighed and answered the call.

Me: Sandile.

Sandile: I called to tell you that we arrived safe.

Me: Alright, that's good.

Sandile: Are the kids home yet?

Me: No they are not home.

Just then they came inside the house making noise.

Me: That is them coming in.

Sandile: Can you give them the phone put them on speaker I want to talk to them.

Me: Okay.

I greeted them all and I told them to go to the lounge and sit down because their father wanted to speak to them. They went to sit down. Heather proceeded upstairs so I let her be. I gave them the phone and I went back to the kitchen. I didn't even feel guilty after speaking to Sandile. I didn't even feel guilty for sleeping with his lawyer. I just didn't care but I was thinking about my father. I wasn't going to see him not after what he did. I felt a tear escaping from my eye. I sniffed, trying to stop it. I was done crying. There was no one who deserved my tears.

Voice: Are you alright mommy?

I turned back and it was Asemahle. I wiped the tears and I nodded.

Me: I am fine bring back my phone.

Asemahle: Daddy, mommy is crying.

Sandile: Give her the phone baby I will speak to her.

She gave me the phone and she left.

Sandile: What is wrong, why are you crying?

Me: I am fine. It's nothing.

Sandile: Do you want me to come back. I can come back if you're not feeling alright.

Me: No. Do your thing there and don't worry about me. Aseh is just a kid. She's overreacting.

Sandile: Her mother used to cry like that, hiding from us that she had cancer. So I don't want you to hide what's bothering you from us. We can't lose you too. We can't.

Me: You are not going to lose me.

Sandile: I love you and please be safe.

Me: Thanks. You too be safe.

We said our good-byes and I hung up the call....

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

I took my big pink suitcase. I packed Sphephile's clothes. His clothes were in my room. All of them. He no longer had a room of his own because he didn't like sleeping alone. My phone rang while I was busy packing. I went to lock the door. It was Sphephelo. I answered.

Me: Good Morning.

Sphephelo: Good Morning I got your message. What's going on?

Me: I left Sphephile and the kids with the maid last night like my parents always do when they go out. I used my mom's car to leave. Dad tracked it down and he beat me for leaving. Him and mom. My mom started saying hurtful things about having our son around the house. Things like I left him for them to raise. If I get pregnant again I will do the same. Dad said should I get pregnant again I will be on my own together with my son. So Sphephelo I don't want it to come to that. Please take him and live with him.

Sphephelo: Why didn't you leave him with me? Where were you?

Me: I was with my boyfriend. They always stay with the maid when the parents are not home. So I saw nothing wrong with that. Sphephelo I don't want our son to be a burden to anyone not even my parents.

Sphephelo: Alondwe you live with your boyfriend almost 24 hours and yet you couldn't spend the night with our kid because you had to go to him.

Me: The last time I saw him was two weeks back. He's working on a project at Mpumalanga. He came back because he thought I was still in Johannesburg but I was already gone. So he came here to see me and Sphephile. He was going back to work on Monday so I had to be with him because I will see him again after two weeks.

Sphephelo: Alright I understand. What will you tell Sphephile?

Me: I will tell him the truth in a polite manner. I don't want to lie to him. Will you be able to do this? I don't want to force you into it.

Sphephelo: Don't even say or think about that. Sphephile is my son. He's our son, the only good thing I got from loving you. I love him and I would do anything to protect him and his sister. He can never be a burden to me. And I am happy that I will live with him.

Me: But there's a possibility that I will take him next year to live with me.

Sphephelo: I will get to see him right? It won't be like you're taking him away from me?

Me: No I can never do that to him or you. You guys love each other and I don't want any man to replace your place in his heart and life. You're his father and he loves you. You'll always remain that. He may love Thapelo too but that doesn't mean he'll replace you. He'll visit you during school holidays or any weekend if you want him. Joburg is only minutes away when you're using an aeroplane.

Sphephelo: Okay Alondwe, Thanks.

Sphephile: (rubbing his eyes) Mom, who are you talking to?

Me: I am talking to your father.

Sphephile: Can I speak to dad too?

Me: You will baby let me finish first. (he nodded) So my parents are going to church during

the day. I won't go to church. So you'll come and take him then. Is it alright with you?

Sphephelo: Yes it's fine. Can I speak to him now please?

Me: Who said I am done speaking to you?

Sphephelo: Okay, okay. I am sorry madam.

Me: (laughing) okay. We will speak when I see you.

Sphephelo: Sure.

I gave Sphephile the phone and he spoke to his father while I finished up packing. All his clothes were in that suitcase. What was left was his school things. I took my other medium sized suitcase. It was also pink. I packed his school uniform. I put the big suitcase on my wardrobe just in case someone walks in my room. Then I went to get his books in Alupheli's room. Alupheli was still sleeping. I took them all and I packed them on the suitcase. I finished up and I joined him in bed. He was still speaking to his father about cartoons I don't even know. I just looked at him and smiled. He looked so serious on the phone. Like he was discussing a business proposal. They finished up and I cuddled him.

Me: Hey. (I kissed him)

Sphephile: Hey, why did you leave me at night?

Me: I went to see chocolate man. Did you cry?

Sphephile: Yes, a little but I stopped when I saw the chocolate. I ate them. I thought you went back to school but Sisi Thandi said you're coming back so I was happy because you were going to come back.

Me: Okay my love.

Sphephile: Mom?

Me: Yes love.

Sphephile: Why were you packing my clothes?

Me: Okay. I was packing because you are going to live with your father full time now.

Sphephile: As in like everyday?

Me: Yes.

Sphephile: Why?

Me: Grandma and grandpa said some very hurtful things to your mom about you because your mother had you while she was still in highschool.

Sphephile: They don't want me here because you're not married to my father like them?

Me: No baby it's not that. They do love you but mommy doesn't want you to live with them. I don't want to force you to them my love do you understand?

Sphephile: Yes. I understand, they hate me and they don't want me here.

He cried. I sat up straight and I held him in my arms. I didn't want him to think like that but hey.

Me: You don't like to go and stay with your father?

Sphephile: I want to go and stay with my father and my sister. But what about my uncles. I won't see them? I won't?

Me: You will see them. Remember your uncle Mesuli's school is closer to your school.

Sphephile: But I won't see uncle Alupheli and Uyathandwa.

Me: I will tell your father to bring them to you. But for now don't tell anyone that you're leaving alright.

Sphephile: I won't tell them.

I kissed his forehead. I tickled him and he laughed. I laughed too. His laughter was life. My father came inside my room without knocking.

Dad: Good Morning Sphephile.

Sphephile: Good morning Mkhulu.

Dad: Alondwe you two get ready for church. We are all going to the Saturday morning service.

Me: I am not going to church.

Dad: I wasn't asking you. This is my house and when I say everyone is going to church. Everyone will go to church. No one will stay behind.

Me: Okay.

Dad: And one last thing. Take off that ring.

I nodded and he left. I took off my ring and I put it inside my hand bag.

Me: Come my love let me bath you.

Sphephile: I can bath myself.

Me: No. You'll bath yourself le kwa Sphephelo.

He laughed and I went to the bathroom with him. My body was sore but I tried to hide in front of him. I didn't want him to see me. I bathed him and I went to moisturise his body.

Sphephile: I wish I also had a Chocolate skin.

Me: Why?

Sphephile: Yellow bone is boring. You're yellow bone and my father is yellow bone.

Me: Yes. So you couldn't be chocolate.

He laughed. I don't know why he was laughing. I dressed him up and I told him to go downstairs. I went to take a warm shower too. I finished up and I dressed up in a long black dress. It had long sleeves. I wore black sandals. I combed my hair and I took my bag I went downstairs after fixing my bed.

Everyone was having breakfast. I wasn't feeling so good so I didn't want breakfast. I greeted everyone and I went to have warm milk in the kitchen. It was like I was having periods pains. I hated them so much. Yesses! I went to sit on the lounge.

Mom: (shouting from the dinner table) You're not having breakfast?

Me: I am not hungry.

Dad: Come and have breakfast Alondwe.

Alupheli: She said she's not hungry.

Dad: I will give you one slap that will teach you how to close your mouth. That is my daughter not yours syezwana?

Alupheli: Yes.

I went to the table before they beat me again and force the food down my throat.

Aunt Shemah: Are you alright?

Me: Yeah I think I am having you know?

Aunt Shemah: Oh sorry. I will get you warm water and pain killers.

Me: Thanks Auntie.

I tried to eat because I was going to take painkillers. Everyone was awfully quiet like someone died.

Sphephile: Is someone dead why is everyone quiet?

I wanted to laugh because it's like he read my mind. I didn't though I just didn't have the strength.

Alupheli: Didn't you hear your mom being beaten like a dog this morning?

Mesuli: Alupheli!

My father slapped him. He held his cheek and tears followed. He wiped them quickly.

Uncle Andile: You shouldn't have slapped him Samkelo.

Mesuli: Yes, just like you shouldn't have beaten my sister like that.

Aunt Shemah gave me the painkillers. I thanked her.

Mom: You have no right to tell us what to do. She's our daughter.

Luzuko: And she's our cousin.

Dad: Hee! Ngiyalingwa yazi. ( I am being tested)

He stood up and he went upstairs.

Uncle Andile: A child should always know his or her place. Do you all understand?

Them: Yes.

Alupheli: I will know my place when my parents start treating me like a child not like a dog. Aunt Shemah took my son and she went upstairs with him and Nonduduzo. Sphephile was crying but he wasn't making sounds. Nonduduzo too.

Mom: We are treating you like a dog Alupheli?

Alupheli: What you did to her is like you did it to me. She's my older sister. My only sister. Obviously you can do that to me too.

Mom: If you deserve it, we will.

Mesuli: Alondwe is not a teenage girl anymore. Why can't she be treated like an adult? That guy loves her but you and dad you still want to keep her under your shell. When are you going to let her go?

Dad: (sitting down) Let her go where? You think you're adults now? Then let's have a conversation like adults where should we let her go?

Alupheli: To her husband, someone who won't beat her like you did. We saw what you did to her. How you beat her. She has a child now. She's old.

Dad: She has a child? Who raised that child for her? Is it us or you two?

Mesuli: Who raised her for you two?

Mom: I did, I was the one who wasn't sleeping at night while I had to wake up in morning and go to school. When she was sick I was the one to get worried and my brother will take me to the Doctors. Your grandfather wasn't there. When your father took Alondwe she could sit, crawl and stand. Alondwe didn't raise Sphephile I did. This is my daughter and how I discipline her is my business not yours.

Alupheli: What you did is punishment mom not discipline.

Mesuli: Were you –

Me: OKAY THAT'S ENOUGH!

I banged the table and they all shut up.

Me: Alupheli, Mesuli stop it. Even if I turn 43 they will always beat me because I am not good enough in their eyes. I have accepted that and you should do the same. I get that you love me and you want me to be happy. But they don't okay. Our parents don't want me to be happy. You two should accept that and live with it and never talk about my marriage topic again. Not now not ever. Do you understand me?

Them: Yes sisi.

I stood up and I was feeling dizzy. I held the table for balance. I closed my eyes a little.

Mom: Alondwe are you alright?

Me: Yes I am fine.

Mom: You don't look fine.

Alupheli: She said she's fine mom. Leave her alone.

Dad pinched his ear and he shut up. I went upstairs to get my son. We left for church. Aunt Shemah was driving, I asked her to.

In the middle of the service Sphephelo contacted me. I took my son and we left. I told my brothers that I will come back. Sphephelo drove us to my father's house. We arrived there and Uyathandwa was in the house listening to music. He came to hug me and he greeted Sphephile and his dad.

Uyathandwa: What's going on I have never seen you two together?

Me: Come and help me.

They followed me and I showed them where the suitcases were. They took them.

Sphephile: I don't want pink suitcases. What no! Mom. I don't want there.

Uyathandwa: He's leaving?

Me: Yes, he is. Sphephile come on.

Sphephile: Dad tell her. I don't want them.

Sphephelo: I will buy the ones that you want but for now your mother is borrowing you hers until you have your own suitcases alright?

He nodded and we went to his father's car. They packed them. I went down to his level.

Me: I love you alright?

Sphephile: I love you too. You will come and see me?

Me: I will see you everyday until I go back to school.

He nodded and I kissed him. His father took him.

Me: Take care of him.

He nodded and they left. Sphephile waved goodbye and I did too.

Uyathandwa: This will kill mom Brah. What you doing is not right. She will be heartbroken.

Me: You don't know what happened.

Uyathandwa: Of course I know. Mesuli and Alupheli told me this morning on the phone.

Me: Oh well.

Uyathandwa: I don't even know how am I going to tell them that Nomcebo is pregnant and her family wants to see them immediately. They are very angry.

Me: I bet they'll be happy for you.

Uyathandwa: Don't say that Brah.

Me: What? It's true. You don't have to worry they will love your child. Your child is not a product of rape so they will love him or her.

Uyathandwa: Alondwe don't say it like that.

I took out my fake ring and I put it on my finger.

Me: It's the truth. I am going to the hospital to see my fiance and I have to see the Doctor too for this pain I am feeling.

Uyathandwa: Let me go with you I want to see brother in-law.

I laughed and we left using a cab.....

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

My brother and I stepped out of the car. I held his hand for balance. I was feeling dizzy.

Uyathandwa: I think we should start by the Doctor first then we can go to Thapelo.

Me: No. I will see the Doctor after. Just take this plastic bag.

He nodded and he took it. I had bought food for Thapelo. Uyathandwa held my hand and we went to Thapelo's ward. He was reading a newspaper with his leg hung up. He had a leg cast. That is what he called leg cement. I sat next to him. He smiled.

Thapelo: You're boring you know. You greet me like that. By sitting down.

Me: I am with my brother chocolate man please.

Thapelo: Oh I am sorry. Hi.

Uyathandwa: Hey dude, I am Uyathandwa Smith. Her big brother.

Thapelo: I am Thapelo Moloji. It's nice to meet you Uyathandwa.

Uyathandwa: It's nice to meet you too. I can see you have had an encounter with your father in-law.

We all laughed at that.

Thapelo: Yeah. He gave me an unexpected gift.

Uyathandwa: Sorry man. You'll be strong though.

Thapelo: Yeah. And tomorrow I have to go to work.

Me: No. You're not going to work.

Thapelo: Yes Twinkie. I have to. It's no big deal. It's just one leg. And I don't do hard or heavy work.

Uyathandwa: What do you do for a living?

Thapelo: I am a surveyor.

Uyathandwa: That's nice. You're going to marry a top dog my sister.

Me: Shut up Uyathandwa. Your parents don't want me to get married.

Uyathandwa: Come on they'll come around.

Me: Whatever. So you're leaving today?

Thapelo: Yes. The Doctor will discharge me. I have booked a cab.

Uyathandwa: You must upgrade now and use an Uber. You know live like a boss.

Me: Dear God. I don't know why I brought him here.

Thapelo: Calm down.

Uyathandwa: Just go and see the Doctor. I will stay behind and talk with your husband. Just to get to know him a little.

Thapelo: You're sick?

Me: No. Not really. It's just intense period pains.

Thapelo: Alright. Please go and see the Doctor.

I nodded and I stood up. I held the bed to ease the dizziness.

Uyathandwa: No. Let me go with you so that you won't collapse on the passages.

Me: Come on I am fine.

Thapelo: No. Let him go with you.

I agreed and I left with him. We found the gynaecologist because I wanted the ultra sound so that I can see how big my cloths were because my pain was intense. Uyathandwa left me and he went back to Thapelo. I was left with the Doctor. I explained everything to her. She started doing the ultra sound. I closed my eyes concentrating on the coldness of gel.

Doctor: Uhm... Young Dr Ndunakazi.

I opened my eyes. She told me to look at the screen. I looked at it closely. She knew that I was doing Medicine. She heard the terms I was using while speaking to her then she asked me and I told her. I blinked and laughed. The Doctor looked at me.

Doctor: Do you know what does this mean?

Me: I see that is a baby.

Doctor: Yes. But it's a dead baby. That's why you're feeling such pain. It's not cloths Ndunakazi. It's your baby. The baby needs to come out of your womb because it's already dead.

I looked at her. I swallowed hard. I laughed again. What else was I supposed to do. I looked at her.

Me: I am going to go to the theatre?

Doctor: No. I will give you the abortion pill and it will crush the –

Me: I understand. You don't have to say it. The pill won't make me –

Doctor: The baby is already dead so you won't feel too much pain. It will be normal. I can keep you here for a couple of hours until the pain dies down then you can go home.

Me: Okay.

Doctor: If you don't mind. Your whole body looks –

Me: I was beaten by my parents.

Doctor: I am sorry. Did they know that you were pregnant?

Me: They didn't know. And I didn't know too because I thought I got the dates right for my injection.

Doctor: Do you want to report your parents. What they did to you and your child is not right.

Me: Doctor. I am black and us black kids we don't report our parents for beating us. It's their way of discipline.

Doctor: I am sorry. I understand.

I nodded and she went to get the pill. I took it and I drank it. I asked her to sedate me so that I can sleep. I didn't want to feel it when the pain starts. I didn't mind if I was going to wake up feeling it. She did that.

Me: When my brother comes back please don't tell him the real story.

Doctor: Alright. But you need support. You've just lost a baby. It's still new now but soon you'll feel the pain of loss.

Me: I want this to be between me and the father of my child. For now he's here in the hospital. So once he finishes his work project. I will tell him and we will go through it together. Please.

Doctor: Alright.

She let me be and I slowly dozed off.

I woke up because the pain was too intense. I felt the need to go to the bathroom. The Doctor gave me the pads and I went to the bathroom. I did what I wanted to do and I put on the pad because I was starting to bleed. I went back to the Doctor. I spent more minutes at the Doctor's office. My phone rang. It was Thapelo. I didn't answer him. I wasn't going to speak to him while I was feeling that much pain. After about an hour. The pain was gone. The time was 15:55 pm. The Doctor came to me and gave me some pills.

Me: Thanks.

Doctor: Your brother left with your fiance. He said your boyfriend was leaving and he was going somewhere with your family. But he is going to tell them that you are with your son and his father.

Me: Thank you. So I can go now?

Doctor: Yes and make sure you drink your medication.

Me: Thanks. Please don't include more details on the medical aid. My fiance pays for it so I don't want him to get the surprise when the card reports to him

Doctor: Don't worry. I will do as you asked.

I was now over 21 years. My parents were no longer paying for my medical aid. They stopped because I was not a sick child. Thapelo added me on his medical aid. She wrote everything down and I went to pay. I took a cab back home. I arrived at home and nobody was home. I went to take a shower and I changed. I wore my pyjamas and I went downstairs with my phone. I opened the TV. I listened to music on channel 325. I just didn't want to think. Thapelo called again. I answered this time around.

Me: Moloji.

Thapelo: Little pudding I am in Mpumalanga now are you still at the Doctor?

Me: No I just got home.

Thapelo: You went to the gynecologist?

Me: Yes. I wanted an ultrasound to see my cloths.

Thapelo: How bad are they?

Me: They are pretty bad but she gave me medication.

Thapelo: I am sorry. Please be better soon.

Me: Thanks. You should recover too. I don't like that you're going to work.

Thapelo: I am a man with a wife and a kid now. I have to work you know.

Me: Uhm... A kid?

Thapelo: Yes. Sphephile. He'll want more chocolates so I have to buy them.

Me: You're such a cute man. (He laughed) Moloji?

Thapelo: Yes Mam.

Me: We have a lot of things to talk about once you come back okay?

Thapelo: Can't we talk about them now? What's going on?

Me: For now work there and make us proud. You will find your wife waiting for you. (I held my tears back) I love you so much.

Thapelo: Alright. I love you too Nana. Take care of yourself.

Me: You too. And tell Nomzamo not to touch you.

Thapelo: Relax she won't touch anything in me. Everything in me is yours. It's your property and our little babies down there.

I laughed and said: Alright. I am happy to hear that.

We made the kiss sounds and we hung up. I switched off the TV. The music was just useless. I closed my eyes and tears just flooded. I let it all out. I just cried. It was painful. I couldn't stop crying. I cried until I fell asleep on the couch.

When I woke up. It was dark inside the house. That meant everyone was not back yet. I sat there on the couch folding my legs and I thought about how he or she was going to be.

Clearly with my combination and Thapelo's combination she was going to be caramel skinned. It was supposed to be a baby girl maybe. I have always loved a baby girl. A mini Alondwe. I wasn't crying anymore I was quiet in the dark. The lights went on and I got a fright. The family was back but uncle Andile and his family were no longer with them.

Mom: Why are you sitting in the dark? The windows are opened but it's windy outside.

She said closing the windows. I didn't say anything. Alupheli sat next to me.

Alupheli: I brought takeaways for you and Sphephile. Where is he?

Mesuli: Have you been crying?

Me: No. I need to go to my room. Please excuse me.

I stood up and I went to my room. I went to the bathroom to wash my face. I went back to my room and my mom was in my room. She had some clothes on her hands. It was a baby's clothes. They were new, maybe she bought them for Sphephile. I went to my bed and I took the plastic bags I put them beside my bed. I went under the blankets.

Mom: Alondwe where are the rest of my grandsons clothes?

Me: He left with them.

Mom: What do you mean, he left with them?

Me: Sphephile is your burden right? So I sent him to his father. He's going to live with him.

Mom: Uyahlanya wena ngane! What are you talking about?

I didn't say anything. She left calling my father's name. They came back together and dad looked inside the wardrobe.

Dad: Alondwe where is Sphephile?

Me: He's with his father.

Dad: You can't do that. You can't do that to your mother. Thandeka loves that child.

Me: Yesterday it wasn't like that now was it? I forced you guys to raise him right? I have set you free then I sent him to his father. I don't want to make you feel like you are forced to raise him. You're not forced. And you have made your feelings clear. So thank you for raising him the past four years. If I knew you that you felt like this. I wasn't going to give him to you. I am sorry for doing that.

Mom: (crying) Samkelo do you see what this child is doing? How can she do this?

Samkelo: Alondwe how can you do this to us? Do you know that in court they can say Sphephile is ours because we've been looking after him since he was one month.

Me: Maybe the court can say that but when they can see my body they won't agree with you. You might not even see him again. And don't even think of going to Sphephelo and take him. I will go to the police and I will get a restraining order that I don't want you anywhere near my son because you're dangerous. You might own me as your child but you can't own Sphephile he's my son.

Dad: It's us who brought that boy in Sphephile's life. Now you run to him like he's your friend.

Me: I was going to forgive Sphephelo on my terms. He's a good father and I want Sphephile to live with him until I am good with my studies.

Mom started panting. Dad held her. I didn't care yazi. I lost my child. My first child with Thapelo so what happens to her now I wouldn't care maybe I will care later but not now.

Mom: Samkelo take me to my room. I can't stand the sight of your daughter right now.

My father left with her. I took my dead child scan picture. I asked for it to the Doctor. I

wanted to have something of her. I held it close to my heart. I cried I needed Thapelo. I needed to be with him. I took my phone and I texted him: “Thapelo come back I need you” after a few minutes. He called me. I answered I was crying.

Thapelo: Alondwe what’s going on? You’re scaring me now.

Me: I need you Thapelo I can’t do this alone. I can’t.

Thapelo: Alondwe what’s wrong? I can’t just leave work. I am almost there. Can you please just hold on. It’s just two weeks.

I hung up the call and I cried. It was painful, everything was painful. How was I supposed to wait for two weeks? He chose his work over me. I couldn’t just tell him over the phone that “hey man, we lost our first baby” He called again. I didn’t answer. Talking to him wasn’t going to help me. I went to my wardrobe to take the teddy bear and I held it very tight. I suppose you can never come between a man and his work.....

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

Being a parent is not easy as it seems, our children wants to do as they please. They are forgetting one thing that we’ve been there where they are and we don’t want them to repeat the same mistakes we did. Not that our lives were perfect. We weren’t perfect, we lived reckless and we took stupid decisions. That’s why I don’t want my children to go through the same things I went through. With Alondwe I have done my best. I have beat her, I have spoken to her, I have been her friend but she still wants to go to the dark place that I am trying to keep her away from. She was my only daughter. I had no other girl. Even my two dead kids were boys they weren’t girls. I just wanted her to be happy but she had her own picture of happiness and that picture wasn’t happiness. It was misery. As a parent when you beat your child it’s not nice but you do it because you want to give them a wake up call if talking doesn’t work. What Thandeka and I did was giving her a wake up call but she thought we hate her and she thought we don’t want to see her happy. I have never been hurt by my daughter like that. When she said we don’t want to see her happy it was like she just cut through my heart with a knife. I decided I wasn’t going to be nice anymore. Obviously being an open dad doesn’t work. If you try to be their friends. It doesn’t work. I was going to treat Alondwe like a child. After Thandeka requested me to take her back to our room. She couldn’t stop crying because Alondwe had taken Sphephile away from us. She didn’t even want me to hold her. She was just crying.

Me: Thandeka calm down please. We will talk to Sphephelo and he’ll give us the child back.

Thandeka: Haven’t you seen that Sphephelo does everything that Alondwe wants. He will never give us Sphephile back. He won’t do that because Alondwe said so. I can’t believe your daughter.

Me: So now she’s my daughter alone?

Thandeka: After what she did today. I consider her dead to me. I can’t believe she took Sphephile away from us. I loved him Samkelo. He was our first grandson and we lost him. Just like that.

Me: Thandeka you don’t mean that. You can’t cut off your first born just because she took Sphephile away from us. You can’t do that. That’s our daughter and we went through too much pain when she was conceived. We separated and we loved each other apart. We told ourselves that we weren’t meant to be while we knew deep down that we wanted each other. So I refuse to let you cut her off your life.

Thandeka: Does it looks like she needs us. The time I got Themba I thought I had it all because he took care of me. He did everything for me and you can see that this boyfriend of hers does almost everything for her. Alondwe hardly asks for money since last year. And this boy started working last year. Maybe you don’t see it but she cut us off first.

Me: She's a child danmit! She'll forever need us.

She didn't say anything. I was more angry at her than Alondwe. That was one other thing I hated about Thandeka. She easily gives up once someone hurts her. She has "I don't beg attitude." I hated it. And it times like this that makes me wish I never met her. She introduced me back to the idea of love. She made me fall in love with the idea of being good and the idea of having a family. But when she acts like this I can't help but think about how stress free my life would have been without love and family of my own. I was only going to think about my mom and myself. I wasn't going to have kids to worry about and a wife to look after and to love. **Love hurt us, pain changes us and it's love that saves us from drowning. Love pulls us out of pain and misery. It brings us back to life.** I clicked my tongue and I left. I took my car keys and I went to my car. I started the engine and I drove off. I needed some time alone. Some time away from everything. I kept on driving I didn't know where I was going but I just kept on driving.

I found myself in the front door of my mother's house. I sighed. I was at Richards bay. I looked at the time and it was 22:05. I stepped out of the car. I unlocked the front door. My mom was watching TV alone in the dark.

Mom: Who is that?

Me: It's Samkelo mama.

I turned on the light and I went to sit next to her. She kissed my forehead. I smiled.

Mom: What have you done to Thandeka?

Me: Hawu mama.

Mom: You don't just drive alone at night unless something happened.

I laid back on the couch and I placed my head on her lap. I also wanted to feel like a child. Being an adult is tiring. Mom brushed my head.

Mom: I don't want you climbing my couch with your shoes on Samkelo.

Me: I am sorry mom. I will clean the house in the morning. Where is Londeka (my sister's daughter who lives with my mom)

Mom: She said she wants to go back to her parents so she left.

Me: You're living alone here?

Mom: Yes.

Me: Mom why didn't you tell me?

Mom: I didn't want to bother you.

Me: I am your only son. You can never bother me. I am taking you. You will live with me now.

Mom: I don't want to bother Thandeka. You don't know if she'll agree.

Me: I don't care whether she likes it or not. You're my mom and I can't let you live alone. It's my house and she'll have to accept it.

Mom: Okay, What did Thandeka do?

Me: Eish mom...

I just told her everything that happened. With my mom I didn't have to be a strong man who wants to put everything on check. I can be weak to her. I can cry to her because she's my mom. She wiped my tears. This life was hard. It was hard for me. Being noble is not a game.

Mom: You and Thandeka were wrong. I don't blame you for refusing to let your daughter marry a son of a woman who thinks witchcraft is the solution. But you should have let her date the boy. Then trust that they'll eventually give up. If they insist then you let her marry him and she was going to see for herself what was going to happen. And if what you were trying to prevent happens don't rub it on her face. Support her and help her get through it. Not to beat her just because she went to the

boy who travelled from where he was to be with her and to see her son and siblings. You were wrong my son. And she had no choice but to take her child to his father. It's not like Sphephile will have a bad life. You said it yourself that the boy is a good boy.

My mom was right but the damage was already done. There was nothing I could do.

Me: But Thandeka wants him back.

Mom: You just have to accept that you can't bring everything that Thandeka wants to her feet. I know when a man loves a woman he wishes to bring everything that his woman wants to her feet just to make her happy.

Me: I love her mom. I don't want to see her hurting.

Mom: I know baby. And I am happy that you have her in your life. You'll see in the morning she'll be calling you crying asking where you are.

Me: Too bad I left my phone at home.

Mom: Then she'll call me. (we laughed) Alondwe will be alright. Don't worry about her.

Me: Thanks mom. Now let's go and pack your clothes. We are leaving in the morning.

Mom: I don't want your wife giving me ugly stares because you didn't discuss this with her.

Me: She'll suck it up. She's your only daughter in-law. It's high time she looks after you now.

I stood up and I assisted her get up. We went to her room and we packed all her clothes. We finished up midnight because she was busy coaching me. It was time to sleep.

Me: I will sleep with you.

Mom: I don't want you here. You will mistake me for Thandeka. I may be old but I still got the curves like your wife.

I laughed and I took off my shoes. I joined her in bed. We had a general conversation until I was sleepy. I kissed her cheek.

Me: Goodnight mom.

Mom: Goodnight my son.

We switched off the lights and we slept.

In the morning. We were on the road back to Durban. My mom's phone rang. She showed me the caller ID. I took her phone and connected it to the car speakers. I answered it for her.

Mom: Thandeka.

Thandeka: Good Morning mama. How are you?

Mom: I am fine and how are you?

Thandeka: Not so good. I want my husband. He left his phone here and I can't get ahold of him. I don't know where he is Mama. I am worried.

Shame my wife was crying now.

Mom: He's here with me.

Thandeka: Tjo. Thank God. Uhm.... Mama please give him the phone.

Mom: Okay.

My mom showed me using her eyes that I should speak. I couldn't take the phone because I was driving.

Me: Thandeka?

Thandeka: Baby please come back home. I am sorry about what happened yesterday okay?

Me: I am with my mom.

Thandeka: I know but Samkelo –

She just cried bakithi. I smiled. This woman.

Me: I will come back. Don't cry.

Thandeka: Thank you. Ngiyakuthanda.

Me: Ngiyakuthanda nami. After that don't say any nasty things or comments. My mom is with me here and she can hear you.

Thandeka: Hawu Samkelo Kanti unjani nje. What will your mother think of me now?

Me: Awu baby I was saving you.

Mom: Don't worry Thandeka. I know that he's the one who taught you how to be nasty since high school. You were innocent and he he corrupted your mind.

Me: I can't believe my mom right now.

Thandeka: Thanks mama. At least I have you on my back. I was innocent Samkelo.

Me: Mom just wants you to be happy.

Thandeka: Okay say whatever. I will rest when I see you in my bed. (I looked at my mom and she smiled) Me: You're supposed to say in your house not bed.

Thandeka: Eish I am sorry mom. Let me hung up before I say –

Me: Yes baby hung up.

I laughed and she hung up. My mom shook her head.

Mom: Uyinika ini le ngane Samkelo?

Me: Mom you're making me shy.

Mom: Kwahle bo! When you are not home she puts her ego aside and she cries. She wants to see you in her bed. What are you giving her?

Me: Mom Ayi. I am giving her love.

She looked at me and I laughed. Damn she was making me shy.....

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

I managed to sleep through the night. In the morning I was woken up by my phone ringing. The ringtone was irritating. I didn't even check the caller ID. I pressed the power button after it stopped ringing. I switched it off. Wherever my tablet was it battery was off. So that meant I can go back to sleep. I tried to sleep. My mom woke me up. I turned back and I looked at her. She was crying.

Mom: Alondwe where is your father?

Me: I don't know.

Mom: He didn't come back home last night. His phone is here and I don't know what to do.

Me: Sorry I don't know where he is.

She left my room. I went back to sleep. I didn't have time to stress about anyone. I just wanted to sleep so that my feelings can shut down. I woke up around 9am. I went to shower. I finished up and I went back to my room. I opened the windows and I made my bed. I moistened my body and I dressed up in black jeans and a blue vest. I went downstairs. Everyone was sad because dad wasn't back home. I went to the kitchen. Alupheli followed me.

Alupheli: Alondwe why did Sphephile leave?

Me: I wanted him to leave.

Alupheli: But I didn't want him to leave.

Me: I am sorry. I didn't mean to do that. But you can see him whenever you want to see him.

Alupheli: Okay. Are you fine?

Me: Yes and you?

Alupheli: I don't know. Do you think dad won't come back?

Me: He can't live without mom so he'll come back.

Alupheli: Yeah. You're right you know. I won't be miserable here. He will come back and they will kiss each other. And my misery will go to waste. So let me to my art gallery. I will

see you later.

Me: Okay. Don't you want to go with me. I will take Sphephile and his sister to the beach today.

Alupheli: Count me in. I can never say no to the party and food.

Me: Sure.

He left. I made a small breakfast and I went to my room. I had my breakfast. And I took my medication. I went downstairs to use the house phone. I called Sphephelo. He answered.

Sphephelo: Hello.

Me: Hey. It's Sphephile's mom.

Sphephelo: Ah. Why are you calling me using a house phone?

Me: What? are you having debts?

Sphephelo: No. But I just. You know I don't know.

Me: Get over yourself. I am going through some shit. I am not using my phone for a few weeks. I will drop by your place. I am taking the kids to the beach.

Sphephelo: And Enhle too?

Me: Yes. I am going to Johannesburg on Wednesday. I need my friend. So I will spend time with Sphephile as much as I can.

Sphephelo: Alright. I will get them ready.

Me: Thanks.

I hung up and I went to the lounge. Dad was back with grandma. She smiled and I went to her. I hugged her.

Me: How are you doing?

Grandma: I am doing alright baby and you?

Me: I am trying.

Grandma: You'll be fine don't worry.

I wanted to believe that. I really wanted to believe that but I couldn't. I just didn't believe that I will ever be alright. I felt tears quickly gathering up in my eyes. I tried to smile to hide them but it was too late. I stood up.

Me: It's nice to have you here.

Grandma: Child what's going on?

Me: It's nothing. Just that not having Sphephile around here is not nice.

Grandma: No. There's something else that is bothering you. What is it. It's not Sphephile.

Me: I am sorry. I don't know what you're talking about. Excuse me.

I let go of her hand and I made my way upstairs.

Grandma: Samkelo. Something is wrong with Alondwe.

Samkelo: Her boyfriend's leg is broken so it must be that. That's why she's miserable.

I went to my room. I took my laptop and modem. I logged in on Facebook. The laptop ended up looking at me. I couldn't let this happen to me. I couldn't let tears take all over my life. I stood up and I changed my vest. I wore a black t-shirt. I took some cash. I was leaving my phone because there was no need for it. I went to Alupheli's gallery. He was painting a cat. I sat down.

Me: Sorry to disturb you but I am leaving now. Dad is back now.

Alupheli: Okay. Let me go and ask dad's permission.

I nodded and I told him that he will find me outside the gate. I went there and I was going to wait for a taxi. The taxi passed by Sphephelo's place. Alupheli came to the gate.

Alupheli: Dad said we shouldn't go because you didn't tell him that you're leaving.

Me: I am leaving you. Tell him that I am going to see my son. I will bring food with me for you.

Alupheli: Let's just go. He won't notice. They are busy talking to Uyathandwa.

Me: They'll beat you and they'll say I taught you to go against their word. So sorry I am not

leaving with you. Just stay. I will bring food for you.

He didn't want to, but I gave him no choice. I walked down the road to wait for the taxi. It came and I stepped inside. I paid. I got off where I had to. I buzzed Sphephelo's room. He answered and I told him it was me. So he came down with the kids. I hugged them. I was happy to see my son.

Sphephelo: Don't you want me to drive you.

Me: That's a good idea. And please borrow me your phone. I want to book a ticket for tomorrow night.

Sphephelo: Why what's wrong?

Me: I want to go.

He went to take his car and he came out with it. We stepped inside and he drove off.

Sphephelo: Don't leave because of what happened.

Me: I don't want to stay there anymore.

Sphephelo: No. Don't leave.

I didn't say anything. I looked at my son he was playing with his sister. I smiled. They were so adorable. We arrived at the beach and Sphephelo left us there. I told him when to fetch us.

Sphephile: Mama you're going swim with us?

Me: No but I will look at you swim.

Enhle: You're scared of the water?

Me: Yes. I am very scared.

They laughed at me and we went to the water. I showed them the spot to use and not to go somewhere else besides that spot. Then I sat on the sand and I looked at them. They were kids and they were so happy. I could imagine my little baby girl playing with my son. They would have been so cute together. I wiped my tears. I didn't want to cry in public. When they were tired. I went rinse them off and they wore their clothes. We then went to steers to buy food. After food. I took them to milky lane for waffles.

Enhle: We won't eat dad's food tonight right?

Sphephile: Yes. He will eat alone.

They laughed and I smiled. I had a really great time with them. Sphephelo drove us back. They dropped me off at home. I kissed the kids goodbye.

Sphephile: Can you call uncle Alupheli?

Me: I will do love. You will give him their takeaways. I want him to think I didn't buy it.

Sphephile: Yes that's good.

I went inside and my parents were watching TV with my brothers. I have bought burgers for the three of them. I couldn't leave the others aside and buy one for Alupheli only.

Me: Alupheli someone said I must call you. They are on the gate.

Alupheli: Okay. Where's my food then?

Mesuli: Yeah I want it too.

Me: Go with him.

Uyathandwa: I am not staying behind.

I left them and I went upstairs to my room. My parents didn't say anything to me. I got to my room and grandma was there.

Me: Gogo what are you doing in my room?

Granny: We need to talk. Sit down.

Me: The last time I checked you're also siding with my parents not to let me get married.

Granny: Lock that door and come here.

I went to lock the door and I went to sit down with her in my bed.

Granny: I found this under your pillow.

Me: What? Grandma you have no right to go over my things. What about privacy?

Granny: There's no privacy if you're hiding things from me. I am your grandmother. And

you lost a child. I can still read. (I wrote a note at the back of the picture)

I stood up and I went to the door. She followed me.

Me: I refuse to let you invade my privacy like this grandma please leave. I know now you'll tell my parents. I want no one to know about this.

She held my hands and she made me face her. I was shaking and tears were voluntarily coming out of my eyes.

Granny: Didn't you trust me with your secrets before? And I never told anyone else about it. Don't let this pain be your pain share it with someone.

Me: (crying) He is supposed to be with me grandma. I am supposed to share this pain with him but he's not here. I need him. It was our first child.

Granny: Did you tell him?

Me: I was still at the Doctor when he left. I told him that I need him when I got back and he said he can't leave work. I didn't want to tell him on the phone because I don't know how he's going to react. He told me that we're not ready for a baby and I said I got it covered because I was on the injection. I must have mixed up the dates. I didn't know that I was pregnant now my little baby is gone. I will never get to see my baby grow.

Granny: He doesn't know what you are going through. Don't hold your tears baby cry. You need to cry and let it all out. I am here for you. I won't leave your side. If you break I will hold you. So cry.

Me: I don't want to cry, I am angry at Thapelo and I am angry at my parents. They did this to me. They hurt my child. How will I get through this?

Granny: Cry Alondwe man cry!

We were on the floor next to my door. She held me too tight and she pressed my chest. I couldn't hold it in anymore. I let it all out. I wailed. As loud as I could.

Granny: Kuzodlula baby.

Me: This pain is here to stay.

Granny: Listen to me. I will not let that happen because today you gonna cry the pain.

There was a knock on the door. Actually it was a bang on the door not a knock.

Granny: Who is it?

Dad: Mama what's wrong with my daughter? What's happening?

Granny: I told you something was wrong you didn't care enough because you thought it's because of the boy.

Dad: I didn't know mom please let me in.

Mom: We want to see her.

Granny: Hheyi. Futsek man go away!

Mom: Samkelo?

Dad: Shh! Don't cry.

Granny: Baby you're not done yet. Don't stop.

It didn't stop, it just kept on getting worse. My pain my heart. It was mixed up with everything. My parents were still on the door. I could hear my mom crying when I go too loud.

Me: I can't do it Gogo. I can't.

Gogo: You must exhaust every muscle of the pain. You're almost there. Don't be afraid to go into that place you think you won't make it back to. I am here I will pull you out.

I gave in and break through the pain. I cried until I couldn't. I had hiccups. I was feeling exhausted. My grandmother held my hand and we went to the bathroom. She ran a cold bath for me. I got inside after taking off my clothes. I sat on the tub and she bathed me. I was so numb. She finished up and I dried my body. I wore my pyjamas and I went to bed.

Grandma: Take your medication now.

She gave me the medication and water on my juice bottle. I took my medication.

Grandma: I will leave you now. Please call the father of the child and talk to him.

Me: No.

Grandma: I am not saying tell him about the baby now but speak to him. You need him.

Me: I don't want to talk to anyone. I just want to sleep. I need to sleep.

She nodded and she went to the door.

Dad: What is wrong mom?

Grandma: Let her sleep.

Mom: We just want to see her.

Grandma: You will see her in the morning.

They agreed and they left. I tried to sleep. I was exhausted so I fell asleep immediately.

Samkelo Ndunakazi...

We arrived at home. Uyathandwa was outside the house talking to someone on the phone. I asked him to assist me with the bags. He did. My mom went inside the house. We took the bags to the guest room. I went back downstairs. Mesuli was watching TV. But he was busy talking to his grandmother.

Mesuli: Mom is waiting for you. She's been crying.

Me: I am here now.

Mesuli: You scared her. And she was scaring us.

Me: Yeah. I am sorry. I will go to her.

I went upstairs to our room. She was packing up clothes in my wardrobe. She looked at me and she stopped. She came to me and she hugged me. I hugged her back. She kissed me. She did say that she wanted to see me on her bed but hey I won't tell such things. There are kids in here. We went to take a shower afterwards. I changed my clothes.

Me: I came back with my mom.

Thandeka: What do you mean by that?

Me: I mean she's going to stay here now.

She didn't say anything. I couldn't see her face because she was inside her closet. But I assumed she didn't like it. She came out and finished up packing up my clothes.

Me: Did you hear what I told you.

Thandeka: You were telling me. You weren't asking for my opinion or my say. So what should I do now?

Me: There was no time to discuss all this Thandeka I couldn't just leave her alone.

Thandeka: So if I don't want to live with her?

Me: You'll have to suck it up because she's going nowhere. I am not going to send her back home.

Thandeka: Then you shouldn't have told me.

I wanted no fights anymore. I have had enough of them. I left her and I went downstairs to the kitchen. Alupheli walked inside the kitchen.

Alupheli: Sawubona Baba.

Me: Sho mjita zithini? (What's happening)

I carried him and I placed him on top of the counter. His mother walked inside the kitchen.

Alupheli: Eyi kuya le nale. Ngimatasatasa. (I am busy)

Thandeka: What do you want to eat?

Me: Anything with meat.

Thandeka: Tea or juice?

Me: Juice. (back to Alupheli) What are you up to?

Alupheli: The lady from next door asked me to paint her cat so I am busy with that.

Me: How much did you charge her?

Alupheli: I was fair enough. It's above R100.

Me: That must be a good painting.

Alupheli: Yes. But it's very cheap. And I need more paint. Can you buy them for me on Monday?

Me: Just write the list I will buy them for you.

Alupheli: Thank you.

Me: How much have you saved now?

I was teaching him how to save. He was very good at painting, writing and drawing. He painted pictures for kids and sell them. They knew him around the neighbourhood. I was proud of him. This thing was a talent for him and I was supporting him to develop it. He was growing into it because he loved it. Art was in him. So he called me his financial advisor though I have never seen his balance or transactions. And he was good with words.

Alupheli: Close to enough.

Me: That's not an amount.

Alupheli: Dad if you know how much money I got that means you will know my strength and power.

Me: Okay. Fair enough. A man should have some secrets. I suppose.

Thandeka: What type of secrets?

Alupheli: Mom this conversation doesn't include women. It's between men.

Thandeka: I see one man here.

Alupheli: I am a man too.

Me: Don't mind your mother. I think she's jealous of your wealth.

Alupheli: I don't blame her though. I got real cash.

Thandeka: R200 isn't real cash.

Alupheli: Dad I don't know what's she talking about.

Me: I told you. Don't mind her.

Alupheli: Alright, You know I want to go to the beach. I am kind of hungry. Can I go with Alondwe?

Me: Where is she?

I carried him to the lounge. He was pretty pleased to be in my arms. You got to treat him like a child here and there because he's the last born. We sat down.

Alupheli: She's waiting for me now. I came here to ask for your permission.

Me: Permission not granted because your sister didn't tell me that she's leaving.

Alupheli: Eish Okay.

He went to greet his grandmother then he left. Uyathandwa was busy tapping his foot. He was checking his phone now and then. My mom was having a conversation with Mesuli. They were talking about cows. I don't even know why they were talking about them.

Me: Ugrand Ethan?

Uyathandwa: Yes I am alright but not really. I kind of need to speak to you and mom. And since grandma is also here I don't mind if she can be there too.

Me: Is everything alright?

Uyathandwa: Not really.

Mesuli: Okay. Let me leave you. We will continue later grandma.

Mom: Okay Ndunakazi.

Mesuli went upstairs. Thandeka served me and my mom food. We thanked her and I told her Uyathandwa wanted to talk to us. She sat down.

Thandeka: What's wrong? Don't tell me you're bringing a wife.

Uyathandwa: Actually.

Thandeka: Here we go.

Me: Thandeka give him time. Speak.

Uyathandwa: Thank you dad. So I have a girlfriend. And she's kind of pregnant.

Thandeka: Repeat, she's kind of what?

Uyathandwa: She's pregnant.

Us: What!?

Uyathandwa: Please don't yell.

Thandeka: You will not tell us not to yell. You got a girl pregnant. How?

Uyathandwa: I didn't mean to mom it just happened. Me: Where is she?

Uyathandwa: She's at her parents house. She's done with varsity. She's working now. The problem is her parents are angry and they'll come here to let you guys know that I made her pregnant. So I didn't want you to get a surprise visit.

Mom: They want damages?

Uyathandwa: Her father is angry so yes.

Mom: Samkelo?

Me: I don't know what to say mom. We can pay the damages but we need to tell your father.

Uyathandwa: What? No. Please don't.

Thandeka: What do you want us to do boy? We must tell Themba. He's your father.

Uyathandwa: He'll be mad at me and I am supposed to go and see him this weekend. I don't want any punches to greet me.

Thandeka: Well you should have thought about that before you had unprotected sex. I just don't know how you think you guys. It's not like we never had sex talk with you. We did but you are just reckless.

Mom: What if this family forces you to marry the girl? Are you ready for that?

Thandeka: Mama don't even go there.

Me: It's a possibility some people are just. I don't know how to say this.

Uyathandwa: Ay. I don't want to marry her. I don't want to be held down. I don't want to get married.

Me: I wish I can be you right now.

Thandeka: What do you mean right now Samkelo?

My mother laughed. I looked at Uyathandwa. He was laughing too. I didn't answer her.

Me: Call your father now.

Thandeka: You haven't answered my question.

My mother excused herself. She went upstairs. Uyathandwa called his father. I touched my wife's hair and I smiled. She didn't smile back. I didn't want to laugh at her because she was going to be more angry. Uyathandwa placed his father on speaker.

Themba: Boy.

Me: Themba it's Samkelo here.

Themba: Oh sho man. Is there any trouble that Uyathandwa have caused where is he?

Uyathandwa: I am here dad.

Themba: You have done something wrong?

Thandeka: Why do you assume that?

Themba: Because his stepfather greeted me on his phone. And I am on speaker obviously he has done something wrong.

Me: Well he has.

Themba: What have you done Ethan Junior? I want to hear it from you.

Uyathandwa: My girlfriend is pregnant with my child.

Themba: Is jy van jou sinne beroof (Are you out of your mind)

Uyathandwa: Ek is jammer pa (I am sorry dad)

Themba: Thandeka how did you let this happen?

Thandeka: What was I supposed to do? I was supposed to hold his penis for him? Or let him leave it here while he went to study? I taught him how to behave and how to protect himself but he didn't.

Themba: You better take him to the Doctor to check his status.

Uyathandwa: What? Dad no.

Thandeka: You're going that's not up for discussion.

Uyathandwa: I can't believe this.

Themba: You better believe it. Tsk!

He hung up the call. Uyathandwa stood up and he went upstairs.

Me: Now that must be his choice.

Thandeka: Don't talk about choices please. You mistakenly chose to get married remember? She stood up and took the dishes. Ey she'll hold that against me for as long as she can remember.

When we heard Alondwe crying her brothers were outside the house. Thandeka and I rushed upstairs to her room but the door was locked. Hearing her cry like that was painful. We didn't even know what she was doing or going through.

Thandeka: What is your mother doing to her?

Me: I don't know. Don't cry.

Thandeka: My daughter is crying. I can't just not cry.

I held her close to me. Trying to calm her down. My mom got out of the room. We asked her what was going on and she told us not to disturb her.

Me: At least tell us what is wrong with her?

Mom: She'll tell you if she wants to. I won't tell you or else she will never trust me again.

Thandeka and I went to our room. We just sat there in silence.

Thandeka: Do you at least have an idea of what is wrong?

Me: No.

Thandeka: This is our fault.

Me: We're trying to protect her. She can continue to date the boy. But we are not letting her get married.

Thandeka: Can we go and see her?

I held her hand and we went to her room. She was sound asleep. She looked so peaceful.

Thandeka looked at her wrist and she was just fine. She once cut herself before so we didn't know what to think.

Me: Let's let her rest.

She nodded. We kissed her goodnight and we left.

At the dinner table everyone was quiet. Alondwe was sleeping. If Sphephile was with us he was going to ask if someone was dead or what. I must say it was quite dull without him. Him and Alupheli were always talking even if nobody wanted to talk.

Alupheli: I know eavesdropping is not right but I heard you are going to be a father Uyathandwa.

Uyathandwa: Okay. Can you hold it a little.

Alupheli: Don't worry I have some cash I will help you buy the tin of nan.

Uyathandwa: Dad I swear if he doesn't stop talking I will make him stop.

Me: I am not getting involved.

Thandeka: I supposed you are not doing your masters degree next year.

Uyathandwa: Mom, why?

Thandeka: You have to work. I am done looking after kids that you are going to take away from me in the end. I won't continue doing it.

Me: The kid will stay with the mother so there's no need for him to stop studying.

Uyathandwa: Actually dad, the mother doesn't want the baby. So I thought maybe?

Thandeka: You will make a plan mfana wami.

Mesuli: You must have done something to Nomcebo. It's not like her not to want your child. I thought she loved you.

Thandeka: You know her?

Mesuli: She's my brother's girlfriend of course I know her.

Alupheli: Who's your girlfriend Mesuli I don't know her. Please tell us.

Mesuli: Really?

Me: There's nothing wrong with his question.

Mesuli: This is about Uyathandwa not me.

Uyathandwa: This is about all of us not me alone. Alupheli can also tell us who is his girlfriend.

Alupheli: Hheyi Hheyi I don't kiss and tell.

Everyone laughed except his mother.

Thandeka: Ngizokuphoxa wena! I am warning you Alupheli.

Alupheli laughed and we laughed with him.

Mom: What did you do to your girlfriend Ethan?

Uyathandwa: Uhm... Grandma there are kids around here. And I am scared of my mom.

Mom: They know enough just tell us. Don't worry about Thandeka.

Alupheli: I am sure he cheated on her. I saw some pictures of a different girl on your phone. She's not Nomcebo.

Thandeka: Tell me it's not true Uyathandwa.

Uyathandwa: Alupheli!

Alupheli: What boy Jesus said the truth will set you free.

I could see that Uyathandwa was scared and he was sitting next to his mother.

Thandeka: Uyathandwa is it true danmit!

Uyathandwa: Yes it's true.

Thandeka gave him a back slap.

Uyathandwa: I am sorry mom.

Thandeka: You're sorry? What did I say about respecting women? Alupheli what did I say?

Alupheli: You said we should love and protect women. We must not hurt them, not lay a hand on them. Treat them like Princesses because they are royalty. You said one day we will have girlfriends or wives. We must not cheat on them because we will destroy their confidence and self esteem. And you said in order to do that we start by respecting and protecting our older sister Alondwe. We cherish and love her. That is not being weak it's being a real man

Thandeka: Did you forget that Uyathandwa?

Uyathandwa: No mom I didn't.

Thandeka: Would you hurt your sister?

Uyathandwa: No I wouldn't and I wouldn't like to see someone hurting her.

Thandeka: So why did you hurt your girlfriend?

Uyathandwa: I am sorry I didn't mean to.

Thandeka: Tsk!

She stood up and went upstairs.

Mom: Your mother has raised you all very well. Do not disappoint her. I don't think you have seen your father hurting her or ill-treating her. Have you?

Them: No we haven't.

Mom: Then don't do it to girls out there. Don't destroy girls love them and protect them. Do you understand?

Them: Yes grandma.....

Nobuhle Zulu.....

The following day I had three classes. I haven't heard a thing about cufflinks so I figured Ntando must have taken them and after their meeting I did go and look for them but they

weren't there so I wasn't going to worry about them. In the morning Sandile was helping me dress up. I was sitting on the dressing chair. He does that when he wants to. He's actually a very romantic man.

Sandile: Your breasts look much bigger now.

Me: I know. I have gained weight that's why.

Sandile: Don't you want to work out?

Me: You don't like my body?

Sandile: No. It's fine. I was just asking. You know I can do anything for you.

Me: Yes I know but I don't want to work out.

Sandile: Okay. Let me get the shoes.

He chose the shoes and he put them on me. I looked at myself and I was looking good. I helped him too. I brushed his head and fixed his tie. We kissed each other. We took our bags and headed out. The kids have already left for school. I drove my car straight to campus. I was thinking about Asemahle. I couldn't stop thinking about her behaviour. I didn't know what it meant. I just didn't know what was going on. It was confusing as hell. I arrived on campus and I went to my first class. My phone vibrated. It was a WhatsApp text from Ntando. "My penis is having a bad reaction something is wrong"

{Me}: I am in class is this your idea of a joke?

{Ntando}: No. I will send the picture. I went to the Doctor this morning and he said nothing is wrong with it medically.

He then sent the picture. I looked around me to make sure that nobody was looking. It was pretty bad. His penis was bad. I don't even know how to explain it. It looked like it was painful.

{Me}: What's this? Why are you like this?

{Ntando}: I don't know. We need to consult. Maybe your husband did it. You must go with me during your lunch break. We must see a traditional healer.

{Me}: I can't even wait for lunch. This is scaring me. Please pick me up. We will go together. I can't go with my car. It has a tracker.

{Ntando}: I will fetch you.

I didn't know what was happening. Maybe Sandile knows about my affair and he's using umuthi to cripple whoever I am sleeping with. This made me very scared. I couldn't believe what was happening. How can this happen. What was this?

Ntando called me once he was on campus. I left the class and I went to him. I stepped inside the car.

Me: Please drive.

Ntando: Calm down. I don't think he knows. I was talking to him just now. He was normal.

Me: Do you know Sandile? He's capable of anything. Maybe he is pretending. Oh dear God what was I doing?

Ntando: I am the one in pain so please. Just chill.

I closed my eyes and I took a deep breath. We drove in silence. My mind was way far from where I was. I was starting to regret my actions. I couldn't lose Sandile. I couldn't afford it. We arrived at this place I don't know. He led the direction. Even his walk changed. I didn't know what was going to happen. I felt sorry for him. The traditional healer let us in. We had to take off our shoes. We weren't supposed to tell him why we were there. He was going to find out himself. That's what he said.

Inyanga: You two are having an affair. Vumani bo?

Traditional healers always creeps me out. That's why I never go to them. And my mom never told me that I must go to them for help. I was doing it because I had no choice and I have lost my faith. I looked at Ntando and he nodded.

Us: Siyavuma.

Inyanga: Your penis is getting a bad reaction and you need help with it?

Ntando: Yes.

Inyanga: You should stop sleeping with your boss's wife. You should stop.

Ntando: What? Why? I love her.

Inyanga: I know you love her but she's not yours. You must respect that.

Me: Is my husband doing this to him?

Inyanga: No. You know why he is like this?

Me: I don't understand.

Inyanga: The secret that you're keeping. It's the reason why he is like this.

Me: I don't have a secret.

Inyanga: Women are different and babies are different.

Ntando looked at me and I looked down.

Inyanga: What is happening to you, happens when an unborn child of a woman that you're sleeping with doesn't want you. In Zulu we say ingane iyakukhahlela. And you see that by the reaction of the penis or you get sick. But not everyone gets that. It's goes according to the unborn baby. It means the baby can feel that you are not her father and she doesn't want you inside her mother.

Ntando: Why didn't you tell me?

Me: It's a girl?

Inyanga: Yes. Your husband loves you.

Me: But I don't have feelings for him.

Inyanga: Be patient. Sekuzosa. You can go now. The gentleman must stay behind. I will help him.

I nodded and I left the room. I had more questions though. There's a lot I wanted to ask.

Things like where was my late husband? Was he at peace or what? But hey I couldn't. I sat inside the car. I was relieved that Sandile was the father of my child. I just didn't know what the traditional healer meant by "sekuzosa" and I guess I will never know. A while later Ntando came back to the car. He started the engine and we drove off.

Me: I was scared. I didn't know who was the father.

Ntando: We always used protection.

Me: I know. Sometimes it breaks. I am sorry.

Ntando: I can't believe I have to let you go.

Me: I am sorry.

Ntando: I have to leave.

Me: Why?

Ntando: I can't stay. I can't have you so I have to leave. The traditional healer said Sandile can kill for you so I am not safe.

I didn't say anything. I had feelings for him and I wasn't ready to let him go. But what can I do? I can't be selfish and put his life in danger. We drove in silence until I made it to my car on campus. He walked me up to my car.

Ntando: You'll be alright.

Me: I can't believe I won't see you again.

He hugged me. For the first time in months. I cried.

He wiped my tears and kissed my forehead.

Ntando: I will leave tonight. He said I don't have much time.

Me: Look after yourself Mr Myeza.

Ntando: Look after yourself too Mrs Zulu and the little one.

I nodded and he left. I stepped inside my car and I cried. I don't know why I was crying but I cried. I thought I have buried everything correctly but I guess I was wrong. I wasn't strong as I thought I was. I thought I got it all covered but clearly I was wrong. Once I was calm. I

drove my car straight home.

The kids weren't back yet so I just went to my bedroom and I slept. I slept like a baby. In my dreams I saw my late husband smiling at me. I looked at him and I couldn't smile back. I was crying and I was in pain where I was but he was smiling at me holding my hand.

Me: Rajiv don't leave me.

He didn't say anything but he let go of my hand smiling upon me. I cried as he was leaving me. I didn't understand why he was leaving me. He wasn't supposed to leave me. He was supposed to stay with me. Why was he leaving me? I woke up panting. It was dark in my room. I turned on the bed side lamp. I got a fright. Sandile was sitting on the edge of the bed.

Me: You gave me a fright.

He stood up and he went to turn on the room lights. He came back to me.

Sandile: We need to talk about this.

He said putting the cufflinks on the bed. My heart started beating fast.....

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

In the morning I woke up feeling better. I went to take a shower and I changed my clothes. I cleaned my room. I took the scan and I hid it in my books. I went downstairs. Everyone was having breakfast. I sat down next to Uyathandwa.

Me: Good Morning.

Them: Morning.

Dad asked the others to excuse us. The schools were closed so no one was going to school. They went upstairs to their game room. That's where they played PlayStation, xbox and other games.

Dad did it for them.

Grandma: How are you feeling?

Me: Much better. I am leaving tomorrow.

Dad: Excuse me, why?

Me: I need to go back to my school work.

Mom: Are you running away from us?

Me: No. Exams are coming up soon. I have to study.

That was the only thing that was going to help me until Thapelo comes back. I needed to leave and distract myself.

Dad: We need to talk Alondwe.

Me: I don't want to talk. I am fine.

Mom: You're going to shut us out of your life just like that? Because we beat you?

Me: I am not shutting anyone out.

Dad: You are shutting us out Alondwe. We need to know what is going on with you.

Me: Nothing is wrong. I am fine. I just need to study. I don't want to fail. Otherwise you'll blame Thapelo for it. I don't want that.

Dad: You can date him. Continue dating him.

Me: I don't want to date him I want to marry him.

Mom: Let's not go there because it won't happen.

Me: Okay but I am leaving tomorrow.

Grandma: Are you sure you'll manage to be there alone. When will Thapelo come back from Mpumalanga?

Me: 28 April. I will manage.

Dad: What is he doing for a living?

Me: He's a surveyor.

Mom: He –

Me: Mom and dad stop asking questions about him. You don't have to pretend like you care.

Dad: We are your parents we care about you.

Me: Thanks hey.

Mom: You're my daughter. I can tell when you're being sarcastic.

Grandma: Just give her time. She'll come around.

They didn't say anything. They just looked down.

Me: Dad will you buy the ticket for me?

Dad: I will give you cash and you will go buy it yourself.

Me: Thank you.

Mom: And Sphephile? Is he coming back?

Me: No.

She took her bags. Kissed my dad goodbye and she left. I started eating. Dad stood up too.

Dad: You'll fetch the money in my office.

I nodded and he left. I was left with grandma on the table. I ate my breakfast.

Grandma: Did you call Thapelo?

Me: No. I will call him later.

Grandma: How do you think he's feeling right now?

Me: I don't know. I can't speak to him. With him it's hard to pretend. I don't know what will I say to him.

Grandma: Just try. And I don't like the fact that you're leaving. You'll be alone there.

Me: In Johannesburg. I have my aunt and my friend Nkululeko but studying keeps my mind off things. I will be fine don't worry too much.

Grandma: Okay. Your brother told you that he's having a child?

I kept quiet. He told me before I find out that I was pregnant.

Me: He told me. Please let's not talk about it.

Grandma: Okay. Let me go make my bed.

Me: No relax I will do it for you. Have you unpacked your clothes?

Grandma: Your mother unpacked them for me.

Me: Alright. Just relax.

Grandma: Thank you baby.

I smiled and she went to watch TV. I then finished up eating. I washed the dishes and I went to clean grandma's room. The maid does come on Mondays so I wasn't going to clean the house. I just went to my room. I connected to my laptop and I went online on Twitter. Time flew and I had to go and book the ticket. I was going to use my own money because I know that when dad said I must come to his office he just wanted to corner me with questions. I changed my clothes, I took my card and I left after telling grandma that I am leaving. I took a cab to buy the tickets after that I went to Sphephelo's foster home. Not his place but where he grew up. The kids stay there during the day because he's working and the school are closed. Sphephile was going to spend the night with me. They gave me him and his overnight bag. We left. We arrived at home.

Sphephile: Mama where are the others?

Me: They are upstairs playing games I think.

Grandma: They are swimming outside. Hello Samkelo.

Sphephile: Hello Khulu.

He went to Grandma and he hugged her legs. Grandma brushed his head. She went to sit down on the couch with him. I went upstairs. I wanted to take a quick nap.

When I woke up I went downstairs to the others. It was already dark outside. They were watching TV. I joined them. It was just grandma and my brothers.

Me: Sphephile who bathed you?

Sphephile: It was grandma. She bathed me and dressed me up on my new pyjamas that she bought for me and she bought new clothes for me. She said I can take them with me if I want to or I can leave them here. I will wear when I come for a visit.

Me: Okay. That's nice have you eaten?

Sphephile: Yes grandma fed me.

Me: Alright.

Grandma: Your food is on the microwave, you should eat and take your pills.

Me: Yeah. Thanks for reminding me.

I stood up and I went to the kitchen. Dad was eating a yogurt. I greeted him and I took my food. I sat on the high chair.

Dad: You didn't come for your ticket money?

Me: I used my card. I was going to be late. I wanted to go and fetch Sphephile.

Dad: Your mother is still hurting about Sphephile.

Me: We are all hurting.

Dad: That's the problem you're not telling us what is hurting you.

Me: It doesn't matter. You won't change it.

Dad: What you did is not right. She's not willing to look after Uyathandwa's child now because she believes he'll also take the child.

Me: You know dad I am must starting to doubt mom's love for Sphephile. Are you sure that she's not trying to cover the pain of loosing the child you both lost using my son?

He kept quiet. He didn't say anything.

Dad: Don't you ever, ever bring that up. Specially not to her. You don't know what we went through when we lost our son so please don't act like you know the pain of losing a child because you don't. Don't you ever talk about that.

He stood up and attempted to leave but mom was standing from afar listening to us. She was looking at me with on her eyes. I kind of wanted to smile at her but I didn't. My father held her hand and they went upstairs to their room. My goal was achieved I wanted them to have that moment of reliving the pain of the death of their unborn child. Dad thought I knew nothing about loosing a child but he was wrong. After eating I went upstairs to take my medication. I told Sphephile that he must come to bed after watching TV. He wanted to sleep with Alupheli so I let him be. I was leaving in the morning. I have asked Sphephelo to drive me to the airport with Sphephile.

In the morning I woke up and I took a shower. My bags were all ready for my trip. I wore blue boyfriend jeans and a white t-shirt with black ankle boots. I went downstairs. They were having breakfast. I greeted them. I sat down.

Alupheli: Are you leaving?

Me: Yes.

Alupheli: Sphephile is leaving too?

Me: Yes.

Alupheli: Can he stay for the rest of the holidays? He'll leave on the weekend.

Granny: Ask him if he wants to stay.

Me: Do you want to stay for the whole week Sphephile?

Sphephile: Eh. I can't miss Thursday. Dad is taking us out. I want to go.

Me: But do you want to spend other days here with Alupheli and everyone else?

Sphephile: Yes. If I won't miss Thursday.

Uyathandwa: Boy where are you going on Thursday?

Sphephile: We're going to a restaurant.

Mesuli: Where?

Sphephile: To that big building surrounded by trees.

Alupheli: Isibaya casino?

Sphephile: Yes.

They laughed at him. He smiled and looked down.

Alupheli: You won't miss it don't worry.

Sphephile: Okay. I will stay.

Alupheli: Sho ntwana.

They smiled. I wondered what they were up to. Mom and dad stood up and they went upstairs. They came back with their bags.

Them: Bye guys.

The others: Bye.

They didn't specifically say goodbye to me nor give me money like they usually do. They just left.

Maybe it was their way of saying I am on my own. They were angry at me? It's okay. I was also angry.

Sphephelo came. Uyathandwa went upstairs to get my bags and he packed them on the car.

Me: Gogo. I am leaving now.

Grandma: Be safe baby and call me once you get there alright?

Me: I will do so grandma.

I hugged her and I hugged my brothers.

Mesuli: Uziphathe kahle ke.

I laughed and nodded.

Me: Uyathandwa good luck with the whole baby thing. It will be alright.

Uyathandwa: Eish thanks I am going to need it.

Alupheli: Shame.

Me: Musa ukuphapha wena. Let's go baby.

Alupheli: I want to go too.

Me: Okay.

We left. They drove me straight to the airport. They were talking and singing on the road until we made it to the airport. I kissed my baby goodbye.

Me: I love you alright?

Sphephile: I love you too.

I said goodbye to the others and I proceeded to the line taking me to Johannesburg.

In Johannesburg. I laid low. I was in Thapelo's apartment since the day I came back. The day that the campus first term break ended. Mpendulo came to the apartment to knock. He was probably checking if I was there or what. But I didn't open the door. I wanted to be alone with my books. I used the cab everyday to go on campus. My phone and tablet were still off. I was using the house phone to call grandma and Sphephile. I buried myself in my books and it was all that I did. Ever since I left my parents never spoke to me. I didn't speak to them too. If this was their way of disowning me then I was cool with it. As a parent I can never give up on my child. If they are doing it to me. It is

well with my soul. I can't force them to anything.

It was a Thursday morning. Thapelo was coming back the following day. I had cleaned his apartment and washed his clothes. Ironed them and packed them. I wanted him to come back to a clean apartment. I had just got out of my last class at 4pm. Nkululeko was outside the gate on campus. She walked up to me.

Nkulu: Do you hate me that much?

Me: I needed some time alone. Please drive me to my place I will sleep there tonight. Thapelo is coming back tomorrow.

Nkulu: You better explain to me that where have you been.

I nodded and we drove straight to my place. We arrived in my place and we went to my room. I got the surprise of my life. Thapelo was just there sitting on my bed. He looked at us and my heart started beating fast. Tears started forming on the corners of my eyes. He was looking at me. He still had the cast on his leg. His beard was smaller than before.

Nkulu: Hey Thapelo.

Thapelo: Hey Nkululeko can you please give me and her some time. We need to talk.

Nkulu agreed and she left. I sat on the dressing chair facing him.

Thapelo: I am not fine, are you?

Me: No I am not.

Thapelo: Alright. You enjoyed not talking to me for two weeks?

Me: No I didn't.

Thapelo: Oh. Your actions said it all though. So Is this what you wanted us to talk about? I found this paper on my file with your school books. And the ring it was on the sink in my apartment. You wanted to explain that to me. Well now is your chance.

Me: That's not what I wanted us to talk about.

Thapelo: Well you'll explain this first. How on earth did you get 37% on your major module for the first test? First tests are always the easiest but you got 37%. And this ring I paid a lot of money for it but now it's washing off showing that it's fake. Are you trying to tell me that I bought a fake ring with so much money?

Me: No I can explain.

Thapelo: Go on explain I am listening and it's better be the truth.

Me: Monday night I was angry because of Nomzamo and the gift. I have studied for the test and I was going to continue studying but my anger got the best of me. So I went to the club. I took a few shots and I got drunk. I was late for my test the following morning but the Lecturer gave me extra time but it was useless because I blacked out.

Thapelo: How can you be drunk on a Monday? You went clubbing on a Monday? Do you want to fail your major module?

Me: I am sorry Thapelo. I don't want to fail.

Thapelo: The ring?

Me: I was on the dance floor with some guy. He deconstructed me by kissing me and I think he's the one who took my ring. I made the fake one because I was scared to tell you what happened.

Thapelo: Another man kissed you? After about five hours of my departure. Another man kissed you and you kissed him back?

Me: I am sorry for everything.

Thapelo: He kissed you and you kissed him back?

Me: Yes I kissed him back.

Thapelo: Who went to the club with you? You have never went to the club alone. Who took you to the club I want the name now.

Me: I went alone.

Thapelo: I supposed you went there with Nkululeko and I am pretty sure that this idea of a ring was hers and you are here in front of me covering up for her because you do anything that friend of yours tells you to do. You are lying.

Me: No I am telling the truth.

He took his crutches and he went to the door.

Me: Please don't leave. Don't go.

He opened the door.

Me: I had a miscarriage, that's what I wanted to talk to you about. That's why I needed you. It's because we lost a child. Our first child.

He stopped walking for a few minutes but he didn't say anything nor look at me. He then continue with his journey. He closed the door behind him and he left.....

Nobuhle Zulu.....

I looked at him. I didn't know what to say. I just ran out of words. My mouth went dry.

Sandile: The maid gave me these cufflinks because she thought they belonged to me. But I told her they don't belong to me. She was quite shy and couldn't keep eye contact. I asked if she knew who they belonged to or if a man have been coming in this house without my knowledge. She told me. But I want to hear it from the horse's mouth.

Me: I don't know any man.

Sandile: This is your chance to come clean with me. I will understand if you explain to me what happened. I know you are not in love with me but I need to hear it from you. What happened in my house? What has been happening in my house?

Me: I really don't know. I don't know.

Sandile: The owner of these cufflinks will tell me.

He took his car keys, went to his safe he took his gun and he headed to the door. I went to my handbag and I looked for my phone. It was not there. I looked for it everywhere inside my bedroom but it wasn't there. I figured Sandile must have taken it and meant he has seen everything I have been communicating with Ntando. I took my car keys too. I asked the maid to stay longer. I went to my car and I drove to Ntando's house. Clearly Sandile was going there. I was very scared of what might happen next. I didn't know what was going to happen. I was just hoping that Ntando was already gone. I was flying on the road and I couldn't stop crying. I couldn't believe that I was going to loose the man who has been with me through thick and thin. I just couldn't believe it. It's funny how I realise that now that I have been busted. I was hoping that he forgives me. I arrived at the house. I knew the combination of opening his gate so I opened it. Sandile's car was already inside the premises. I stepped out of the car and I rushed inside the house. Sandile was beating Ntando senselessly on his lounge.

Me: SANDILE!!

He stopped and looked at me. I was crying and shaking. I was really scared and I didn't like this side of Sandile. I liked his soft side not this one.

Sandile: What are you doing here?

Me: Sandile I can't let you do this.

I looked at Ntando hoping that he will slowly grab his bags while Sandile had his focus on me. It looked like he was about to leave because everything was on his lounge. He got the hint and he did just that. He looked pretty bad. Sandile doesn't play. He beat him very hard and I felt sorry for him.

Sandile: You can't let me do this?

Me: Yes. What if he gets you arrested for trying to kill him. And you will go to jail for murder?

Sandile: He's been fucking you right under my nose and you think I care about that.

Me: I am sorry.

Sandile: I didn't think it was going to be him. My lawyer Nobuhle. My goddamned Lawyer. You've been sleeping with him in my house. In my study where I make money to feed you and our kids. How can you do this to me?

Me: I didn't mean to disrespect you. It just happened. I am sorry Sandile please forgive me.

Sandile: If he didn't get this reaction he was talking about were you going to continue fucking him while you're pregnant. Or you knew that you are pregnant but you didn't care whether you fuck me or him.

Me: I didn't know who was the father of the child. I wasn't sure because condoms break sometimes.

He gave me one hot slap. I lost balance but I didn't land on the floor. I held the couch for balance.

Sandile: You've hurt me Nobuhle. You're carrying my child but you are sleeping with another man. You've been letting me share you with another man.

Me: Honey I am sorry.

Sandile: If it wasn't for my child that you're carrying I was going to put you in the hospital and leave you in Street, you were never going to see our kids again. Tsk!

He looked around Ntando wasn't there. He went to look for him around the house. I couldn't believe he slapped me. Just like that. He slapped me? He came back to the lounge. He had his gun on his hand.

Sandile: Where is he?

Me: I don't know. He left.

Sandile: Where is he going?

Me: I don't know he didn't tell me.

He took my phone out his pocket. He called him but his phone rang inside the house. He threw my phone on the wall. He clicked his tongue and he left. I went to take my phone. It's screen has cracked. I went to my car and I drove back to the house.

I arrived at home and the kids were already sleeping. I went upstairs. Sandile was on the shower. I sat on the dressing chair and I looked at my cheek. It didn't show that I was slapped. He came back to the bedroom.

Sandile: I want you to take all your clothes and move them to the guest room.

Me: You're kicking me out?

Sandile: I can't even stand your sight. I can't share the same bed with you anymore so please leave.

Me: Your mother is coming tomorrow. What will we say to her?

Sandile: You were supposed to think about that before another man fucked you. Even Prudence, she had never cheated on me. I didn't expect this from you. Your parents raised you well but you are doing this? How could you?

Me: Sandile I am sorry. I will be good. I will learn to love you. I will be a good wife. I will go back to church.

Sandile: Fine you will do that in the guest room not here. Please leave.

I went to the bathroom and I took my bathing staff. My night dress and I left. I sat on the bed in guestroom. I didn't want to cry anymore I have cried enough. I just didn't want to regret because it wasn't going to help me. I didn't want to use the "If" because it wasn't going to help me.

The following morning I didn't go to school. I didn't want to wake up. I didn't even wake up

to prepare breakfast and see my kids leave. I was too ashamed. I guess when you've been bad and your actions catch up with you it's where you feel more pain because everything just comes back running and it plays on your mind like a movie. The maid knocked on my door telling me to come and have breakfast. I didn't open the door. I wanted to stay in my new room alone. I looked at the bedside watch and it was 12:30 pm. Maybe I needed to find my faith again. I needed to consult my God. I got off my bed and I kneeled down. I didn't know what to say.

Me: I don't know what to say. My sins are over me. I don't deserve your mercy but I am in need of it.

I paused. I sat down on the floor and I cried. Do you know that moment when you are praying and your prayer feels like it's going nowhere. That's how I felt. I felt useless. There was a knock on the door. I wiped my tears and tried to compose myself.

Me: Who is it?

Sandile: The maid told me you are not coming out of this room and you haven't eaten today.

Me: I don't want to come out.

Sandile: Is this your plan of killing our baby? You don't want to eat because the baby is mine?

I didn't say anything to him. I stood up and I went inside my bed covers. I covered myself with the blankets.

Sandile: Nobuhle I am speaking to you.

I didn't say anything. I didn't want to talk. I wanted to be alone with my sins. I was getting sleepy. I fell asleep immediately. I was woken up by Sandile. He was in my room. I looked at the door and he broke the door. I looked at him.

Sandile: You need to wake up.

Me: Why did you break the door?

Sandile: You're not going to lock yourself in here. You need to eat and you need to go to school. You wanted to study I paid for your fees now you're sleeping here like it's the end of the world.

Me: Can you leave me alone. I need to think about all the bad things I have done. Right now I want to be alone.

Sandile: I will not let you do that to yourself. Not to yourself not to our child. I am going to get food for you.

He stood up and he left the room. He was supposed to be angry with me. He was supposed to not talk to me and I thought he was going to want nothing to do with me. But yet he's in my door trying to make me feel better, trying to get me up so that I can face life. What type of love does he have? Or he only cares about the baby now? I stood up and I went to the bathroom. I locked the bathroom and I ran the shower. I wanted him to think I was taking a shower. I sat down on the floor trying to pray for forgiveness and redemption.....

Samkelo Ndunakazi.....

I have never thought I will find myself feeling pain because of my daughter. I thought if I had to feel pain it was going to be of her reckless behaviour but not because of the words she used on me. It's been years since Thandeka and I lost a child. Over ten years. Alupheli came after that child and we were grateful for that. We moved on from the pain.

Thandeka: I can't believe she said that.

Me: I am sorry.

Thandeka: It was painful when we lost our son and I thought it was going to break us apart. The grief and the pain. It was too much.

Me: I know. She's angry at us for something I don't even know. Why is she angry?

Thandeka: Her love for that boy is too much and even we were considering giving her away,

after that. I want no part of the things she's going through.

Me: I have heard enough too. This boy will see her through because he's everything to her.

Thandeka: I always thought I was going to see her getting married. Her beautiful day and you'll walk her down the aisle. She'll have beautiful kids and she'll live a happy life. Better than the life I had.

Me: She's big enough. She's on her own. I never thought it will get to this but I am tired of Alondwe. I am tired of fighting with her. Her respect for us is gone. It's all gone.

Thandeka: This is more like losing another child.

Me: It will be alright. If she comes to her mind she'll find us here. We will accept her.

Thandeka: I love you.

Me: I love you too. What are you going to do about Uyathandwa's child once the child is born?

Thandeka: I can't cast my grandchild out because of what happened with Alondwe. I will take the child but that girl will not get the baby. Why would she hate the child if Uyathandwa cheated on her.

Me: Maybe she's angry for now. She'll come around once the child is born.

Thandeka: She better come around otherwise there's no grandchild of mine that I will give to a girl who abandoned him or her.

Me: Let's hope she will do what is right for the child. We just need to get ready for tantrums that her family is going to throw at us.

Thandeka: So God help me.

Me: You will hold your horses Thandeka I am serious.

Thandeka: I will be on my best behaviour. I promise.

Me: I will believe you once I see it and I will have a reward for you.

Thandeka:(laughing) What reward?

Me: You'll get to race with me.

Thandeka: Motor bike race?

Me: Yes.

Thandeka: Oh my God baby thank you so much. I will behave. It will be like I am not there. I promise I won't shame your name.

The way she was happy it's like she was a child and I was happy to see her smile. To see that glimpse of happiness in her eyes. She's my world and I can't even imagine my life without her.

On Saturday morning the family of the girl came. I have asked Themba to ask someone from his family to come and be there. Uyathandwa's uncle Silumko and his wife were there. The girl looked young but she looked like she's from a decent family. I don't know you can never judge someone by looking at them but she seemed decent. She was with her mother and aunts.

Me: How can we help you?

Woman1: Inja yenu idle amaqanda akwami. (Your son made my daughter pregnant)

Silumko: Who is the dog?

Thandeka: We don't have a dog mama. Maybe you got the wrong house.

Woman1: Nomcebo what is the name of the boy again?

Nomcebo: His name is Uyathandwa Smith.

Woman1: Uyathandwa made her pregnant mfazi.

Mom: We will call him and he'll have to answer to that. Thandeka call him.

My wife stood up and he went to call him. She came back with him. Uyathandwa sat down.

Silumko's wife: Ethan Junior do you know this girl?

Uyathandwa: Yes I know her.

Silumko's wife: She's here with her parents and she says she's pregnant. The child is yours.

Do you know this pregnancy?

Uyathandwa: Yes I know it.

Woman1: Boy you must do right by my daughter and her father wants damages.

Woman2: Do you take responsibility for that?

Uyathandwa: For now I am still studying. I don't have money but I can ask for a loan to my father and I will do the right thing by my child.

Woman1: That's all we want. What are your intentions with her?

Uyathandwa: I don't understand your question.

Woman2: Are you planning on marrying her?

Uyathandwa: We are no longer in a relationship. She broke up with me. I don't plan on marrying her.

Woman1: You think who will want her now that she is going to be a mother.

Uyathandwa: She doesn't want the baby so I don't think that will be a problem.

Thandeka: And you can't force him to marry her just because she's pregnant.

Woman1: My daughter just started working. She must fix her father's home. She won't have time to mother a child.

Uyathandwa: I will make a plan.

Thandeka: We are not abandoning our grandchild.

Mom: The child will come to us. I will look after the child. Once Uyathandwa have paid the damages the child will be rightfully a Smith.

Thandeka: Girl you don't want to raise your child?

Nomcebo: I don't want the child. I wanted no baby from the beginning. I can't raise a child. My work is demanding I am not ready to be a mother.

Thandeka: Do you think at your age we were ready to be mothers?

Woman1: Don't talk her into it.

Thandeka: No I want her to understand that once she gives up her child. She's not going to get the child back. We won't raise the child and once she feels like it suit her she'll come here claiming the child.

Woman1: She's the mother.

Silumko: His mother have said it. And we stand by that decision. A mother is a woman who doesn't abandon her child because she doesn't feel like being a mother. Thandeka is speaking the truth and we abide by it. All of us.

Me: So girl are you really giving up your child?

Nomcebo: Yes I don't want the child.

Thandeka: Good. Don't come here years later claiming you have a child with my son. Your name won't be on the birth certificate. I hate girls who abandon kids because they are angry at the father. Uyathandwa you can go.

Uyathandwa was told to leave and he left.

Me: So how many cows is your husband asking for?

Woman1: Five cows.

Us: Hhaybo!

Nomcebo: I was a Virgin.

Woman1: That's my husband's word. Then you can have your child.

Me: We will pay.

Silumko: Samkelo?

Me: Don't worry we will pay.

They were selling the child and that made me angry. We were going to pay and the child was going to stay with us. They didn't want the child so I wasn't going to let them have the child. We agreed to that and they left.

Sunday afternoon Thandeka and I were ready for the road. I was really proud of her. She was

on her best behaviour.

Me: You did me proud yesterday.

Thandeka: That's because you are the best husband. So let the games begin.

Me: Don't cry if I win.

She laughed and kissed me. We said goodbye to the kids. Sphephile was still with us. His father was going to take him after school the following day.

Sphephile: Please come back safe.

Alupheli: Yes no one must break the leg.

Us: Don't worry.

Mom: Samkelo I don't like this.

Me: Don't worry mom. Mesuli look after your grandmother. I don't want her to have a heart attack. Mesuli: I won't let you down dad.

We then left. The streets weren't busy on Sunday afternoon. The race was on fire I was enjoying it. The winner was going to be someone who was going to make it home first. It was fun until I lost my wife. I couldn't see her. Thandeka was smart. I don't even know how she outran me. I suppose Muzi taught him the skills since her job was kind of critical.

When I got home my mom was worried sick. She thought I have died. I went to her and kissed her cheek.

Me: You worry too much mom.

Mom: You're my only son I don't want you to leave me.

Me: I won't leave you mom.

Mom: But your wife won! How did you let it happen?

Alupheli: Ask him grandma he has shamed us.

Uyathandwa: I am disappointed in you dad.

Thandeka: I told you I will win.

Mesuli: Yeah mom, you got the sauce.

Me: No I did it on purpose. I didn't want my wife to cry. You don't know how she is when she's crying.

Everyone laughed. Thandeka and I went to shower. Then we went to have dinner with everyone. Sphephile prayed and we started eating.

Sphephile: I must say I liked the drama yesterday.

Alupheli: Yeah mshana it was lit.

Thandeka: What Are you two talking about.

Mesuli: They eavesdropped the conversation about the baby and Nomcebo everything that was happening yesterday.

Uyathandwa: You're unbelievable.

Sphephile: What? There was nothing wrong that we did. Malume said it will be fun and he was right.

Thandeka: What kind of an uncle are you Alupheli?

Alupheli: The good one.

Me: Sphephile eavesdropping is for girls.

Mom: Samkelo we are girls please respect us.

The boys laughed at mom's statement.

Thandeka: It's not funny.

Boys: Yes mom.

Sphephile: Huh, I was wondering.

Alupheli: What mshana?

Sphephile: On Muvhango. Vusi's girlfriend is pregnant but we have never seen them doing pom poms. Not even kissing.

Us: Hhaybo! Sphephile!

That was very unexpected of him and here I was thinking Muvhango is good because they don't show such things.

Sphephile: What?

Alupheli: Be five years old mshana. Be five years old. Please.

Mesuli: As if you're nine years old.

Uyathandwa: But I must say umshana is telling the truth. They are playing us.

Me, Thandeka and mom: Uyathandwa! Behave!

Alupheli: Yes behave because we also didn't see you Uyathandwa.

That was it!

Me: In your rooms all of you!

Sphephile: But we are still eating.

Thandeka: You will eat your dirty minds go now!

They reluctantly stood up and left us in peace.

Mom: Mesuli didn't say anything wrong.

Thandeka and I looked at each other.... The family I have.....

Thapelo Moloi's Point Of View....

I love Alondwe, I would do anything for her. She's been good to me and she has showed me love in different ways. We are not perfect but we bring the best out of each other. I don't know where to begin. When she sent the text that she needed me. I wanted to drop everything and go be with her. But then I couldn't because I didn't know what was going on and to leave I needed to have a reason. I didn't know whether she was serious or not but she sounded serious. Alondwe is naughty she doesn't mind calling me during my working hours and she'll cry saying she's on campus sick. I will drop everything and drive to her campus only to find her waiting outside the gate. She'll kiss me and say "chocolate brownie I wanted you to take me out for lunch" all my trouble, getting worried and driving on the road would be for lunch. I couldn't really differentiate when she was serious or not. But I made sure that I am available all the time because I didn't want to think that she's joking only to find that she was serious. Mpumalanga was too far for me to drop everything and go to KZN for something that I didn't know. I was sad when she said I chose my work over her. I didn't want her to feel like that but her switching off her phone made me angry and worried at the same time. I was full of different emotions when she told me the truth. I was angry that she went out kissing guys that she doesn't know. I couldn't imagine the other guy touching her and kissing her. The more I thought it about was the more I got angry. She got 37% for going out clubbing and she lost the most precious thing I bought for her. I have never loved Nkululeko's lifestyle and at times I would be scared that she might influence Alondwe. But there was nothing I could do, I wasn't going to break their friendship. I can't choose friends for her. I knew that she was covering up for her and I hated it. I would have appreciated it if she told me the truth and don't even go through trouble of faking the ring just to cover up for her friend. I felt like she listens to Nkululeko more than she should. Through it all I was more angry at myself. I was supposed to protect her. I was supposed to be there with her and grieve with her. She went through it alone. I don't even know how she handled it. We lost our first child. Our first symbol of our love. It was more painful than any pain that I have endured in life...

\*\*\*\*\*

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

I didn't know what to do. Should I follow him? Should I call him? But he won't answer his phone obviously. I went to my phone and I switched it back on. I called the cab. I needed to go to his place. Maybe he was there. I was worried maybe this was the end of everything. Maybe after six years we had to end it here. I couldn't imagine my life without him. I love him and there is no other guy I wanted beside him. The cab contacted me. I took my bag and

I left. The cab dropped me off his place. The door was locked so I took my keys and I opened the door. He was inside the apartment on the lounge. He was crying. I went to him and I knelt down before him. I held his hands. He looked at me with tears on his eyes. I couldn't help but cry with him.

Me: Thapelo I am sorry.

He didn't say anything, he just cried. It was painful seeing him cry. Thapelo doesn't cry. We've been together for that long but I have only seen him cry once when I broke up with him after he cheated on me. I didn't like looking at him cry. Nobody can like to see their partner cry.

Me: I am sorry. This is all my fault if I listened to you and we used protection all the times I wasn't going to get pregnant. I am really sorry.

Thapelo: How did you loose the baby?

Me: The pain started after my parents have beaten me. I thought it was cloths being heavy on me but the Doctor said it was the baby. I am sorry Thapelo.

Thapelo: It's not your fault. Maybe we were meant to go through this pain. Alondwe I am sorry that I wasn't there when you needed me the most. I should have been there but I just thought that maybe it's one of those stunts you usually pull just to hold me down.

Me: I am sorry for shutting my phone down and not talking to you for two weeks. I didn't know what I was going to say to you. I didn't want you to hear it over the phone where you're far from me.

Thapelo: Come here.

I stood up and he made me sit on his lap. We hugged each other. The pain felt much better with him. Hearing his heart beat was better than listening to my thoughts. I ended up laying on the couch on my back with my head on his lap. He was brushing my hair. I had my natural hair on. We were quiet.

Me: I was going to want the baby to be a baby girl.

Thapelo: You don't choose baby.

Me: I know but it had to be a girl. A mini Alondwe.

Thapelo: Girl or boy as long as you are the mother I was going to be the happiest daddy.

Me: The good daddy.

Thapelo: We are good together. What did your parents say?

Me: I didn't tell them. Their actions says they have disowned me.

Thapelo: Why do you say that?

Me: It was dad's pay day on Tuesday and he didn't send money like he usually does. When I left they didn't say goodbye nor give me money. They didn't call to ask if I arrived safe.

Thapelo: Your phone was off maybe they did call.

Me: I called grandma and she didn't say they called. There is no missed calls from them. No text or voice message. So basically I am on my own.

Thapelo: You're not on your own, you got me and I will never leave you.

Me: Thank you... Uhm baby about the ring.

Thapelo: You gonna buy it with your money.

Me: Ah! But Thapelo I don't have that kind of cash. I don't even have half of it.

Thapelo: Then you'll get married without a ring. I will be the one with the ring.

Me: You know man will hit on me right if there is no ring on my finger?

Thapelo: You'll walk around with our marriage certificate.

I looked at him and I laughed. I didn't believe he said that. I couldn't stop laughing. He joined me and we laughed together. He saw that the idea was more sick than he thought. We laughed until it turned into tears. He held my hands.

Thapelo: Maybe she was going to be yellow like you.

Me: No maybe she was going to be caramel skinned.

Thapelo: We were going to take her and her brother to the park to play.

Me: Have family vacations. She was going to have a passport at a younger age.

Thapelo: Pecks of having adventurous parents. Meeting her was going to be a blessing.

Me: Loving her was going to be life.

Thapelo: It will be alright. We will get through it. Get some rest now.

I closed my eyes. He brushed my head humming a hymn for me until I fell asleep.

\*\*\*\*\*

We took everything one step at time. We didn't rush healing. We were there for each other and we supported each other. Whenever I needed someone to talk to I spoke to him or call my grandmother. She was very supportive. We didn't tell any of our friends that we lost a child. It was between us. Thapelo didn't get all angry on Nkululeko and I was happy with that. Things between my parents and I were still mute. I am good at handling silence because I also know how to give someone silence. I made peace with that because even if I try to ask what was wrong or ask for forgiveness for what I have said we were still going to fight when they learn that I am married to Thapelo. I wasn't going to stop on their account this was my happiness. On 30th of May Thapelo's uncle and his family hosted our traditional wedding. It was a small ceremony but it was beautiful. I was a Sotho wife bathong. A Moloji by tradition. I was very happy and I wished my whole family was there. Uyathandwa was there. He supported me and I was grateful. I hated the fact that I couldn't even tell my grandmother. I knew that she wasn't going to support the idea and I couldn't fight with her about this. My aunts were there and my father's brother was there. The grandparents who accepted the lobola money were there. We had our wedding on video and pictures. After the wedding I moved in with Thapelo. I was living with him full time.

10th of June. In the morning. I was getting ready.

Nkulu: Well I got the message for the bride from the groom. It's important.

Me: Ah what is he saying now. Don't tell me he's having cold feet.

Nkulu: No he's not but he's requesting that you don't put make up on.

Me: Huh!? Why now?

Nkulu: The message reads "Nkulu tell my wife that I need not to see make up on her face. I didn't meet her with make up and I am not planning on marrying her with make up on her. And tell her I love her"

Me: He's unfair.

Nkulu: What must we do because the make up is already on your face?

Melo: She must wash it off.

Me: Why is Thapelo doing this to me?

Simthande: Don't cry just wash off the make up.

Immaculate: Listen to your husband.

I stood up and I went to the bathroom. I washed off the make up on my face. We were in my flat. I was selling it after the wedding. I wasn't renting it anymore I was owning it. I wiped my face and I went to get dress. My wedding gown was beautiful. I couldn't wait for Thapelo to see me on it.

My brother Uyathandwa was walking me down the aisle with the song "Giving myself by Jenifer Hudson" I couldn't stop crying, I was seriously giving myself to him, my body, my soul and my everything. I was praying that he doesn't change after we get married. I prayed that he stayed as loving as he was before we got married. Uyathandwa handed me over to him and they shake hands.

Uyathandwa: If you mistreat her Brah. I will kill you.

Thapelo: I will not.

I smiled and wiped my tears. It was beautiful. Nkulu was born for this, one couldn't tell that was just our apartment. Our guests were 50. It was just a few of my classmates, my family

and Thapelo's family and his colleagues. Well Nomzamo was there too. . The pastor began by giving us a sermon then we had our own vows. Thapelo went first.

Thapelo: Six years ago in my classroom there was this new girl who was asking questions non stop on the physical science class. I thought maybe I could help but hey she told me to fuck off (people laughed) She had the world on her shoulders but she was beautiful regardless. I won her heart over and I have kept it ever since. I want to tell you that I love you for the last time as a single man because according to home affairs I am single. (People laughed) My vow to you is to love you till the end of time. To grow old with you, grow in love with you. To cherish you and honour you. From this day on wards I vow to stand by you til death tear us apart. I will love you now and love you in the next life.

Me: Thapelo Moloji you were annoying with your allegations that I wanted you in high school. (People laughed) I didn't think I was going to love you this much. I was a mess when I met you but you changed that, you made fall in love again. You held my hand and you went through life with me. I vow to respect and love you til the end of my days. To be faithful to you and to respect our marriage. I vow to stand by you in joy and in pain. I will love you now and forever.

Pastor prayed for our rings and we exchanged them. Thapelo bought another ring. The exact same ring. I was going to wear it as three pieces counting in the other piece of the old ring that I lost.

Thapelo: With this ring I am showing you my love. I am showing the signs of my heart through this diamond. This is to tell every guys out there that you are mine and mine alone. It will remind you that you must not do as you please because you belong to Moloji. I am saying you are mine and I am yours.

Me: With this ring I am giving you my eternal love. I am tying you down. Every girl in your office and on the streets will know that you are taken. This is to say I am yours and you're mine.

Pastor: With the power and authority invested in me I now pronounce you husband and wife. Thapelo you may kiss your bride..

Thapelo removed the veil and he held my chin softly, he looked at me for a while. He was making me shy. He smiled and I smiled back.

Me: Will you kiss me already.

He smiled and then he kissed me. People clapped hands for us. After that we went to take pictures and proceeded to our reception. We were now  
Mr and Mrs Moloji

Nobuhle Zulu.....

I stood up after a while and I went back to the room. Sandile was still there I thought he would be gone by then. But he was sitting on the bed. He looked at me with eyes that were wondering. I figured he thought that I was showering.

Sandile: I thought you were taking a shower.

I looked down and I didn't answer him.

Sandile: You wanted me to leave.

Me: I want to be alone.

Sandile: I get that you're regretting your actions but think about the baby. If you don't eat what will happen? If you're stressing yourself out what will happen? The baby will die. I don't want our kid to die please Nobuhle eat.

Me: You can go I will eat.

Sandile: I am not leaving until I see you finishing your food so you better start eating.

I took the food and I started eating. I didn't want to eat. I just wanted to be alone. But maybe he was right I had to think about the baby. If I had to do right by him I will do by our child. I

will give our child love and care. Should the baby die he will say I wanted the baby to die. I took the plate and it was chicken mayo with bread and green salad. I hated chicken. It had a horrible smell. I put the plate down and I went to the bathroom to throw up. It was tiring and I didn't have much energy left within me.

Sandile: Is it the salad?

Me: No. It's the chicken.

Sandile: Okay. What do you want to eat?

Me: Can you go and buy Pizza for me. I don't have the honey anymore. Please buy it too.

Sandile: You will eat the pizza with honey?

Me: Don't judge. My baby girl is wired.

Sandile: It's a girl?

Me: Uhm... Yes. Can you buy the meaty triple deck please Sandile.

Sandile: Don't beg like that. I will buy it but you have to take a shower now. I want to come back and see you looking clean.

I nodded and he left. I closed the door and I cried. His behaviour towards me was making me feel bad and filthy. How can I hurt such a man? I thought he was going to be mad at me for months. Well he's still angry but he's trying. He's trying for the sake of the baby. That counts for something. I wiped my tears and I went to shower. I shower longer than I usually do. I just wanted to wash my body. Why did I let temptation get the best of me? Why? I am a bad person. Will I ever be good?

I went back to the room and I moistened my body. I wore my gown. I went to our room to change my clothes. I then went back to the guest room. Sandile was back. The smell of pizza was just life and everything to my cravings. I took the piece and I gave it to him.

Sandile: No I am fine.

Me: Please eat with me. Please.

He took it and we are together. I was eating my own way and it was good.

Sandile: You're going to school tomorrow.

Me: I am not sure.

Sandile: I am not asking you. I am telling you.

I didn't say anything. We continued eating. The door was opened and my mother in-law walked in.

Mrs Zulu: Sandile, the maid told me you're here. Why are you both in this room?

Sandile: Mama.

Sandile stood up and he went to hug his mom.

Mrs Zulu: Oh my boy. Nobuhle is looking after you. You're looking good.

Sandile: Mom come on.

Mrs Zulu: I am serious. My daughter in-law.

I stood up and I went to her. We hugged each other. She looked at me and she smiled.

Mrs Zulu: I can see you're gaining some weight.

Me: Yes. How are you doing?

Mrs Zulu: Now that I am seeing you together. I am very happy. How are you two?

Us: We are fine mom.

Mrs Zulu: Okay. Why are you in this room?

I looked at Sandile expecting him to explain.

Sandile: Well my wife and the baby doesn't like the ora of our room so they prefer this room.

Mrs Zulu: Did you just say baby?

Sandile: Yes. We're having a baby girl.

Mrs Zulu: Awu ziyanda izinkomo kwaZulu.

She did the Zulu happy dance while she allulated. I laughed because it was kind of funny.

She hugged us both.

Mrs Zulu: Siyabonga. Nisebenzile bantabami.

Sandile: Yes mom. Can we leave Nobuhle to rest I will take you out for lunch.

Mrs Zulu: Okay. Makoti we will talk later.

Me: Alright mama.

They left and I went back to my food. Seeing Mrs Zulu made me miss my mother. I didn't see her ever I don't even know. I sighed. I took my car keys and I left.

I drove my car straight home. I was nervous. I didn't know what I was going to say to him. Where was I going to begin. Was she going to accept me or she was going to chase me out. I arrived at home. I parked my car outside the gate, I remained inside trying to figure out whether I should go in or I should turn back but I decided and I went inside. The gate wasn't locked. I knocked on the front door. She told me to come in from the inside. I went in, she was watching TV while having tea and biscuits.

Me: Sanibona.

She looked up. She had her reading glasses on. She took them off and she looked at me.

Mom: Nobuhle is it you?

Me: Yes mom it's me.

Mom: Oh mtanami.

She just broke down and cried. I went to her and I kneeled down in front of her. She hugged me and we cried together. I have missed her and I didn't even realise. She was my mom.

Me: I am sorry mama.

Mom: Oh my child all is forgiven. Forgive us my child.

Me: I love you mom.

Mom: I love you too my child..

Alondwe Moloji...

At 8 pm Nkululeko drove us back to our apartment. Everyone had left. Nkululeko couldn't stop talking about the wedding. Thapelo and I were all lovey dovey at the back seat of the car.

Nkulu: Guys are you even listening to me?

Us: Yes.

Nkulu: What am I talking about?

Me: You're talking about the beauty of the wedding.

Nkulu: It was the beautiful intimate wedding. Oh dear God. I loved it.

Thapelo: You did a great job Nkululeko.

Me: Yes and thank you so much for not charging us.

Nkulu: You're my friend. And besides it was my wedding gift to you and that little gift I gave you.

Me: Yeah. You're the best friend.

Thapelo: What little gift is she talking about?

Me: It's between me and her.

Thapelo: You're starting with secrets. It's not a good way to start a marriage.

Nkululeko and I laughed because we knew that he was trying to make me feel guilty. I kissed him deeply. I loved every second of it.

Nkulu: Guys I am still here.

We stopped and we laughed at her. She shook her head. We arrived and we stepped out of the car.

Nkulu: Okay go and start making babies.

Thapelo and I laughed faintly.

Me: Goodnight my friend. I love you.

Nkulu: Goodnight. I love you too.

We walked up to our apartment, he was holding my hand.

Me: You know you're not a romantic husband. Our first night we're going back to our apartment.

Thapelo: You know I can only afford the honeymoon next year my love not now.

He said picking me up as we got off the lift. I giggled and he walked with me to our apartment. He was no longer on a leg cast. He was just fine and more sexy now that he was working out. He opened the door and we walked in. The apartment was clean and there were roses leading to our bedroom. The song by Jenifer Hudson- giving myself was playing.

Me: Okay I take my word back. You're romantic.

Thapelo: We need to shower first.

We went to the bathroom and it was just perfect just like the bedroom.

Me: Will it be like this all the times?

Thapelo: Ah baby come on.

Me: I was just asking.

Thapelo: We couldn't eat the wedding cake on the normal bed sheets on the first night of our wedding. No. It couldn't happen.

Me: Oh you want some wedding cake?

He put me down and he held my hands. He looked into my eyes.

Thapelo: If you're not ready you can tell me.

I smiled. After loosing our child I never had sex with him. I was scared and I didn't want to do it. I felt like I was going to get pregnant again and I was going to loose the baby again. Fear was taking over and I allowed it. I wasn't going to do to that to him on our wedding night. I was going to give it all up to him.

Me: Let's bath together.

We took off our clothes and we went inside the tub. He was at my back and I was in between his legs. It was so relaxing and refreshing. We drank the wine and had some chocolate with some kisses here and there.

Thapelo: I just wonder what will our parents say once they find out.

Me: I don't know but I don't think mine will care that much. They don't seem to care.

Thapelo: They do care.

Me: Let's just enjoy our night. They will find out on their own way. Because we won't post any pictures.

Thapelo: Yes.

Thapelo and I decided that we will not post our wedding pictures on social media. And we blocked the wall posts on Facebook. We were just hoping that people won't post on other networks. That's not how we wanted our parents to find out.

After bathing we went to our room. I took the lingerie that Nkululeko bought for me and I wore it. I was on the bathroom. I then went back to the bedroom Thapelo was laying on the bed on his back.

Me: So you wanted to know the secret?

He sat up straight and looked at me. I smiled. He jumped off the bed and ran towards me. He tripped but he didn't fall I laughed at him. He got to me.

Thapelo: Don't laugh at your husband.

I smiled and I kissed him softly. He held my waist softly and we walked to the bed and we flew to our heaven... Our first night as Mr and Mrs Moloji

[Ay sorry guys I won't elaborate some of us are single ]

On the 23rd of June. Mesuli, Alupheli, Sphephile, Thapelo and I we took a vacation to Maim. They didn't know that I was now married. I told them that if they wanted to go with me and Sphephile they will have to convince our parents on their own. I wasn't going to do it for them. Uyathandwa assisted them on convincing our parents and they agreed. They even paid

for the costs of the trip but they sent Uyathandwa to give me the cash. Sphephelo contributed some cash for Sphephile. Thapelo and I also contributed half/half. We were going to spend one week there. I was very happy.

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

SIX MONTHS LATER...

It's been six months and God has been great. My family was going stronger. My wife and I were happy and everything was just going well. There is nothing much that happened on the past six months beside us being at peace. Ever since we cut Alondwe off our lives we had less fights and less stress. We figured doing that was the best for us. Not that we never thought of her. There was a gap that she was no longer there but by the look of things she was fine wherever she was. We haven't seen her in six months. Her grandmother told us that she wasn't coming home because of the residency in the hospital. She was very busy so she had no time to come back home. Sphephile visited her in Johannesburg. They went on a trip with her and they weren't closing their mouths about how beautiful Maim was. Alupheli and Sphephile were always imitating the Maim lifestyle. It was clearly that they had a good time. We had Christmas and happy new year celebration without Alondwe and Sphephile. On the pictures she was posting on Facebook and other social networks she looked happy with her boyfriend. I was going to let her be and don't even intervene in her life. Clearly the boy was taking care of her. She had no room for us in her life.

It was now the end of January. Uyathandwa's baby mama was due the following month which was February. I just got back from work and I found my wife crying in our room. I quickly went to her.

Me: Thandeka what's going on?

She didn't answer me. She just gave me her phone. I looked at it and she was on Facebook. It was a Facebook post, posted by Alondwe.

She posted: **If I could get just one call to heaven. I would call my grandfather and speak to him. Just to tell him how hard life has been on me. I would tell him how hard it is to be an orphan with dead walking parents who don't give a shit about you. Then I would wait for him to respond so that he can tell me how he feels about his son. My dead walking father. I would probably ask him to pass the phone to my little angel just to speak to her. Maybe in heaven she can talk it doesn't matter how many months she is. So guys if you still have parents love and appreciate them. If they are dead honour their memories because some of us don't know which category do we belong to.**

**A tear escaped. I wiped it off immediately. People commented seconding her on how people should appreciate their parents and love them. I felt bad that my daughter was feeling that way about us.**

Thandeka: What little angel is she talking about?

Me: I think the only person who can answer that question is my mom.

Thandeka: She might be going through something. Even if she isn't, what kind of parents are we?

Me: We thought she was going to realise that she was wrong but she didn't. We did what we thought was best. But let's go and speak to mom.

She wiped her tears and we went to mom's room. She was reading her Bible. We sat down on the bed.

Mom: What's wrong?

My guess was Alondwe lost a child so to dig that from mom I had to use an angle because she wasn't going to tell us if I just ask her.

Me: Why didn't you tell us that Alondwe lost a child?

Mom: Who told you that?

Me: What's important is that we know now.

Mom: Then I bet you know how she lost that child.

Thandeka and I looked at each other. Our daughter lost a child and we weren't there for her.

Me: You can tell us mom.

Mom: You're the reason why she lost the child. That's why she never came back home after you have beaten her and that's why she said those hurtful words to you about your child that you lost.

Thandeka: What did we do to her?

Mom: You two are van damm right?

Me: Mom please tell us.

Mom: You beat her hard enough that the baby didn't survive. She went to the hospital and the doctor told her that she was pregnant. The baby died. She didn't know that she was pregnant. We didn't say anything. I stood up and I went back to our room. Thandeka followed after me. We sat in our room in silence.

Me: So we had a hand in the death of our own granddaughter?

Thandeka: It was better for us nobody had a hand on our son's death it was just stress but for her? To have her parents beat her until she lost a little life. A life planted by a boy that she loves more than any other boy. What kind of parents are we? I don't blame her for staying away. After that we disowned without even telling her that we are disowning her. She just read in between the lines. Our love for her is what?

Me: We're going to Johannesburg. We will fix this. Please start packing.

She didn't ask twice. She did as I told her and I booked our tickets online.

Saturday morning we flew to Johannesburg. Everything was awkward. The silence between me and my wife was too much. I had nothing to say and she had nothing to say. We arrived in Johannesburg and we drove to her flat. At the door we knocked. A white man opened the door. Thandeka and I looked at each other.

Man: Hi, can I help you with something?

Me: Yes. Our daughter Alondwe?

Man: Oh. She sold the flat to me. She doesn't live here anymore.

Thandeka: Do you know where she lives?

Man: No I don't know.

Us: Thank you.

He smiled and closed the door.

Me: Okay where the hell is she?

Thandeka: Obviously she's still dating the boy. That means they live together. Maybe he couldn't maintain her so they decided to live together.

Me: It makes sense. I will kill that boy with my own hands. A civil union with my daughter?

Thandeka: Samkelo don't forget why we're here. I don't want to fight with that boy.

Me: Let's call the boy's parents. We need the address of that boy.

Thandeka took out her phone and she called the mother. The woman answered. She was on speaker.

Mrs Moloi: I thought we were done with that meeting we had.

Me: Well apparently your son is having a civil union with my daughter and that is the problem. We need his address.

Mrs Moloi: Tsk! Wonders will never end.

She hung up the call and we sighed. She sent the address and we took the cab straight to the apartment. It was an expensive estate. I must say. The boy was really making good money. First the ring, the apartment and maintaining our daughter and her lifestyle.

We arrived at the apartment and Thandeka knocked on the door. The voice of a man told us to come in. We looked at each other and we went inside the apartment. Alondwe was sitting

on the couch she was reading a book, there were papers on the coffee table. The was laying on the couch on the couch watching soccer. The atmosphere between them wasn't right.

Alondwe turned her head to our direction and she looked at us. She was stunned.

Thandeka: Ndunakazi do you see what I see on the wall. Do you see it?

I looked around the apartment had beautiful expensive furniture. It was big and beautiful. I looked at the wall as my wife said. I couldn't believe this. Those were wedding pictures I saw on the wall. Both traditional Sotho wedding and the white wedding. Alondwe was very beautiful on the pictures and she looked happy. They had more different pictures on the small table that was against the wall.

Alondwe: What are you doing here?

Thandeka: Alondwe you got married without our blessings?

Alondwe: What are you doing here?

The boy was sitting on his lap looking at us. Alondwe was standing on her feet. I looked at her left finger and she had the ring on her finger. Not the engagement ring but the wedding ring. The boy also had the ring. Alondwe looked angry. No she was angry. My mind was still on the pictures though. Like how did she get married? How did she do it? How did they do it because it was clear that even the boy's parents didn't know about this. I felt the grip of my wife tightening. I looked at her. She was panting. She was having one of her attacks.

Me: Thandeka? Alondwe get some water.

My daughter just stood there and she did nothing. Thapelo stood up.

Thapelo: She's panting she needs the paper bag to breath right? You're the Doctor here!

Alondwe didn't say anything.

Thapelo: Alondwe we are not fighting right now this is your mother's life. Speak.

She didn't say anything. Thapelo clicked his tongue and he went to the kitchen. His apartment was an open space apartment. He came back with the glass of water and the paper bag. I put it on Thandeka's mouth and she breathed through it until she was more calm. I gave her the glass of water.

Me: Thank you Thapelo.

He nodded. Thandeka started crying.

Thandeka: Our daughter got married without us.

I was defeated, I had no words for it all. I was beyond surprised. I thought I knew my daughter but clearly I was wrong. Just then the parents of the boy walked inside the apartment.

Mrs Moloi: Thapelo What's the nonsense you are doing in here –

The pictures on the wall were eye catching. Their eyes went straight to the wall... Their mouths went dry....

Nobuhle Zulu....

I told my mom everything that I have been through since I got married to Sandile. I told her everything that I have done and she did not judge me. She gave me advices and we had a prayer section together. I felt like myself again. I felt like I can do good again. I had inner peace. I was going to my house that same day. I couldn't sleep because I didn't tell Sandile that I was going to my mom. And my phone was damaged so I needed a new phone.

Me: Thank you mom. I really appreciate it.

Mom: I am glad that you came back home. I felt really bad for supporting your father's idea. Seeing that you resented us.

Me: You only wanted what's best for me. I understand mom.

We hugged each other. I stepped inside my car and I drove back home. I was going to see my brothers some other time because they were not home.

When I arrived at home, the kids were already back from school. It was starting to get dark

outside. I opened the door and the kids ran towards me. They all shouted “mama” they hugged my legs others went on my back. I laughed because it was kind of hard to balance. Sandile stood up and assisted me.

Sandile: Okay guys mom will lend on the floor if you don't stop holding on too tight. They let go and I picked Asemahle up.

Brandon: Why are you picking her up. We are the babies.

Me: But I thought you said you're men now. You don't need to be treated like kids.

Heather: Yes remind them mom. Leave my little sister alone. She is the baby.

Asemahle: Thank you sister.

They smiled at each other. I loved the way my children loved each other. They didn't care whether they have the same biological mom or whatsoever. I went to the couch with them. We sat on the couch.

Sandile: Where have you been?

Me: I went to see my mom. I just wanted to talk to her.

Sandile: I hope she did help and you'll start going to school again.

Me: Yes.

Sandile: I can say she's the best mom.

I smiled and nodded. My mother in-law came to us and she told us that dinner was ready. We all stood up and we went to the table. Bradley blessed the food and we started eating. I was feeding the baby Asemahle. She always wanted to be fed. Everyone was having a good meal. My mother in-law was a good cooker.

Mrs Zulu: I am happy that you two are holding this family down. I am very proud of you. I was kind of ashamed to take the credits for that. But Sandile and I did have a beautiful family. I was grateful for the baby that I was carrying because if it wasn't for her I wasn't going to realise this beauty.

Weeks went by I was trying to adapt but healing and adjusting doesn't happen overnight. Accepting that you were wrong and moving on from it doesn't happen in just two days. It takes time and support. Sandile has been supportive but I realised that his support didn't count because I was being hard on myself. It was hard. And having to teach Heather how to respect Sandile was a mission because it was something that I didn't even try to do before. It was something that I didn't know how to do and how to make her see she was wrong but we're never too old to learn. I did learn. I was still in the guest room. I had better days and some were bad. My hormones were all over the place and I was always crying. Sandile walked in my room I was thinking about the Lecture that I had about unethical behaviour that teachers practice on the children. It catch up with me because I mistreated Asemahle.

Sandile: My colleague suggested this centre.

He gave me the paper and I read it.

Me: The place is in Johannesburg.

Sandile: Yes and I thought since the semester will end soon you'll have to go and be there. A month should be enough. You'll be alright. They will help you. They have different types of activities and programmes.

Me: I want to go for myself, our kids and us. If there is still us.

He held my hand and looked into my eyes.

Sandile: They'll forever be us. We will get through this.

Me: You'll be here when I get back?

Sandile: Once you're ready for me. I will be ready for you. I just want you to be healthy, happy and better. And our baby will be too.

Me: Thank you so much.

He gave me a tight hug and he kissed my forehead. He fixed the space for me to sleep and he covered me. I fell asleep.

Growing up I was brought up with good moral values and I thank my parents for that. I knew the difference between wrong and right. Meeting Rajiv was the best thing that happened in my life and he was the best husband I could ask for. When he died my whole world shut down. I never believed in being good, because to me it seemed like all the bad things happen to good people and the pain changed me. I was horrible but conceiving my precious Sthembile Zulu, my baby girl changed me. Sandile's love pulled me from drowning. I can never forget him and how falling in love with him was beautiful. I had my family and we were happy.

Maybe you have never been in that dark place, the place that swallows all the goodness in you. Where you think being bad is the answer because you're protecting yourself, where you think living reckless helps protect you from heartbreaks and feeling pain of losing the loved one. But I have been there and love saved me. I have learned from that experience and I came out more better. I will be forever grateful.

So if you're in there just know that you're not alone. Your redemption is coming.

So from Nobuhle Zulu to you.

Chapter : 10

Alondwe Moloi.....

SIX MONTHS LATER.....

It's been six months since Thapelo and I have been married. We had a wonderful marriage.

Starts with our trip to Maim. This trip made me realise how I don't wish to have more children. Alupheli and Sphephile were driving me crazy. Thapelo knew how to handle them but I just couldn't. Before we got married Thapelo wanted us to have two more kids together. That was going to make them three with Sphephile. But after witnessing that I think one more child is enough. And that child better come when Sphephile is 9 years old maybe. By then I would have settled well in my job. And I know by then I would be ready for another child specially after loosing my second child. Things have been very hectic at school. I have started my residency and I must say I loved working at the hospital and helping out people. It was my dream and I enjoyed seeing it coming true. I couldn't wait for the following year because it was going to be my last year. Though it was hard for me having to go to the hospital and doing the paper work for school. But with Thapelo I managed to balance everything. My school work and my marriage along with my responsibility as a mother. Though I didn't live with my son but I made sure that I don't go a week without contacting him. Just to hear what he's doing and how he's doing. He was just an amazing boy. My friend Nkululeko was successful on starting her own line. In a few weeks she was going to open a boutique of her own. She was really excited about it. She wasn't going to leave her job until the shop starts generating real money. Mpendulo was doing good too. Well I have never made an update about his love life. He was currently seeing some girl that I didn't get along with. The girl was coloured. Him and Mbali broke up because Mbali followed Cassandra to London after high school and Mpendulo was a mess when Mbali left him but Thapelo was there for him.

My other family members were just fine and everything was good.

My husband, Sphephile and I spent the December holidays together. I didn't go home. My parents weren't talking to me so I let it be as it was. We wished we could go to another trip but we couldn't because we had to save money for our honeymoon which is going to be on the present year, on December. The first two weeks of December. We were going to leave Sphephile. Well I haven't spoken to Thapelo about the idea of having Sphephile live with us.

But I was going to speak to him on our dinner date. So it was a Friday night Thapelo and I were at the restaurant. January was almost at the end but just in the middle. You know how long January is.

Me: What are you going to have tonight?

Thapelo: I don't know. I just want something with chicken.

Me: I will have the steak and –

Thapelo: Doctor?

Me: What?

Thapelo: You've been eating a lot of red meat lately are you pregnant?

Me: No! What? no! I am not ready for a child yet.

Thapelo: You're not ready?

Me: Yes I am not.

Thapelo: Well that's why I brought you here.

Me: I don't get you.

Thapelo: I want us to try for a baby.

I just laughed sarcastically. He wasn't serious of course. No he wasn't serious. I continued looking at the menu and I ignored him.

Thapelo: Alondwe I am talking to you.

Me: Are you serious?

Thapelo: Yes. I want a baby.

Me: It's been eight months since we lost a child and already you're talking about replacing her.

Thapelo: It's not like we did meet her or hold her in our arms. Or even bond with her.

Me: How can you say that Thapelo?

Thapelo: I am being realistic here.

Me: Wow! You know what I have lost my appetite.

I placed the menu down and I left him on the table. This was the first argument since we got married and I didn't think it was going to be about the importance of our baby. I thought maybe it was going to be about the untidiness of our place whenever his friend and colleagues came over for a soccer match but we never fought about that because I am the soccer wife. The wife who watches soccer with her husband because she loves soccer so I never get mad if they make a mess because I understand. It's for the love of the game. There were plenty of things that I thought maybe were going to be our first argument as married couple but definitely not about the baby. In the past six months we didn't even have one single argument. Besides the small stupid things that we used to argue about. It was all fun and lovely. I stood next to his car waiting for him to come out of the restaurant. He finally came out. He opened the car. He opened the front door for me and I stepped inside. We thank American movies for teaching our African black boyfriends and husbands that they should open doors for us. We I don't think there is fun in dating a guy who has a car if he doesn't open the front door for you. It's just romantic. It's a small thing but it's cute. Well it may not be for all women. Some don't care about it but I find it cute. He closed it and went on his side and we drove off in silence.

We arrived at building, he parked the car. Got off the car and opened the door for me. He closed it. We walked together to the entrance of the building. He pushed the entrance door and let me walk in first. Then he closed it behind him and we walked up to the lifts. He pressed . Once the lift was on the ground floor. I got in first and I pressed our level number. We got off and he opened the door in our apartment. I went in first and he followed after me closing the door behind him. We went to our bedroom. He sat on the bed. I took off my shoes and my blazer. I then went to him. I kneeled down and took off his shoes and his socks. I went up and I untie his tie. I took off the cufflinks from his shirt wrist. He did the rest. Basically that's how we treat each other. I treat him like a king and he treats me like a Queen. It doesn't matter whether it's in public or private. Well I promised myself to try and treat him like that even if I am mad at him. I suppose he feels the same way because I didn't see him

change that night.

Me: Are you going to take a shower or are you going straight to bed?

Thapelo: Should I go straight to bed hungry? You walked out on our dinner remember?

Me: I will prepare dinner for you.

I put away our clothes and I went to the kitchen to cook. There were no leftovers on the fridge and Thapelo hated leftovers so I learned how to cook something enough for the two of us. He taught me how to master my cooking because I wasn't really a great cooker. And I was now the best. If I had leftovers I ate them myself because I couldn't throw away food. Food is expensive to be thrown away. He came to the kitchen on his pyjamas. He sat on the dinner table. And he ate some chips.

Thapelo: I am sorry if what I said about our baby made you sad.

Me: Alright.

Thapelo: I do need a child.

Me: Thapelo I am still studying. I can't possibly give you a child right now.

Thapelo: Studying is not an excuse Alondwe. Next year you'll still be studying so what does that mean. I will wait a year and eleven months to make you pregnant?

Me: It's only been eight months since we lost our baby. Not even a year but you want another baby already. Are you trying to replace our child with another child?

Thapelo: I didn't get a chance to bond with her. To know her. To love her.

Me: So does it make it any better or it makes it less painful. Or you didn't care you were just pretending.

Thapelo: Don't you say that Twinkie. I was hurt as much as you were hurt. But we can't hold on to that pain forever.

Me: What if we try and loose this one again. I am not ready for that. I am not ready for a baby.

Thapelo: Nothing will happen. I will be here supporting you. We will be together.

Me: I am sorry but I can't. Not now and not next year. I am sorry.

I turned back and attended to the pot. He didn't say anything, he just stood up and went to watch TV..

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

My wife and I sat down. Thapelo's parents looked around the place. Alondwe was still looking at us. I was speechless. I just didn't know what to say. I didn't know my daughter was capable of such a horrible thing. How can she get married after we have said "No".

Thapelo: I highly don't appreciate you coming here unannounced, in my house.

Mrs Moloji: Your house? Your house boy. We took you to school. We gave you education. Now it's your house.

Thapelo: You paid for primary school and high school. University I had a bursary because of my hard work. And it was my right that you give me education. And I am grateful for what you did for me. And It my have been your help as my parents but I was the one who was studying hard to get all this. So that I won't rely on you anymore. So yes mom this is my house.

Mr Moloji: This is not even a house it's an apartment.

Thapelo: Well it's house now. No in fact it's home because I have a wife.

Me: The wife who is my daughter. My child. I didn't give you my daughter.

Alondwe and Thapelo sat down on the couch, next to each other. Mr and Mrs Moloji sat down too.

Thapelo: I couldn't wait for you to come around so that I can make her my wife. Who knows how long was that going to take.

Thandeka: We are not white people, so in my eyes and everyone elses eyes Alondwe is not

your wife because you did not pay lobola for her.

Mr Moloi: Yes so this is a fancy civil union.

Mrs Moloi: And it must end.

Me: And you Alondwe I am taking back home.

Alondwe: I belong here with my husband not with you. I am not leaving.

Thandeka and I looked at each other. We both laughed sarcastically. Our daughter was unbelievable.

Mrs Moloi: Didn't you hear what your mom said girl? You're not married to him.

Thapelo: Well that's where you're wrong. Or maybe you didn't see the pictures of our traditional wedding? The beauty of being an African black person is that we have extended families.

Mr Moloi: What are you talking about. We don't get along with our extended families.

Thapelo: It's you and mom who don't get along with our extended family not me. I told you both as our parents that I love Alondwe let me marry her. You refused. I continued to beg you mom and dad but you refused. I told you we lost our first child, you didn't care mom. But because I love her and I respect her enough I had to do right by her. I had to rightfully take her as my wife. Then I paid lobola for her to her extended family members. So basically we were like kids who don't have parents anymore but we wanted to do the right thing and our extended families helped us do the right thing. That makes us a married couple. Traditionally and lawful married couple.

Thandeka: WOW! I thought I have seen it all.

Mrs Moloi: That makes the two of us.

Mr Moloi: If I may ask who negotiated for you?

Thapelo: Uncle Kenneth and his wife. They welcomed her to the family and introduced her to our ancestors.

Them: What?

Mr Moloi: Thapelo are you out of your mind why would you do that to us. You know my history with them. We don't get along!

Thapelo: Parents should never drag their children in their family fueds and enemies.

Me: Alondwe you can't speak now.

Alondwe was just quiet, letting her "husband" do all the talking. Her eyes were on us. She didn't say anything to me.

Me: Who negotiated on our behalf Alondwe?

Alondwe: Your brother, who is also my father. My grandfather's brother and his wife. My aunts were also there to support me since my parents didn't care about my happiness.

Me: Your happiness? It's your happiness we were thinking about. We love you and we want what's best for you but you disrespect us by letting people who didn't raise you accept your bride price?

Alondwe: What was I supposed to do? Mom if you were me what were you going to do?

Thandeka: I may be all things but I wasn't going to get married without my father's blessings.

Alondwe: That's because your father didn't sell you off at a zero price. Like mine did.

Me: What are you trying to say Alondwe?

Alondwe: Mom your father disowned you because you got pregnant by choice. You want me to speak right? fine I will speak. It was better for you mom but for me it wasn't by choice. I was raped, that was against my will. It wasn't my choice. I can never be proud and say I know how my virginity was taken away from me by the guy who loved me but Sphephelo didn't love me. I was just part of the plan to him. But regardless of a mess that I was. This man right here. He loved me. He supported me, he helped me get through it all and he helped me love my baby. He's been with me since high school. He has never disrespected me nor

abuse me. When I told you he wants to marry me and I love him. My father refused and you supported him mom. What did you think dad? Just because you have said no. I was going to stop loving him. The love was going to vanish and we were going to break up because you have said no? You gave me to him at a zero price. Because you don't care about my happiness. It's all about what you want. So what if his parents don't want me? I am not the first to be hated by my in-laws. What matters to me is that he loves me and he makes me happy. But you didn't care at all about that. Clearly it was your way of saying continue to sleep with her boy I don't care. You don't have to pay lobola for her. She's not worth it. She's not valuable. She deserves to be a girlfriend til she dies. Marriage is not for her. That is the message you sent to us but Thapelo didn't allow that to be true. He said he'll do right by me because he knows I am worth it. Well my uncle and grandpa also saw that I was worth it so they supported me something my father failed to do. Something my father did not want to see happening because his daughter is worthless. What can I say? you taught me to read between the lines just like the way you disowned me, I figured it out myself. So mommy forgive me for getting married without your blessings you didn't care about my happiness anyway.

Her husband hugged her on the side, drawing her closer to his chest and he wiped her tears. As much as what she said hurt me it was true. I was selfish. I didn't put her first. I was too scared, I should have let her make her own choices and her own mistakes so that she can learn from them. I was amazed that I have raised such an intelligent young woman. She can stand up for herself. She explores options so that she can do the right thing. And this boy loves her, he respects her enough not to take advantage of the fact that her parents didn't want to accept their marriage. He went on and said but I will do right by you. I was proud of how she respected herself enough not to agree to a civil union. I was hurt that I didn't support them sooner. That I wasn't there to see her get married. To give her away.

Mrs Moloi: Your pathetic wife is rude. How can she speak like that to her parents.

Me: That is my daughter you're calling pathetic.

Thandeka: And you will respect her.

Mrs Moloi: Respect her? Has she respected you by getting married behind your backs?

Me: Did we give them a choice?

Mrs Moloi: Ndunakazi where are you heading with this? Where are you heading?

Me: Can't you see they love each other?

Mrs Moloi: Your daughter gave that little speech about being raped and you are changing your mind?

Thapelo: Mom don't be insensitive about what my wife went through.

Mrs Moloi: She's not your wife and she'll never be your wife!

Mr Moloi: Yes, she is his wife.

Mrs Moloi: What? My love. No!

Mr Moloi: I don't wanna loose my first son trying to stop him from being happy. If this girl makes him happy then they should be together.

Mrs Moloi: This is madness.

Thandeka: I think we should just have a second wedding at least. Just a celebration of your love.

They looked at each other. (Alondwe and Thapelo)

Thandeka: We will cover the costs. We know you must have paid a lot of money Thapelo. Your wedding looked beautiful.

Thapelo: Thank you.

Thandeka: I just want to see her in that beautiful dress, give her some marital advices. Kiss her forehead as her father takes her hand. I have missed out on that. But can we get a second chance to do it. We won't start the whole thing afresh but just the wedding. Please.

Mrs Moloi: That is not happening.  
Mr Moloi: You don't get to decide what is happening and what is not happening.  
Mrs Moloi: I can't believe you.  
The woman stood up and she left. Her husband stood up too.  
Mr Moloi: I will speak to her. Thapelo we will speak on the phone.  
Thapelo: Okay dad, Thank you.  
He nodded and he left.  
Me: So Alondwe what do you say?  
Alondwe: If my husband is okay with it I don't have a problem.  
Thandeka: Thapelo?  
Thapelo: Because she has no problem, I don't have a problem with it.  
Me: Alright. Alondwe we had something to talk to you about. That's why we came here.  
Thapelo: I will give you some space.  
Me: No. There's no problem, you can stay.  
Thandeka: She's your wife anyway. She'll probably tell you what we said to her.  
The boy smiled and looked down.  
Me: We figured out that you have lost a baby through our hands.  
Alondwe: Dad can we not speak about that?  
Thapelo: I do think we need to speak about it.  
Thandeka: We're so sorry Alondwe. We didn't know and didn't mean to hurt you.  
Me: What happened was our fault and we are sorry that you two lost your first child together.  
Please forgive us.  
They held each others hands. Thandeka held mine too, while we waited for their response.  
Them: We forgive you.  
Alondwe: And I am sorry too for the things I said. It was just pain talking. I didn't mean to deliberately hurt your feelings.  
We stood up and asked for a hug. They both stood up. I hugged my daughter and handshake Thapelo. Thandeka hugged both of them.  
Alondwe: So I suppose this means I will get all the money you didn't give me times six.  
We all laughed.  
Me: You are getting no money from us now. You have a husband to take care of you.  
Thapelo: Well I wouldn't say no if you can help a man out and give her some money.  
Thandeka and I laughed.  
Me: I supposed you have realised that the standards are too high?  
Thapelo: I have indeed realised Sir.  
Me: I am glad that you have lifted one load off my shoulders. Her, together with her mom.  
They leave me bankrupt.  
Alondwe: It's mom not me.  
Thandeka: Come on Alondwe I am working and you are not working. (We laughed)  
Thapelo: I can see what you have been going through.  
Alondwe: Let me go make something to eat before I send him back home with you guys since he's your son in-law.  
Thapelo: You will miss me though and I will get to spend more time with Sphephile.  
We laughed and Alondwe left us. We had a conversation with Thapelo just to get to know him more. He was actually a good boy.  
Alondwe came back with the food and drinks. She served us. We thanked her.  
Thandeka: Did you send her to a cooking class?  
Thapelo: No why?  
Alondwe: I can't believe you mom.  
Thandeka: (laughing) No you just got better.

Thapelo: No. I cooked the food you are eating.  
Me: Alondwe?  
Alondwe: No Baba he's not telling the truth.  
Thapelo: I am kidding. I taught her how to cook better. She's cooking better than me now.  
Thandeka: I wish I can teach my husband too. But he's not interested.  
Me: Ayi sthandwa sami Kwahle!  
They laughed at me. We continued talking until we finished eating. Alondwe took the dishes. She came back to us.  
Me: We need to go now. I have to see ubaba omncane wakho.  
Alondwe: Oh dad please don't anything to him  
Me: Well just one punch will be enough.  
Thandeka: I will probably back you up with a slap following that punch.  
Alondwe: Mom and daddy?  
Us: Okay we are kidding.  
Me: Maybe just a little.  
She made a puppy face, I laughed and hugged her while her mom hugged Thapelo.  
Me: Oh my baby I love you.  
Alondwe: I love you too daddy.  
Me: Take care of yourself and your husband. The Ndunakazis don't do divorceses.  
Alondwe: Don't worry dad I am under his spell and he's under mine.  
Thandeka: How nice, come to mommy nana.  
She went to her mom. I handshake Thapelo.  
Me: Well for you –  
Thapelo: Well I know. Uyathandwa have promised to kill me should I mistreat her.  
Me: That's good. That one also needs to get the punch.  
Thandeka: Uyathandwa is seriously in need of it. Like serious. Ah my son though.  
Alondwe: Okay guys bye.  
Thandeka: She's chasing us now honey bear. Do you see that?  
Me: Ah Thandeka don't call me like that in front of my son in-law Kanti unjani nje?  
The kids laughed.  
Thandeka: So now you don't want it.  
Thapelo: Don't worry Baba we all have those names.  
Alondwe: Okay guys.  
Thandeka: Yeah let's go.  
I held my wife's hand, we said our good-byes and we left.....

Alondwe Moloji.....

The following morning I was the first to wake up. I had lunch date with Nonkululeko and my aunt Melokuhle. I had to do all my duties before I leave. Thapelo was still sleeping. I went to take shower. I wore my gown and I went to make breakfast for the two of us. My phone rang while I was busy. It was my grandmother. I put her on speaker because I was busy. I answered.

Me: Gogo.

Mesuli: Hey Doctor it's me I need an advice.

Me: Okay. How are you doing?

Mesuli: I am fine and you?

Me: I am doing great. What type of advice do you need? Medical advice or personal advice?

Mesuli: Well there's this girl who told me that she likes me. We are on the same grade but not the same class. I don't know what to say to her. I have never had a girl tell me they like me and I didn't think it was appropriate. What should I do?

Me: Do you like her or do you find her attractive?

Mesuli: I don't know. She's white and so I don't know.

Me: What does her being white mean?

Mesuli: I don't know Alondwe. It's just that I don't want to sound kind of racist or too black when I give her a response.

Me: There's nothing like too black.

Mesuli: Why are you so difficult? Why did I even ask for your advice!

Thapelo: (joining) You don't like white women?

Mesuli: No chocolate man. My last girlfriend was black but her family moved to another province so I don't have a girlfriend now.

Thapelo: What's wrong with white women?

Mesuli: They are too whiny. Well most of them here in school are too whiny and I don't like a whiny girlfriend. But black girls they have that something special. They are just too pretty and I like black girls. I don't know how to turn this girl down without sounding like I am doing it because she's white and I don't want to be embarrassed that my parents thinks I am too young to have a phone.

Me: They don't think you are too young to have a phone. It's their rule. That you will get a phone when you're doing grade 10. They did that to me too.

Thapelo: Well this is simple. Just tell the girl that you're still dealing with the fact that your girlfriend left and you're still not over her. But you can be friends with her. Don't push her away, you may never know maybe you might like her. And for the phone just tell her the truth. It's better to start friendship on the strong foundation. That means no lies.

Mesuli: Mmm. Thanks Alondwe for dating him. Thapelo you're the best brother in-law.

Thanks Brah. I will do as you say.

Thapelo: Sure.

Mesuli: Bye Doctor.

Me: Bye Scientist.

We hung up the call. Thapelo made his way to the fridge for milk. No morning kiss? I suppose this means there'll be no morning kiss when he's mad.

Thapelo: Good Morning.

Me: Good Morning. How are you this morning?

Thapelo: I am good thanks and you?

Me: I am fine thanks.

Thapelo: I am hungry.

Me: I will serve you just now. Have you washed your face?

He nodded and sat down. I cleared the table and I prepared it for breakfast. Once I was done. I sat down with him. We held each others hands and he blessed the food. We then ate in silence. We finished up and I cleared the table. He went to our room. I then cleaned the apartment. I wasn't rushing my cleaning because it was Saturday. I finished up and I went to shower again. Thapelo was watching TV in our room. I moisturised my body and got dressed.

Thapelo: Are you going somewhere?

Me: Yes. I told you yesterday morning that I will meet up with my aunt and Nkululeko. She needs our opinions on something.

Thapelo: Oh. I forgot. You'll need me to drive you?

Me: No. She'll pick me up.

Thapelo: Okay.

I finished up and I brushed my weave. Thapelo didn't really like weaves, he says they make me look like a doll. I looked unreal on them. But he had no problem with them as long as they make me feel comfortable with myself. He likes braids, straight back/up and razor cut. I wore weaves when I know that I won't have time to change hairstyles in two months or three.

So I will just wash it and save time. But I make sure that I am not always on them I don't want my husband looking at me for the whole year and see a doll. I just target a very busy time and wear them. Once or twice a year. I looked at myself in the mirror and I was fine. I turned back and looked at Thapelo.

Me: How do I look?

Thapelo: You're going to have lunch with your friend and aunt not a business lunch.

Me: Okay. You'll be like this till when exactly?

Thapelo: I am like what?

Me: You're cold towards me. You didn't even kiss me this morning.

Thapelo: Come and get the kiss now.

Me: You know what? let me go and leave your sour ass in here. I will probably sleep in my aunt's house tonight. I can't come back home to this mood.

Thapelo: Well you don't get to do that. I am not agreeing to that. After that lunch you'll come back home.

I took my bag and I left. Mxm. I hated what he was doing. I took an Uber as soon as it arrived on the front entrance of the building. I went to it. I got in and the driver,drove off. Nkululeko wasn't going to fetch me. I just didn't want Thapelo to drive me while he was on that sour mood.

We were at the table and having a conversation before Nkululeko can show us her new ideas. My mind was just miles away. Actually my mind was back home. I wished I could be ready but I am not. I was scared. What if I loose the baby again. It does happen and I am scared to go through that pain again. I just don't see myself pregnant again yet. Nkululeko banged the table and I snapped back to planet earth.

Nkulu: What's wrong with you?

Me: Nothing.

Melo: Are you having problems at home?

Me: What? No I am just thinking about the patients.

Nkulu: You're lying Alondwe.

Me: I am not lying. You know how much I love my career and I love learning how to help people.

Melo: I think she's not lying.

Me: I am sorry for being destructed. Can we see the designs please.

Nkulu: Okay let me show you.

She took them out and she gave them to us.

Melo: Wow! They are beautiful.

Me: Yeah I like them, specially the dresses.

Nkulu: So do you approve if I use them at my opening?

Melo: Yes.

Me: I think they are beautiful but don't just use them only mix them with the other designs you started with, they also have more fire.

Nkulu: Okay. Thanks. I knew I could count on you guys. I will note that down.

She took some notes. And we had a conversation about everything and anything. We then decided to go for a little shopping. I bought a few things that I needed in the house. We were having fun.

Melo: I think it's late for you to be still here. I should drive you home.

Nkulu: Yeah. You're right. I am just surprised that Thapelo hasn't called to whine about you staying out late. Is everything alright between you two?

Me: Yeah. Everything is just fine. I do think I should go now.

We hugged each other and my aunt drove me home.

When I arrived at the apartment Thapelo wasn't there. There was no note on the fridge

explaining where he went. I just packed the things I bought and I went to take a shower. I wore my panties and bra. I went to the kitchen. I got a fright because someone was in my kitchen. I screamed a little. The girl turned back and looked at me. It was Mandy.

Mpendulo's girlfriend.

Mandy: I am sorry that I gave you a fright but I was with Thapelo and Mpendulo. They left me here because they are going to watch soccer at one of Thapelo's colleagues place.

Me: Oh. What's wrong with your boyfriend's place?

Mandy: I just didn't want to be alone so Thapelo suggested I stay here with you since you are back. I was going to go with them but I don't like soccer.

Me: Well too bad because I am going to watch that game too.

Mandy: Agh you like soccer?

Me: Yes, is that a crime?

Mandy: No. I can watch a movie on your laptop while you watch your soccer.

Me: I will watch it on my bedroom. You can use the living room. (I took out some meat on the fridge)

Mandy: I will just go back to Mpendulo's place but after you have made that meat. I am starving.

Me: Just make something for yourself.

She wanted me to make the food. She was too girly she reminded me of Cassandra, that's why I didn't like her. I finished and we sat down to eat.

Me: Woah slow down. How long have you been hungry? Two years?

Mandy: No. You better understand. I am eating for two. I just love food.

She was a chubby beautiful coloured woman. With long brown curly hair.

Me: Uhm... You're pregnant?

Mandy: Yes. Mpendulo and I are so excited.

Me: Oh. That's nice. Congratulations.

She smiled and continued eating. I just didn't want to think about this. I just didn't! We finished up eating and she left. I then went to watch soccer. After the game I decided to sleep because Thapelo was taking longer to come back home.

In the morning, I woke up Thapelo was next to me. It was a Sunday and we always go to church together. I didn't know whether I should wake him up or what. Mostly on Sundays he's always the first to wake up. I went to shower and I got ready for church. I left him sleeping and I went to church. The service was just wonderful. I went back home after it. I found Thapelo on the kitchen making food. He looked like someone who just woke up.

Me: Good day.

Thapelo: You went to church without me today. So there's nothing good about this day.

Me: You were sleeping and it seems like you needed that sleep since you came home late last night.

Thapelo: I was out with my friend. Just like you were out with your friend for lunch that lasted the whole day. You came home at 7.

Me: We lost track of time. We had more things to talk about and some little shopping to do.

Thapelo: Well it was the same thing for me. You don't have to complain.

Me: I wasn't complaining. I was just saying that you came home late so I thought you needed more sleep.

He didn't say anything. I took off my heels, coat and wrist watch. I went to put them in the bedroom. I went back to the kitchen to prepare dinner. I had some work that I wanted to do after dinner.

Me: Did you know that Mandy is pregnant?

Thapelo: Yes.

Me: Oh so you want me to be pregnant too just because your friend will have a child? Are

you serious?

Thapelo: I just want a child Mpendulo has nothing to do with this.

Me: Well to me it seems like you are Jealous and you want to compete with him.

Thapelo: That's **absurd** I am not jealous. Yes we always wanted to have kids at the same time so that we can raise them together.

Me: That sounds like a women thing not men. And I am not going to get pregnant just because you want to match whatever thing you and your friend planned. I am not ready for a baby and I am not going to repeat that Thapelo. You can't force me to it. I just need to finish my studies first.

Thapelo: While you are finishing up your studies. I should just sit here and look at you with no kid in this house.

Me: Okay. Why don't we take Sphephile and live with him. That way you won't get bored looking at me. Because clearly I am boring you now.

Thapelo: I didn't say you're boring me. And I want to have a child that is going to be mine biological with you. I want that child here.

Me: Oh. So you don't want my son here because he's not your biological son?

Thapelo: I didn't say that Alondwe don't put words into my mouth please.

I didn't say anything. And to think I was going to ask him if he had a problem with my son staying with us but it's clear it won't happen unless I give him a child. And well I am not ready for a baby.

Thapelo: So you not going to talk to me because you think I said I don't want Sphephile here?

Me: I got nothing to say. That's why I am quiet and I can't give you a child now.

Thapelo: You can't or you won't?

Me: I won't give you a child now because I am not ready –

Thapelo: Yeah just save it. Tsk!

He left the kitchen with his plate. I continued cooking. After cooking I went to do my school work. Thapelo and I spent the rest of the evening in silence.

The week began and we were more like roommates than husband and wife. He would speak to me only if he needs something or if he doesn't find his clothes or socks or shoes. He barely touched me nor kiss me. It was just good morning forehead kisses and goodnight cheek kisses. I didn't like living like that and I didn't know for how long he was going to treat me like that. I treat him normal like I always do. The whole week was just horrible. Even if I tried to Apologize he would node his head and continue to give me a cold shoulder.

It was a Saturday and I was reading a book, taking notes while Thapelo was laying on his back on the couch watching a sport channel.

Me: So Thapelo you will be like this towards me until when? Until I give you a child?

Thapelo: You are disturbing me. And talking won't help because it won't get you pregnant.

Me: Well it's not like you are even touching me or trying to have sex with me lately.

He didn't say anything. I just chose to shut up and let silence be our relationship. There was someone on the door and Thapelo told them to come in. It was my parents. I was beyond shocked and surprised when I saw them in our home. I never really thought I would be with them again on the same room. All that talk they had with us and Thapelo's parents. I felt like that was my last chance to tell them how I really feel. I didn't care if Josephine (Thapelo's mom) didn't like me what mattered was that my parents and Thapelo's dad had finally accepted our relationship and I was happy that I had my parents back.

After my parents have left I let out a huge sigh and I smiled to myself.

Thapelo: That was unexpected but it went well right?

Me: Yeah. It went well.

He pulled me closer to him and he hugged me.

Thapelo: I love you.

Me: I love you too.

He held my waist and he softly kissed me.

Thapelo: Now that your parents and my father have accepted our relationship and they have apologised about the baby. We can start making a baby again right?

I kissed him back and I unbuttoned his short.

Me: We can just practice how to make a baby not that we will be making a baby.

He stopped and looked at me.

Me: Why did you stop now?

Thapelo: You're still not ready to have a child with me even if your parents have accepted our relationship?

Me: It was never about them from the first place Thapelo. Why don't you get this?

Thapelo: You're selfish Alondwe. You're making all this thing about you. What about me? What about what I want? What about my feelings?

Me: I will be carrying the baby. It's me and I am not ready. How many times should I stay that so that you can understand?

He didn't answer me. He just clicked his tongue and went to our bedroom. I am not ready for a baby. We are both not ready for a baby. He's just hurting because his friend is having a baby and he just want to replace our child...

Samkelo Ndunakazi.....

We took a cab to my brother's house. I just needed to speak to him and understand how on earth did he let my daughter get married behind my back.

Thandeka: I must say Alondwe is brave.

Me: Yeah. She is. What were you going to do if you were on her shoes?

Thandeka: I don't know but my father didn't want me to marry Themba but I had Andile and he backed me up until he agreed.

Me: Her brothers did back her up but we didn't really take that into **consideration**.

Thandeka: I know. I just don't trust that woman. Not that we didn't want her to get married. We were just scared for her life and happiness.

Me: Let's just trust that God will protect her and at least the husband thinks Thapelo must be with her.

Thandeka: Yeah. I trust him. We had a successful trip and I am glad we have her back.

Me: Yeah I am happy too.

Thandeka: I love you Ndunakazi.

Me: I love you too MaDhlomo.

She kissed me and laid her head on my shoulder. Just a few minutes the cab was outside my brother's house. We paid and we went inside the premises.

I knocked on the front door. His little baby girl opened the door. She smiled when she saw me.

Ayabongwa: Bab'omdala.

Me: Hey Aya how are you?

I hugged her and she hugged me back.

Ayabongwa: I am good. Nice to see you. Please come in. Please.

She walked inside and I looked at my wife.

Me: How am I supposed to give him the punch if his daughter is here.

Thandeka: Just relax.

I nodded and we went inside the house. My brother was watching TV with his kids. His son and daughter. He kind of had a surprised look on his face. I suppose he didn't expect to see us.

Me: Njabulo

Njabulo: Hey Matthew and Thandeka.

He stood up and we shared a brotherly hug. And he also hugged my wife. We then sat down. His son greeted me.

Njabulo: Asande and Ayabongwa please go tell your stepmother to prepare something to eat for your father and his wife.

Asande: But dad I was still watching TV.

Njabulo: Go now!

They both stood up and left. This was my chance. Just one punch was going to make me feel much better. I stood up quickly and gave him a surprise punch that he didn't expect. He groaned.

Thandeka: Samkelo! I thought you were kidding.

Me: I don't joke about such things.

Njabulo: What was that for?

Me: For not telling me that my daughter is getting married behind my back.

Njabulo: What was I supposed to do. She was crying and **devastated**. I had to help her and I didn't do it alone. Bab'omncane was there too.

Me: I don't care about him but you? You're my brother. How would you feel if I did the same thing with Ayabongwa?

Njabulo: Well she's still a baby to get married.

Thandeka: Ah stop being sarcastic Njabulo. You know what he means.

Njabulo: I am sorry. I was just doing what is best for my child. Alondwe is my daughter too. So there was nothing wrong with what we did.

Me: But you betrayed us. Brothers don't do that.

Njabulo: That wasn't important. What was important to me was her happiness. Seeing her happy was important. But I am sorry for doing that to you. I know Alondwe is your only daughter but should Ayabongwa want to get married. You will negotiate for her. Will that make you feel better?

Me: I suppose.

Njabulo: So how did you find out?

Thandeka: We saw the pictures on the wall of their apartment.

Njabulo: Ey. They had a very beautiful wedding. They made me wish I can have the balls to get married too.

Me: Well it's not a bad thing.

Thandeka: Yeah it's actually good.

Njabulo: No. Don't try and change my mind. So you have accepted that they are married?

Me: Yeah. We have.

Thandeka: And we're going to have another wedding. We want to see her get married. You're invited of course. You can't miss it.

Njabulo: I won't miss it. I am sure mom will be happy. But please don't invite her Matthew.

Me: Why not. She's also my mom remember? Alondwe's grandmother. My father's wife.

Njabulo: I know I know. Just that I know that she'll just talk about how I am the only child of our father's children who isn't married. And I don't want to be in that awkward position. My wife and I laughed at him.

Thandeka: Would you just relax. My mother in-law will definitely come to the wedding. She loves our children I won't do that to her. I have two mothers in-law and they'll be there both of them.

Njabulo: Eish.

Me: Just relax.

We stood up and hugged each other. His girlfriend served us and though we were full. We

couldn't turn down her food. It was going to be embarrassing. We just had a few bites and it was time for us to leave. Being a big father I had to give my kids money. And they were happy. My brother offered to drive us to the airport.

In Durban we took a cab to our house.

Thandeka: I hope you won't punch our son.

Me: What? Why not?

Thandeka: Samkelo come on. He's just a baby.

Me: A baby. He's turning 22 years old this year.

Thandeka: I know but still. He's a boy.

Me: Don't worry I will be gentle. And maybe he's not home yet. That might help him too.

Thandeka: You're beast Matthew.

Me: Oh so I am not sweet now?

Thandeka: No. You're not.

I laughed and she pouted. That made her more cute.

Me: Don't do that. It shows your wrinkles.

Thandeka: Samkelo! How can you say that?

She hit my shoulder.

Me: I am just kidding.

I laughed and pulled her close to me. I kissed her forehead. I looked at her and I saw a smile.

That made me whole. We arrived at home. I paid the driver and we went inside the house.

The family was on the lounge. We greeted them.

Me: Uyathandwa boy you're back.

Uyathandwa: Yes dad. I am back.

He stood up to manly hug me. My wife looked at me. I smiled. I didn't punch him. I wasn't going to but I just did that thing old women do to grandchildren on their cheeks. That little repeatedly friendly slaps. I don't know if it makes sense.

Uyathandwa: Ouch dad my cheek.

Thandeka: Samkelo bakithi ingane le.

Alupheli: What did he do? (we sat down)

Me: He didn't tell us that your sister was getting married last year June.

Them: What?

Mom: Alondwe is married? Uyathandwa?

Uyathandwa: She didn't want me to tell you guys because you were going to stop her.

Mom: Oh Simakade.

We explained everything to mom. On how they did it. She wasn't pleased but she was relieved that the boy paid lobola for her.

Mesuli: No. We want another wedding.

Thandeka: Relax you will have it.

Alupheli allulated but more like screaming. We laughed at him. There was a cry of a baby upstairs.

Thandeka: Wait! What's that?

Uyathandwa: Well I was going to tell you that Cebo gave birth last night and the baby is here. It's a baby girl. I wanted to surprise you.

Thandeka: What? I have a granddaughter? Oh dear God!

She stood up and ran up the stairs. I smiled. She seemed happy.

Alupheli: I knew she was going to be happy.

Mesuli: Yeah and it's a baby girl. I am sure she was tired of boys.

Alupheli: I bet she got tired when she saw you but she was happy to see me and Sphephile.

Mom: Alupheli! Hhayi man! Don't you get tired?

Alupheli: I was just saying grandma no hard feelings.

We laughed at that.

Me: What's her name?

Uyathandwa: Kiara Uyabongeka Smith.

Me: That's very nice. Let me go and see her.

Mom: She's so adorable. Just like Thandeka's late daughter.

Me: She was her aunt after all.

I went upstairs and her grandmother was already walking around the room with her. The baby wasn't crying anymore. I went to her. The baby was very beautiful.

Thandeka: She's just like Uyabongeka Samkelo. When she was a baby. She was just like this.

Me: I supposed that's why her father named her after her aunt.

Thandeka: Really?

Me: Yes. Her name is Kiara Uyabongeka.

She just cried. I held them both.

Me: Hey don't cry my love. Let's just Thank God for this beautiful baby girl.

She nodded and we went to sit down on the bed with the baby. We both held her and we prayed. Thanking God for her. By the time we said amen she was sound asleep. Uyathandwa was by the door. Thandeka went to put her on her cot. She was going to sleep in my mom's room. She wanted her to be there.

Uyathandwa: Uhm... Mom and dad I wanted to talk to you.

Us: We are listening.

Uyathandwa: I just wanted to thank you both for supporting me even though I didn't go about the right way bringing her on this earth but you supported me still. I am very grateful for that and I am happy that she'll grow up with good grandparents like you. Thank you so much I wouldn't have done all that on my own. And you also helped me talk to dad. Thanks.

Thandeka: Ah my baby boy. You have grown up now.

She went to hug and kiss him. I smiled because Uyathandwa didn't want kisses. I hugged him too.

Me: So the mother didn't want her?

Uyathandwa: She didn't want her not even to hold her. She was just swearing at me and complaining about the pain she felt when she gave birth.

Thandeka: Some girls! Shameful! Ah.

Uyathandwa: It's cool.

Me: Just so you know soon she'll be asking for your blessings to get married.

Uyathandwa: Ah dad!

Thandeka: Samkelo bakithi.

Me: What? It's the truth, just yesterday Alondwe was a chubby cute baby girl but now. She's older and married. She'll start having more kids. I didn't think that day was going to come.

Uyathandwa: Ah man. Old man you're getting old.

We laughed and left the room. The baby had to rest.....

Alondwe Moloji...

Days turned into weeks and weeks turned into a month. I tried everything but still Thapelo wanted a baby. There was nothing that was going to solve this between us beside having a baby. It was now the beginning of March. His mother still didn't like the idea of us being married. She wanted us to divorce each other but Thapelo didn't want to. I just wondered why he didn't take that offer because he was treating me like his roommate. He did those things that showed that he was my husband but not like before. It was painful because I just wanted him to support me. I wasn't being selfish. I wanted to make him happy but being pregnant while I was still studying wasn't on my plans. And I was still scared to try for a baby. My brother had a baby girl and I was so happy for him. I was in the hospital on a

Wednesday morning. We were having tea with the Doctor that we worked with. That term, we were in theatre.

Jade: You are quiet these days Twinkie are you alright?

Me: Yes I am fine.

Doc: I was also told that you're a fun person to be with but I can't say I agree Twinkie. You're quiet or is it me?

Me: No. No. It's not you Doctor Edwards. I am fine really. I just miss my son.

Doc: It's understandable.

I smiled and the emergency siren went off asking for Doctor Edwards and his team. We left our tea just like that and we ran to the theatre. It was a pregnant woman who needed an emergency c-section. We were there too assisting together with the team. Doctor Edwards was telling us what to do. The best thing you must do as a Doctor is not to panic. Just relax and do your job.

Doctor: Her condition is critical. Is the father here. We need to know who to save. We might lose both of them or either of them. Where is the father?

Surgeon Assistant: The father was too afraid to be here. He asked to wait outside.

Jade: Doctor her heart rate is dropping.

Surgeon: We need to act fast Doctor Edwards. There is no time to discuss who do we save. The mother has a heart problem. I read her file.

Doctor: Okay. Let's work together people.

We worked together and we managed to save the baby boy and the mother died. I just didn't want to be there when they tell the father but Doctor Edwards wanted us to be there. We went to the father. He stood up as soon as he saw us.

Father: Doctor what happened? Is my wife and the baby alright?

Doctor: Good news is you're a father to a beautiful baby boy.

Father: Oh thank God! And my wife? Is she alright? Did her heart manage?

Doctor: I am sorry Sir but your wife didn't make it.

Father: What? No! I told her, we can consider other options but she believed she was strong enough. She wanted to give me the baby.

Us: We are sorry.

We then walked away. I went to the bathroom. It was painful to see him cry like that. His wife must have been special to him. If that woman knew that she had a heart problem then why did she continue with giving her husband a baby? Is that how being selfless means? If there are women who can be like that then why should I deny my husband a child? I sat there thinking maybe I can try. I just couldn't bring myself to it. What if something like that happens? I am not ready and my husband should understand that. I stood up and I went back to work.

After I have done my hours, Thapelo was outside the hospital waiting for me. He always fetches me.

Me: Bye Jade. I will see you tomorrow.

Jade: Bye.

He went on his way. Thapelo opened the door for me. I stepped inside, he closed it and he went on his side.

Thapelo: How was your day?

Me: Hectic yours?

Thapelo: It was a long day. I am just glad that I am going home.

I wish I could say the same thing. Our place didn't feel like home anymore. We arrived at home and I went straight to the fridge for water.

Thapelo: Mpendulo and Mandy are coming over for dinner.

Me: Oh.

Thapelo: Are you coming to help me?

Me: Yeah sure I am coming.

I wanted to scream and scream until my voice was gone. I just didn't want them because I knew they were going to attack me obviously. I went to help him undress and he helped me too with the zip of my dress. I suppose I wasn't that attractive anymore because he didn't even have sex with me. Or that was also the length of his anger? I changed and I went to prepare dinner, counting in our visitors. While I was busy my phone rang. My mom was calling. I answered on speaker.

Me: Mama?

Mom: Mama? Mama? Why on earth didn't you call me back about the date.

Me: Oh. That. Uhm.. mom I haven't discussed it with Thapelo.

Mom: Come on Alondwe. The last time you said that and now you're saying that. Is everything alright between you two?

Me: Yes everything is fine. Just that today we lost a patient who was pregnant. The baby survived but she died. It was just too sad mom.

Mom: Oh my poor baby. Are you alright?

Me: I am trying mom. I am coping.

Mom: Things should be easy with Thapelo on your side. You should let him help you get through all that hospital stress.

Me: Yes. How is little Kiara?

Mom: Ah that one. She's Chicky. She doesn't sleep at night because she's always sleeping during the day. I am always sleepy at work these days. I also wake up to help your grandmother.

Me: Ah. How cute.

Mom: Wait until you have more kids and we will see if you will say cute!

I laughed and she laughed after me.

Me: Come on it will be cute. Little Alondwe.

Mom: And she'll be fat like you were when you were a baby.

Me: Ah mom please! Can we drop the baby talk. I am trying to cook here.

Mom: Alright. Alright. Send my love to Thapelo.

Me: I will and send mine to everyone. What did Sphephile say about the baby?

Mom: I have never seen him being that jealous.

Me: Oh shame my baby. He's used to being the only grandchild.

Mom: Yeah. When he first arrived on Friday he was happy but Saturday afternoon he wanted to go back to his father because ugoro wakhe doesn't give him attention anymore. Then his father came to take him even Alupheli failed to convince him to stay.

Me: I must call him.

Mom: That will be much better and convince him to come back and visit us.

Me: He doesn't visit anymore?

Mom: He has your heart baby you gotta understand.

Me: Yeah. I understand. Bye mom.

Mom: Bye nana.

I called Sphephelo, putting him on speaker while I continue chopping. He answered.

Sphephelo: Mama Ka Sphephile.

Me: Hey how are you?

Sphephelo: Everytime you call I am always on the edge because it's like you'll say I am taking him now.

Me: No don't worry. I won't take him. I have decided to take him after I have started working.

Sphephelo: Okay. Okay. I am good with that. Very good. Actually happy.

Me: Yeah I can hear the excitement. Can I speak to him?

Sphephelo: Alright.

He called out his name and I heard his footsteps like he was running.

Sphephile: Mama, grandma has a new grandchild.

Huh? Not even a hello mom.

Me: Oh baby I know. But that's your cousin.

Sphephile: But grandma is always with her now and she doesn't sleep with me anymore.

Me: But baby you went to them once and you didn't go back. Why?

Sphephile: I don't want to go back grandma broke my heart. She broke my heart.

Me: I am sorry my love. She loves you. She has a big heart because she loves all of us. All six of us and on top she loves your grandfather.

Sphephile: So I should go and visit?

Me: Yes my love you should.

Sphephile: Okay mom. But you are not going to have another baby right? Sphephile is enough?

Me: Sphephile is enough but you must have a little baby sister in a year. Don't you want a playmate when you come to stay with mom here?

Sphephile: Okay I want a playmate but chocolate man is also there. He'll be my playmate while the baby is still small like Kiara.

Me: Yeah. That's a good idea. So how is the new grade?

Sphephile: It's boring, they are teaching things I know. I know how to write vowels.

Me: Oh. You started school very early but don't worry it's still early. They will teach something that you don't know.

Sphephile: Maybe joining uncle Alupheli will be fun.

Me: No! That is not happening. You will go to school.

Mpendulo and his girlfriend arrived while I was still on the phone.

Sphephile: But mom –

Me: No buts! You will go to school like everyone. You will not join Alupheli. You two are not a good combination do you get that?

Sphephile: Yes mom. I will go to school.

Me: Good boy. I love you.

Sphephile: I love you too mom.

I hung up the call and I set up the table.

Mandy came to help me out.

Mandy: Your son has a cute voice.

Me: He's a child, all children have cute voices.

Mandy: I just can't wait to meet my little baby.

I smiled and finished up setting everything. I wasn't really in the mood for all this. They came to the table and we sat down. The unexpected guest also came. That was my friend Nkululeko. Thapelo must have called her too. Mpendulo prayed for our food. We started eating. The four of them were having a conversation. I was just quiet.

Mpendulo: Are you alright Twinkie?

Me: Yes I am fine.

Nkulu: She's been in a sour mood lately but she says she's fine.

Mpendulo: You're quiet that's unlike you.

Me: I just had a rough day at the hospital.

Mpendulo: Oh sorry. I am sure if Sphephile was here you were going to be more relaxed. Kids do that.

Me: Yeah. But raising a kid is no joke but I am happy for you guys.

Mandy: Ain't you going to have a baby? Thapelo and Mpendulo wanted to raise their kids

together.

Me: Well I am still studying. I have school and the hospital at the same time. I can't bring a baby to that busy schedule I have.

Mpendulo: You'll have a nanny. It's not like you will be alone. Thapelo will be there too.

Nkulu: And you also have me. A baby is not a bad idea. It's a good idea.

I looked at Thapelo. He was looking at me.

Me: So Thapelo this was your plan?

Thapelo: What?

Me: Call them in here so that they can talk about the baby issue. This was your best plan?

Mpendulo: No it's not like that.

Me: I am talking to my husband not you!

I looked at him and he didn't say anything. I just couldn't possibly believe him. How can he do this? We promised each other not to discuss our business with our friends but he did it anyway. I stood up.

Me: Enjoy your dinner.

I went to the bedroom. I took my clothes off and I went to take a long ass shower. I thought my husband meant it when he said our business is our business. But clearly I was wrong.

Maybe I just have to give him the baby. Get off the injection, be pregnant again, and give him the baby. Then I will continue studying and doing my residency like I got no little baby. Then he'll complain and say I got no time for our child. I clicked my tongue. I am just going to give him the god damn baby. Thapelo wants a baby right? Fine he'll get the baby because he must always get what he wants. Once I was done I dried my body and wore my gown.

I went back to our room. Thapelo was sitting on the bed facing the other side. Something was burning. I could smell it.

Me: What's that burning smell?

I went to him and there was a can of dustbin. I looked closely it was my pink journal and on his hand he had the scan picture of our baby. He was burning it along with my journal that I used to write my feelings on, when we lost our baby. I kneeled down and I pushed him back. He let go of the scan and the journal and they burn.

Me: What are you doing Thapelo? Why are you doing this to me? Why are you burning my things why?

I couldn't hold my tears. I just cried. He looked at me. He was crying.

Thapelo: You need to let go. Just let go.

Me: Let go of what? Let go –

Thapelo: Let go of this baby, stop holding on to the pain! Can't you see there is no baby here.

Me: You burnt my things how could you?

Thapelo: It wasn't the baby! It's not even once that you felt her move but you act like she was part of your life. You act like you have heard her laughter or seen her face. The baby is someone who didn't exist because you didn't know she was there. And we are here because of you.

Me: It's my fault Thapelo?

Thapelo: Yes. You're the one holding on to the baby that we didn't even know.

Me: How could you hurt me like this? How could you? You should understand, you should support me. You should help me.

Thapelo: I am trying to help you.

He tried to hold me but I pushed him away.

Me: Don't touch me! Don't you dare touch me!

He stopped, he took the trash bin. I stood up.

Me: Where are you taking it?

Thapelo: I am going to throw it away. You want the ashes of the paper now?

I just cried, why was he like this? Why was he so insensitive? I tried to follow him but he closed and locked the door. I just went to the bed and cried.....

Samkelo Ndunakazi.....

Having the baby in the house was a good thing for me. I could focus on my business more without my wife complaining about me not giving her more attention. As a man you have to understand that women love attention. There's a quote that says girls want attention and women want respect. But I argue that, I think someone who quoted that was so hungry for attention if it's a woman who quoted that, she said that to make herself feel better. Truth is women and girls want both respect and attention. No matter how old they get if you give them your attention and respect it means something to them. I saw that in my wife. I thought maybe as she grows that attention cravings will slow down but it didn't. But a tip is not to give them too much attention because they'll suffocate, just give them enough attention not too much and not too least. It was time for me to try and mentor Uyathandwa so that he can get the experience he needs while he was continuing with his studies. We were at the office with him working late.

Uyathandwa: The finances are kind of complicated.

Me: That's why you'll have the department that is going to take care of that.

Uyathandwa: Alright. So since you're still working as a chartered accountant who will be here working with me?

Me: Candice my partner. She will be working with you. You will meet her on Monday and the rest of the team.

Uyathandwa: That's cool. This is real stuff.

Me: Yeah. Let's check the management.

My phone rang while we were still working. My wife was calling. I answered.

Me: Baby.

Thandeka: Are you guys going to sleep there?

Me: No but we are still working and we are not done yet. So we will come back late.

Thandeka: Samkelo come back late? No.

Me: Thandeka please tomorrow it's Saturday and I have to rest. I will work now until we finish. There's a baby there sleep with her.

Thandeka: She's sleeping now.

Me: Well goodnight baby I love you.

Thandeka: Okay. I love you too.

Me: Don't sound so sad.

Thandeka: I am not sad. Of course I am not sad.

Me: Okay. Sleep then.

Thandeka: Okay.... You're trying to tell me that you can't hear that I am sad?

Me: Ah Mama Ka Alondwe that won't work. I am not coming back home now. I am working with my boy. Please just give us time.

Thandeka: Okay. But tomorrow you'll be mine? All of you?

Me: Yes Mrs Ndunakazi all of me will be yours. I love you so much.

Thandeka: I love you too Ndunakazi.

I hung up the call. I wasn't going to leave the boy alone. He needed me.

Uyathandwa: Mom wants you back home?

Me: You know. But we are working now.

Uyathandwa: That's the spirit.

I nodded. We continued working till late. We then drove home before midnight. I was really tired. I just needed to go straight to bed and hopefully I was going to find my wife sleeping. That meant she wasn't going to tell me to go and shower. I just needed the bed not the

shower. We arrived at home and indeed they were all sleeping. My wife was with the baby on the bed. I felt a little bad what if I don't smell so good after a long day I had then the baby will suffocate to death because I don't smell good? No! I had to take a shower. I took a quickest shower then I joined them in bed.

In the morning I was woken up by my phone ringing. I hated being woken up on a Saturday. I just hated it! When I was young my mom had a very big challenge of waking me up in the morning because I didn't like to wake up in the morning. Thandeka also face the same challenge. I remember I almost got fired for sleeping at work the time Thandeka was pregnant with Mesuli. Well all her pregnancies made me sleep more than I wanted to. I think I am still suffering from that. I don't know side effects maybe? Yeah side effects. I reached out to my phone with my eyes closed.

Thandeka: Baby just open your eyes and take it. You'll wake the baby up.

Me: Well I didn't really sleep because of her father. I think it will be fair if she can wake up too.

Thandeka: Just take the phone Ndunakazi.

I opened my eyes and I took the phone. Candice was calling. I answered.

Me: You have the wrong timing partner.

Candice: There was a break in at the office. Please come down now.

Me: What? How?

Candice: I don't know. The police are still looking around the place.

Me: I will come right now.

I hung up the phone and I got off the bed.

Thandeka: What's going on?

Me: There was a break in at the office. I need to go there now. I will see you when I get back. I said all that wearing my tracksuits. I kissed her good morning and I left. I took Uyathandwa with me. These were type of things that he needed to see if he was going to be in the business world. We arrived at the office and I went to Candice.

Me: I don't understand this, Uyathandwa and I left this place before midnight. How did they get in because I turned on the alarm.

Candice: I don't know, the police think they might have done something to the alarm. And they probably waited for you guys to leave. Funny thing about all this is, they didn't steal anything. They just messed up our offices.

Me: Bunch of fools!

I clicked my tongue and we went to talk to the police

Police1: Sir do you have any enemies?

Me: Not that I know of.

Police1: We found an earring. It's woman earring.

Candice: Samkelo do you have any crazy ex girlfriend who might be jealous?

Me: No I don't. My ex is in Dubai. She lives there with her family.

Police1: We will get to the bottom of this but for now you'll have to close business for a week.

Me: That is not good.

Candice: Yeah. It's not but we have no choice.

I sighed. I looked around the place and I didn't find anything. I decided to go back home. I took Uyathandwa and we left. I was thinking who might do this? I mean I have a long list of girls who probably hate me but I don't think they'll do that. I sighed.

Uyathandwa: It's confusing, isn't?

Me: Yeah big time.

I concentrated on the road until we made it home.

We went inside the house. My grandson was home. He saw me and he came running to me.

He probably wanted me to pick him up but I had no energy.  
Sphephile: Grandpa ain't you going to pick me up and swing me on the air like always?  
Me: I would love to but I am tired.  
Sphephile: Oh. It's the new baby. I thought you were going to treat me like before since grandma doesn't.  
Me: Hey why would you say that?  
Sphephile: She refused to sleep with me last night and she didn't feed me this morning.  
Uyathandwa: But you're six years old now Sphephile.  
Alupheli: He wants to be a grand baby.  
Uyathandwa: Okay let me not get involved.  
Uyathandwa went upstairs.  
Me: We still love you. That hasn't changed.  
Sphephile: No. I am calling my dad. I want to go home now.  
Alupheli came to stand in front of him.  
Alupheli: Mshana you're home. Please don't go. We still have plans remember?  
Sphephile: No. I want to be with my father and my sister at home.  
He went upstairs. I just didn't know what to say. I didn't expect to come home and solve Sphephile crisis. My grandson was just jealous.  
Alupheli: So dad you ain't going to stop him. You just gonna stand there?  
Me: No. I won't do anything specially after I have heard that you have some plans together.  
Alupheli: Dad you're unbelievable. Maybe Sphephile is right. Ah.  
Me: I will kick your balls now!  
Mom: Samkelo that's not a good thing to say to a child.  
Alupheli: Don't worry grandma. They are too small I won't even feel his kick.  
He said that and ran away. I shook my head.  
Me: Hey boy.  
Mesuli: Hey dad. It's seems like you have a crisis to fix in the house.  
Me: Story of my life. Let me go to your mom first. I am counting on you to help me keep things under control.  
He nodded and I went upstairs. Thandeka was looking at her phone. She was reading something, she looked scared and frightened.  
Me: What's wrong?  
She snapped back quickly and she tapped on her phone quickly then she pressed the power button and put the phone on the bed.  
Thandeka: Everything is fine. How did it go?  
Me: That can wait, what's wrong? You seem shaken. What was that on the phone?  
Thandeka: Our next project at work. I don't want to talk about it.  
Me: I don't think you should do it if it got you so frightened. You're literally shaking  
Thandeka.  
Thandeka: I am good. I am good.  
Me: STOP LYING TO ME!  
She got a fright then she went to the bathroom. I took her phone and went through her files. Nothing was there, checked the messages, pictures and WhatsApp but there was nothing. She might have deleted it.....

Kimberly Smith.....

When Themba and I started dating. It didn't seem right because I was working for his wife. Well I knew that Thandeka always thought that I slept with Themba while she was out there looking for her son but that is not what happened. Themba approached me while Thandeka was on the streets looking for her son. He needed someone who was well mannered who was

going to be able to raise his kids and respect him. Because he was planning on leaving Thandeka. When she came back I felt very ashamed because it felt like I have cheated with my boss's husband. When they separated that's where I started seeing him and I slept with him so Thandeka thought I was the whore but actually that's not who I am. I am just a young woman who grew up in a disadvantaged family. I managed to pass my matric but not well enough to go to university. When Themba married me it was like a dream come true. He didn't even care whether I could give him kids or not. He just wanted me to be his wife. It was wonderful and I was in love with him. But sometimes I felt like he loved Thandeka more and he was still hung over her. I felt like I wasn't enough, the way they fought over their kids. It was like they still wanted each other and it made me jealous. Themba had his temper but I loved him still. Our marriage was great. I was happy and he took care of my parents. Things started going bad when he lost his father. After that he took over the gangster business and he just became a different person. I knew that he was cheating on me but I didn't know that who was he cheating with. I felt so helpless that I even thought of cheating too with the professor. But just as the affair was going to start Themba got arrested.

When they arrested him, I was so devastated and hurt. I didn't know what to do to help him. I wish I could something but I couldn't. Then his mom died it was just a bad time in his life. Being in prison and to have your mother die. I tried to support him but he was pushing me away. But I wasn't going to allow that. I love Themba and I would do anything to make him happy. I was going to make our marriage work even if he was in prison. Good thing for us was that we were married and that meant we can have some privacy. That is how I was going to keep our relationship working. So it was a Saturday. I was in the prison to see him with our daughter Sisipho. He was happy to see us. Sisipho went to him and Themba picked her up. She kissed her. Sisipho giggled.

Sisipho: Hello daddy.

Themba: Hello my angel how are you?

Sisipho: I am fine. I am happy that you picked me up. I thought you were going to say I am too heavy just like mom.

Themba: You can never be heavy for your daddy. Hello to my wife.

Me: Hello husband.

I kissed him and we sat down. Basically people closed to us respected Themba. Even in the prison he was respected. That includes the prison guards.

Themba: Thank you for bringing her today.

Me: She couldn't wait to see you.

Themba: Yeah I can see. I hope tomorrow you'll come alone.

Me: Themba please just talk to your daughter.

He laughed and kissed me. He had a conversation with Sisipho. If I wanted to see him I had someone who let me see him even on weekdays but not regularly. We didn't want to draw attention to ourselves. The plan was that he can get parole on good behaviour. I was really hoping that he will. My life without him full time was quite empty. Specially that his other kids were not there, Uyabongeka was dead and Uyathandwa went back to his mom. Not that me and Uyathandwa got along very well but we did try. He just didn't like me. He tolerated me for the sake of his father and his grandparents. Now that they were all not there he didn't care. He only called once or twice a month and he will only speak to his little sister. He had this idea that I was the one who made his parents separate.

Themba: How are things going with college?

Me: It's pretty good. I am trying, you know it's been ages since I went to school so I am just trying to adapt.

Themba: Don't worry everything will work out just fine. Just relax and you will make it.

Me: Thank you my love.

I smiled. I couldn't continue with varsity because I had to sleep with that professor in order to get the opportunity to study. My points were too low but he wanted to have a relationship with me and he was going to help me. At the moment I was considering his offer because Themba was acting like a jerk but I didn't continue with it after my husband was arrested. I was doing public management at a college. It was really hard trying to adjust from a house wife who was a nanny previously to a college student. My husband and my daughter were my motivation. The visiting hours were over so we had to go. It was hard saying goodbye but we had to. I was living with my daughter and her nanny who was also my cleaner. We were living in our house. Themba's house. The state didn't take his assets because he didn't buy any assets with the drugs money. That money was for paying his gang. My daughter and I were used to this life but the first year was really hard. But hey one gotta adjust to life because things changes everyday.

So on Sunday. I was with Themba. We were in a private room. We just made love so I was lying on his chest brushing it.

Me: So you still don't want to admit that your ex wife put you here?

Themba: Kimberly I don't want to fight with you specially not after we've just made love.

Me: I just want to know. Why are you protecting her?

Themba: Who said I am protecting her?

Me: I know that you're. I just want to ask her if was it worth it. Putting us in all that pain.

Themba: Woman! Can you please let that go!

He shouted at me. I stood up and wore my clothes. I was angry at him. I knew that Thandeka had something to do with his arrest but he was protecting her.

Themba: Okay I am sorry for shouting.

Me: No. It's fine clearly you're enjoying being in here. It is fun for you to be here. I am not enjoying this okay. It's not easy.

Themba: What are you going to do to Thandeka?

Me: I just want to talk to her maybe get her to reopen the case and say it was all a setup. Maybe say she made up all that evidence.

Themba: Thandeka despises you. She can never agree to that. Just let everything be. My son just got back to his mom. I want him to be happy and his daughter must have a healthy grandmother. Do not stress that woman please. She's been through a lot on my account. I don't want to say the things she's been through so please just drop.

Me: Maybe I can speak to her husband.

Themba: Kimberly you will not do that! Samkelo is mentoring my son. He's a father figure that Uyathandwa needs right now while I am in here. He doesn't owe me anything but he still treats my son like his own son so please if you love me and my son you'll stop bothering that family and let things be what they are. I have my own plan. I will get out of here in good behaviour not with lies. And I am tired of fighting with Thandeka.

I took my bag and I left. All he cared about was Thandeka and his son. He didn't care about me and our daughter. He didn't care that we needed him. I called Bheki once I was in the car. He answered.

Bheki: So what did he say?

Me: He doesn't approve. He just want Thandeka to be left in peace.

Bheki: Well that's not going to happen. Thandeka has been getting her way for too y. I think it's time we make her answer for everything that she has done. I will speak to Emma and Brandon.

Me: Alright. Thanks.

I hung up and I sighed. This was it, I was going to get revenge for my husband. And I was going to find that bitch who was busy screwing him under my nose....

Alondwe Moloji.....

Thursday morning I was woken up by Thapelo. I rubbed my eyes and looked at him. He had a tray of breakfast in his hands.

Thapelo: Good morning. I made you breakfast.

I removed the blanket and I got off the bed.

Me: Good morning but I am not hungry. Thanks.

Thapelo: Alondwe please don't be like this I am trying here.

Me: I am not hungry. I have to be on campus today so I will go and get ready.

I went to the bathroom and I took a shower. I was still angry. I was angry. The anger inside me was too much. I just didn't know how I was going to break through the anger. I finished up and I went back to our room. He was making the bed. I moistened my body. He was done making the bed so he was just looking at me.

Thapelo: I don't want us to continue living like this. It's not healthy. We have to move on from what happened. I want us to be happy. I want to make you happy.

Me: You made me very happy last night. Don't try so hard. Last night was the best.

Thapelo: Okay fine. I know that I shouldn't have told them that you don't want us to have a child but Alondwe I was desperate. I thought they could help us. I thought maybe you'll listen to them.

Me: That's nice. At least you are the one who went first and broke our promise to each other. You spoke to your friends and you dragged my friend in it. That was very wise of you. You took my things and you burnt them. That was so manly of you. You just made me happy. I am happy. You're cool now?

Thapelo: I am sorry but I was trying to help you.

Me: By burning my personal things? My journal? The scan of my baby?

Thapelo: Our baby.

Me: No. Not your baby. You made your feelings very clear last night. And now you're talking to me, making breakfast because you want to make me pregnant? That's very nice of you. Very nice.

I packed my books. He took his bag and his car keys and he left. I went to the wardrobe and I picked out an outfit. I wore a long blue dress and white sandals. I took my bag and keys then I left too. I took a taxi to campus. I wanted to forget about my problems and enjoy my day on campus.

After classes I had no mood for Immaculate and Jade. I just wanted to be alone and I didn't want to go home. And Thapelo's car wasn't outside the gate so this was my time to be alone. I called a cab. I needed a strong cocktail. The cab drove me to my favourite bar. I used to go there with my aunt and Nkululeko for cocktails. We stopped going there when I got married. I was too busy and too happy to sit on a bar and have a cocktail. And they wanted me to enjoy my marriage so we agreed that cocktails were burned till further notice. It was fun back then. Thapelo was in Durban and I had my friend and my aunt whenever I wanted to have fun. I didn't really like alcohol but I liked cocktails.

And I have had a shot once that made me loose my ring. At the bar, I ordered my cocktail. The bar was still empty. I had my cocktail. There was a lady next to me. She was dark skinned and thin. She looked quite serious a bit to be in that place. She kept looking at her watch. I felt like talking to her.

Me: You know you shouldn't have come here if you're rushing somewhere or if you have somewhere to be.

Lady: No. I am waiting for someone but it looks like he stood me up.

Me: It's a date?

Lady: Not really a date.

Me: A husband? Or an in between? Or fling? Or friends with benefits?

She laughed and said: Non of the above.

Me: Are you married?

Lady: No.

Me: Lucky you. I am married, it's been six months. That's a short time hey? And the husband already wants a baby. Isn't that crazy?

I laughed and this lady just looked at me. She didn't say anything. Okay I just made a fool of myself.

She stood up and opened her purse. She took out a card.

Lady: My name is Sbahle Zuke if you need someone to talk to, please just call me. For now I have to go. Have a good evening.

She smiled and she left. I took her card and I put it inside my bag. I continued drinking my cocktail. I had a few more cocktails then I was drunk. I requested an uber. I waited for it. I had a number of missed calls from my dearest husband. I didn't return them. I was going to see him anyway in a few minutes.

I paid, I went inside the building and I went to the lift. My phone rang inside my bag. I took it out and I answered it. Nkululeko was calling.

Me: Nkululeko my friend.

Nkulu: Alondwe where are you? Wait are you drunk?

Me: Guilty as charged. I am about to get in my husband's house. Our house. I am still in the lift.

Nkulu: Do not go to that apartment.

Me: Oups! Too late, I am outside the lift now.

Nkulu: Alondwe! Your mother in-law and her husband are there. Thapelo called looking for you.

They came to see both of you guys.

Me: Ugly beast is my house. Oh God!

The door to the apartment was opened. I quickly ran away and I hid on the stairs until I heard the voice of lift mentioning our level.

Me: They are gone. Thank you Brah.

Nkulu: You were out drinking alone?

Me: Yeah. I knew you weren't going to agree to come with me. I needed a cocktail.

Nkulu: Don't ever do that man.

Me: Relax. I am not a baby. Hey I will call you tomorrow. I want to shower now.

Nkulu: Okay bye.

I hung up and closed the door behind me, the dinner table had plates with food that was eaten by them. It also had an empty plate which I supposed was mine. I shook my head and I went to our bathroom with my bag still with me. Nkululeko really saved me. That woman was going to destroy me. I sat on the toilet seat and called the therapist. I put the call on speaker. She answered.

Sbahle: Sbahle speaking hello?

Me: I think I made a mistake, I feel like I am regretting marrying my husband. He's putting pressure on me and right now the pressure I need is of my studies not having a baby.

Sbahle: Okay. Which course are you doing?

Me: I am doing medicine and this is my sixth year. I don't know what to do. I want to make him happy but right now the only thing I can think about is to give him a baby and let him do all the parenting alone so that he can understand how ready I am not. I mean not so long ago. We lost a child and I feel like he doesn't care about that. As long as Thapelo gets what he wants it's all good.

Sbahle: So that's why you are regretting because you think he puts himself before you?

Me: No. But that too. But now I am regretting because I can see that I won't enjoy my pregnancy. I wanted to be pregnant and enjoy it because I will be giving the man I love a child. But now it won't be like that because I will do it just to make him happy not because I am ready. I want to compromise but this is a baby that we are talking about. The baby needs two happy parents. Not the other parent who don't want the baby while the other parent is over the moon. If I didn't marry him he wasn't going to ask me to give him a child. But I must do it even if I don't want to just because I have to make my husband happy.

Sbahle: Speak to him. This is your marriage. Your lifetime commitment. Just be polite and speak to him, make him understand how this will affect your baby, because if you're still studying you don't just take maternity leave. It's not like being on a job. You'll have to continue going to school after birth and that is not too good for you. Mothers have stress after birth, and that stress plus the school stress, plus the caring for your baby stress, plus looking after your husband and yourself stress will definitely not be good for you. And I don't think your husband wants to lose you. So calm

down baby and talk to him. Reach some level of understanding with him. Don't argue but talk. You must not bring a child to an atmosphere that is tense. Healthy parents means healthy baby. And in marriage we talk things through we don't just regret and think we made a mistake because of one fight no matter how big or small it is. We don't just throw things away with an excuse. We fix them and honour our vows.

Me: Thank you Sbahle.

Sbahle: My pleasure.

Me: By the way it's Alondwe, the lady you met at the bar where a man you were waiting for stood you up. And you left after giving me your card.

She laughed and said: Oh yeah I remember you.

Me: You said I can call you if I need someone to talk to. I think I was in need of that.

Sbahle: Okay. No problem.

Me: Wait? What do I call you, a child and youth care practitioner, a marriage counselor? A psychologist, Life and business coach or a sex therapist?

Thandeka: You can call me whatever you want to call me. I am just here to listen to you as whatever services you need.

Me: You studied all these things? How old are you? I need to know who am I talking to here. I don't want to talk more to a con artist.

Sbahle: I am old enough to be your mother and I can say yes I studied all those professions. You can come by my office if you need proof. It's easy to obtain them all because they in lined. But it took me more than ten years to obtain them all.

Me: Okay. I think I am in the right place. I will call again to make an appointment this time around. Thanks for listening.

Sbahle: It's alright. My pleasure.

I hung up the call and I sighed. She was right I needed to speak to him not fight. I needed to make bae understand. I giggled alone. He was hardly bae these days. I laughed.

I went back to the bedroom. He was on the bed, just sitting there.

Thapelo: Where were you?

Me: Uhm? I went to have a couple of drinks.

Thapelo: You're drunk? Nkululeko denied that she was with you!

Me: I wasn't with her I went there alone because she wasn't going to agree to go with me.

Thapelo: Stop lying to me!

Me: Honey I am not lying to you. My friend is scared to loose me because of you. She's afraid that you will tear us apart because of her lifestyle so she wouldn't do anything to risk being on your bad side. I went alone to that bar because I needed a drink.

Thapelo: You're an alcoholic now?

Me: No. I can never be that.

I took off my clothes. Everything was slow in my mind but nasty.

Thapelo: So you regret marrying me?

Me: You were eavesdropping my conversation with my Doctor? Ah what do I call her? She's just Everything in one person. But that's not the point you were eavesdropping?

Thapelo: No I wasn't but the door wasn't closed. So I heard Everything.

I went closer to him and I held his waist.

Thapelo: You're aware that you've been drinking right? And you are touching me right now.

Me: It's just a cocktail. I am not dirty. And I don't regret marrying you.

Thapelo: But I heard you saying it.

Me: Okay, I regret saying it. I love you everyday even when you can be a nuisance sometimes and lately you are bossy but I love you still. Don't you love me?

I made a puppy face. I needed to get some that night and he was looking so serious like he was ready to murder someone.

Thapelo: I love you too. Even when you can be whiny sometimes.

Me: Me? Whiny? Come on I am a strongbow.

He laughed and his dimples showed. He turned me on dear God! His dimples are just glorious to me. This was my chance. I kissed him immediately and he kissed me back. Just where I wanted him to be. I jumped up and wrapped my legs around his waist. He held me tight. That was our kick start of our journey to our heaven

Alondwe Moloji.....

Friday morning I woke up with my head pounding. I pinched Thapelo and he woke me up.

Thapelo: Is that a best way to wake your husband up Alondwe?

Me: Yes because my head is pounding.

Thapelo: That's your punishment for going out drinking alone.

Me: Last night you slept with a drunk woman. Who wasn't on her right mind. I can get you arrested for that you know?

Thapelo: Well the woman forced herself on me. She's the one who violated me. And it doesn't look like she wasn't on her right mind because she was the one who took my clothes off too.

Me: I violated you?

Thapelo: Yes you did and I am thinking of calling the police right now.

Me: But did you enjoy it?

Thapelo: Who has ever enjoyed being violated?

Me: I thought maybe you can say yes because I was thinking of doing it again now.

Thapelo: Well I won't complain.

Me: Got you! (I tried to laugh but my head got worse. I slowed down) Just get up and get me water and the aspirin.

Thapelo: Yes bully me madam I am your bull dog.

Me: I said go now!

Thapelo: Yes Master!

He got off the bed running. I smiled to myself. He was just the sexiest man I have ever loved. Not that there were too many. I smiled at the thought. He came back and gave me the aspirin and water. I drank it.

Thapelo: Next time you go out drinking I will chain you up on a chair for two weeks and torture your drunk body.

Me: I would love that Mr chocolate. Now let's just skip a day. I would like to violate you more.

Thapelo: Ain't you going to the hospital?

Me: No I have campus and I might go back to that bar if you don't let me have my way with you.

He did the magic smile and before I knew it my nails were on his back with him grinding on me. It was magical!

Thapelo: I swear I didn't want that to end.

Me: Neither did I. I love you.

Thapelo: I love you too. Did you really mean that I am bossy?

Me: Well lately you have been. Did you mean that I am whiny?

Thapelo: Maybe a little.

I bite his chest and he groaned. With a little flinch. My teeth were on him obviously it did hurt.

Thapelo: Why did you do that?

Me: I did it because I can.

Thapelo: What was on that cocktail. Your mind is not right.

Me: I know.

He pulled me closer to him, making me lay on his chest and he brushed my head.

Thapelo: I can't even feel your scalp with this fake hair you have on your head.

Me: Don't worry I am taking it off tomorrow.

Thapelo: That's good. I am sorry.

Me: For what?

Thapelo: Trying to rush you into having a baby. That woman you were talking to last night was right. You have to be emotionally ready for this so that you will give our child all the motherly love and attention that she deserves. You won't achieve that if you're at hospital doing your residency and on campus and cooking and cleaning for me. Dressing me up and doing all those things. When we bring her to this earth it must be a perfect time. Where you will take your break from work to focus on her and me of course because I will always be your big baby. (I laughed) hearing that Mpendulo was going to have a baby and your brother just had a baby got to me. I didn't trust that I was going to be able to be around my friend's child without thinking about what we went through. So I just put pressure on you hoping you will agree. When I asked you to marry me you were still studying and I promised you that nothing was going to change. You were still going to focus on your studies then we can start a family after that. But still I broke that promise by trying to force you into having a baby. It wasn't right and I am sorry. And I am sorry for burning those things. I just thought we needed to let go. And for telling them our business I am sorry. I broke our promise. Will you forgive me?

Me: Yes I forgive you. I am sorry too for going out drinking alone. I didn't mean to do it. And for missing dinner. Please forgive me.

Thapelo: It's alright. It's behind us now.

He kissed my forehead and held me tight.

Me: We'll have our little princess in good time and we will be happy to have her. For now we just have to be happy for Mpendulo and my brother. And focus on ourselves before she comes in our lives and drive us nuts.

He laughed and said: Her daddy will just drug her a little if she starts acting crazy like her mom.

I hit his shoulder and he laughed.

Thapelo: You're my crazy and I love you like that.

Me: I love you too boss. (We laughed) So what did your mom want? We must divorce each other?

Thapelo: No she came to give us her blessings.

Me: Oh. That's wonderful.

Thapelo: Yeah it is.

No! It isn't wonderful. I don't trust that woman for a second. Who knows maybe she's pretending. I wasn't going to accept that. Just like that.

Me: Let's go and take a shower.

Thapelo: I thought taking a day off meant we are going to stay in bed and shower each other with love. Isn't?

Me: Ah! You're Chicky shame come.

I got the bed and tried to drag him out of the bed. He gave in and we went to shower.

We dressed up in clean pyjamas and we went to make breakfast together. We were singing and cooking. It was more like, he was singing while I was ruining the song because I couldn't sing.

Thapelo: You're such a bad singer. Please just stop. I will sing alone.

Me: I thought we are a team. I guess I thought wrong. You just broke my heart.

I acted up and he held my hand dragging me closer to him. He kissed me by my breast aiming for the heart I suppose. I smiled.

Thapelo: You're the most beautiful woman I have ever loved.

Me: Beautiful than all your exes?

Thapelo: Well Cassandra was –

Me: Really?

Thapelo:(laughing) I am kidding I just wanted to see that mean face.

I shook my head and kissed him. I have missed him so much. I have missed everything, us, our moments and his soft lips. We had breakfast together on the dinner table.

Thapelo: So your friend is scared of me?

Me: Yes. And I told you the reason.

Thapelo: I won't do that to both of you. I know your friendship to each other is important.

Me: Thanks baby.... You know what let's go and see my therapist, Doctor and everything.

Thapelo: My love just stick to Doctor. Forget other things that she is.

Me: Alright, alright. What do you say?

Thapelo: I say how can we do that because you didn't make an appointment.

Me: Ummm.... Eh.... Okay I have the craziest idea. Let's just go and dress up like we own some big company. Let's go dress up like bosses.

Thapelo: Sounds fun. Let's do it.

I giggled in happiness and we went to our bedroom. He wore a grey suit with White shirt and black tie. I wore a black pencil dress just below the knee in length. I tied my weave properly and I wore a knee grey coat with black heels. I took my hand bag and he took his phone and car keys.

Me: Wait. I didn't make the bed.

Thapelo: You will be sweaty if you make that bed and you're too sexy on this outfit I can't wait to take it off afterwards.

Me: And you're more sexier. Try not to smile so that I will behave.

He held his smile and kissed me.

Thapelo: Just one last thing.

Me: What?

Thapelo: Some black shades.

Me: Oh yeah.

He took them, I took mine and he took his. We held each others hands. We walked like bosses. I was feeling this and I was loving it. Once we were outside we put on our shades and walked tall and top, to our car. You know the process. He drove off. We bought lunch for the Doctor and we drove straight to her office. All her details were in the card. We arrived at the reception and we took off our shades.

Me: My love, your shades please.

He nodded seriously and gave them to me. I put them in my bag.

Receptionist: Mr and Mrs?

Us: Moloi.

Receptionist: Alright. How can I help?

Me: We're here to see Dr Zuke. For Business and life coaching please.

Receptionist: She's about to go to lunch. Did you make an appointment?

Me: No but we were hoping you can squeeze us in.

I smiled looking at her.

Receptionist: I am afraid I can't do that.

Thapelo: Look here Miss. We just want to see the Doctor. We need to some business coaching. We want to expand our business and we are going to pay her a lot of money if we can get her help.

Receptionist: Everyone pays "a lot of money" but they still go through protocol.

Just then Sbahle walked down with her handbag on her hand. I smiled to the receptionist and

held my husband's hand. We went to Sbahle.

Me: Hello Doctor everything in one.

Thapelo:(whispering) I thought we were going to stick to Doctor.

Me: I am sorry I just got carried away.

Sbahle: It's Okay. I must say you look pretty amazing and different from the first time we saw each other.

Me: Yeah. I know and thanks. I will take that as a compliment. Anyway this is my husband I was telling you about. We would like to have a session with you now.

Sbahle: Well right now it's lunch hour and I am starving.

I looked at Thapelo and smiled. He nodded.

Thapelo: We thought you might say that so we brought lunch. So shall we?

Sbahle: Alright why not? Follow me.

We nodded and followed her. I winked at the receptionist.

We arrived at her office. It was beautiful and big. She offered us a seat.

Sbahle: So how can I help you?

Thapelo: We need some help moving on. But first I need to get something about yourself.

Sbahle: Alright.

Thapelo: Are you married?

Sbahle: No I am not.

Thapelo: Oh. Do you have kids?

Sbahle: No. I don't.

Thapelo: Do you have a boyfriend?

Sbahle: No. If I may ask why are you asking these questions?

He stood up and made me stand up with him.

Me: What's going on?

Thapelo: I can't possibly take advices from someone who isn't married, without kids and doesn't even have a boyfriend. Obviously she hasn't experience what we are experiencing. She'll tell us she understands while she doesn't even know how we feel. She'll be just making a living through our problems.

Me: Oh so it's like that? Is your friend married? Did he lost a baby? Have he ever experienced what we have experienced? No! But you told him our business so I don't really get your point here.

Thapelo: Fine. But I am not doing this. You'll find your way home I am leaving.

He took his car keys and cellphone then he left. I sat down and sighed.

Me: I just don't know what has gotten over him. It's like he's becoming a different person.

Sbahle: I think he just doesn't want to go to that place again. Where you two almost didn't make it back alive. Just give him some time. And if he doesn't come around, you'll get enough help for the both of you because you're one now. You're married. What you are doing you're doing for him too in the name of your love and your commitment to each other. Same applies to him. So just go home and calm down. Hold his hand and tell him you're okay with it. Do you think you can do that?

Me: Yes I can. I will do it. Thank you. And I promise next time I will make an appointment.

Sbahle: It's Okay. At least I got free lunch.

I smiled and nodded. I left the office.

I took a cab home. He was sitting on the couch drinking wine. I closed the door.

Me: You ruined our perfect plan and our time to act like bosses just for one day.

Thapelo: Sorry it wasn't my intentions. I just didn't feel comfortable and I don't think there is something I can get from someone who is alone.

Me: Alright, I get that and I respect that.

Thapelo: So that means we are not going back there?

Me: We are going back but I am going as solo, and I would like you to pay for my sessions.

Thapelo: Why don't you just be friends with her and she'll give you free advices.

Me: Well I already got a friend and your plan is wicked by the way.

He laughed and pulled my hand. I sat down with him.

Thapelo: I don't want you to go back there what if things go hot for us and she'll tell you to leave me because she's single and she thinks being single is great. Then you'll leave me.

Me: Ah my baby. I won't leave you. You're my big boy right? And a good mother doesn't leave her children.

He smiled and a dimple appeared. I smiled.

Thapelo: You're my blessing. You and I can be all things, a cat and dog. Two beasts. Two bulls in one kraal. All that doesn't matter, what matters is that we love each other and we understand each other. And most of all we are still here together.

Me: We threw away the key right? So that means we are stuck in here together.

Thapelo: Yes. We are.

Me: Now give me that glass of wine.

Thapelo: Yes madam. But I will only give it to you after you have done your part. You know ladies first. And I have been sitting here waiting for you to come and help me.

Me: Ah I should grow some nails.

Thapelo: A Doctor with long nails? I don't think so.

Me: Just shut up. (He laughed) undress me first. I can't be on my knees with this dress on. It's tight.

Thapelo: Alright.

He undressed me and I undressed him....

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

That year ended really fast. My wife did tell me that someone sent her a threat through a text message. It was once and that person didn't threaten her again. My guess was that she or he was laying low. And we suspected that it was the same person who messed up our offices. The police didn't find that person and we had no clue who it was. Thandeka was scared but seeing that the person who threatened her was no longer sending threats was a relief. On April Uyathandwa graduated and we were so proud of him. He has come a long way and he finally made it. We bought him a car for his graduation present. He was very happy and we told him that it was from me, his father and his mom. There is nothing that makes a parent happy than seeing his/her children succeeding in life and making something out of their selves. Sphephile let go of his jealous and he visited us regularly. They all loved the baby and everyone was happy. Life was going well and I was happy to see my family happy.

It was now December of the present year. Thandeka and I were 42 years old. Alondwe was 24 years old and she completed her studies on November. She passed her final year and she was going to graduate the following year April. She was still married to her husband and they seemed very happy together. Uyathandwa was 23 years old and he was also going to graduate again the following year for his Master's degree. His daughter was 1 year old and 11 months. She was able to walk and talk but not properly talk. She was going to start day care the following year. Sphephile didn't want us to send her to daycare because according to him when she gets to grade 1 she will be bored. He said in grade 1 they taught things that he knew. We weren't going to listen to him obviously. Kiara was going to daycare so that she can interact with other kids. And learn to talk and learn the basics of English. That they taught in daycare. Mesuli was 16 years old and he passed his grade 11. The following year he was going to do grade 12. Alupheli was 11 years old and he was going to do grade 7 the following year. Sphephile was 7 years old and he was going to do grade 3 the following year. My mom was still living with us. She was 71 years. My other family members were alive and

well. Andile and his family were also alive and well.

It was the 16th of December. The previous day was Alupheli's birthday, he was turning 11 years. We had a small birthday celebration. He got presents from his family and friends. Him and I were the only people born in December in our family. But I didn't like to celebrate my birthday. But my wife always did the celebrations anyway. Alondwe and Mesuli shared the same birthday. Uyathandwa was born in October. Sphephile in March and My wife in July. Kiara in January. On the 16th of December there was a second wedding for my daughter. My wife was helping me with my tuxedo.

Thandeka: You know I should be with my daughter right now but I am helping an old man dress up.

Me: What's wrong with that?

Thandeka: A man who is old like you should know how to do things for himself.

Me: How can I know that? I got married on my mid 20s and you've been doing things for me even since

Thandeka: You should pay me now. Wife allowance

I laughed and held her waist. I kissed her.

Me: Kisses are my way of paying you. And other things that I can do to you right now.

Thandeka: I would love to see you doing those things but we will be late for our daughter's wedding.

Me: Come on just a little something I promise it won't be intense.

She giggled and kissed me. It was a celebration of love day for our family so we had to make love. There was a knock on the door. We just finished up taking a shower. We were moisturising our bodies.

Me: Who is it?

Sphephile: Mkhulu no Gogo. My mom is crying now why aren't you guys coming out of your room.

Thandeka: See what you've done now Samkelo?

Me: Come on. We are coming just now. Tell her to calm down please.

Sphephile: I have been telling her and I am tired now. Everyone has tried to talk to her. Even chocolate man called her. She said you will ruin her wedding. Did you see the time?

Thandeka: Sphephile we are coming!

Sphephile: Alright.

Thandeka: Samkelo it's twenty minutes to ten o'clock now. Please hurry up.

Me: I am doing my best.

By quarter to ten we were done. My wife was fixing her face and hair.

Me: Thandeka you will do that in the car.

Thandeka: No! People will see what was keeping us in here. I will finish now.

She finished and we went downstairs where everyone was supposed to be but they weren't there. Only my two mothers were there.

Mom: You two are very dirty!

Me: What have we done mom?

Stepmother: What have you done? It's your daughter's wedding and you are ruining it by doing whatever you were doing in there.

Me: My wife took longer than expected to make her face.

Thandeka: Really Samkelo?

Mom: Ay fusegani man! Let's go.

We went to my car and we drove straight to the hotel where the wedding celebration was going to be. Mostly it was going to be a reception wedding because they have already said their vows before. We arrived at the hotel and we went to our daughter. She looked mad. But she was beautiful.

Thandeka: You look so beautiful baby. (She didn't say anything) Okay. Please don't murder us right now.

Alondwe: You want to ruin my day mom and dad?

Me: No. We didn't mean to take long getting ready please forgive us.

Thandeka: Please fix her make up Nkululeko.

Nkulu: She won't put make up.

Thandeka: Ah why? She needs it right now.

Nkulu: The husband will understand. Don't worry.

Me: Her face is red right now. What will people say?

Nkulu: That doesn't matter. Alondwe knows that she mustn't wear makeup.

Thandeka: Alondwe?

She just shook her head. Nkululeko wiped her face. She looked much better but still pinkish.

Thandeka: Just relax my love. This day is about you and your husband's love. Remember everything that we told you last night and you'll have a long happy marriage life. We love you and even if you are a Moloji now but you'll always be our little princess alright?

Alondwe: Yes mom.

Me: And you can always come back home if you don't want to stay there anymore.

Thandeka: Awu Samkelo I thought you said no divorce.

Me: Ah. When he beats you. Come back home.

Alondwe: Dad?

Me: Okay I am kidding. I know he will never do that to you. You'll be happy with him. I just can't believe that we are really letting you go.

Alondwe: I will be fine dad.

Me: Yeah baby you will be. But do visit us every month. Twice a month.

Thandeka: Did you let me visit my father twice a month?

Me: Thandeka please don't talk.

She shook her head and hugged Alondwe. She kissed her forehead.

Thandeka: I love you my baby.

Alondwe: I love you too mom.

I hugged her too and I held her hand. And we went to the reception wedding. I walked down the aisle with her. My daughter was very beautiful and I just didn't want to let her go. Her husband met us halfway.

Me: (Whispering to her) Remember you can always come back home.

She looked at me and I smiled. Her husband took her away from me. It was like he was saying I won't see her again. It wasn't an easy moment for me. But I let her go. I told the boy to look after her. Then the ceremony began. It was a beautiful ceremony for everyone but I wasn't too happy. My daughter just left us. She was no longer using my surname now. She was using a surname of another man. All those things didn't sit well with me.

Thandeka: Don't worry, I know it's painful but she'll be fine my love.

I nodded and we celebrated their love. It made me remember how important love is in our lives.

After the ceremony we were at our house. It was Me and my wife. Mr and Mrs Moloji.

Alondwe and her husband. Everyone else was asleep.

Me: So Thapelo and Alondwe my wife and started a tradition of our own. That every month of our anniversary we exchange salaries. I take hers and she takes mine. We would like to pass this tradition to you. It's just to show that we really mean that what mine is yours and what is yours is mine.

Alondwe and Thapelo looked at each other and smiled.

Them: We love it.

Mrs Moloji: It's really beautiful.

Mr Moloi: We should also adopt the tradition.

Mrs Moloi: Yes we should.

Thandeka: That's nice. So since we are family now. We thought a good way to start this tradition will be if we do it. I have the names of the six of us. Each one of us will pick a name and you'll get the salary of the person you have picked on January. Is everyone in?

Them: Yes!

I put the names down. They were folded and everyone picked a name. They were supposed to tell that who got who so that month end we can send them reminders. Good thing was that everyone's pay day was month end not the 15th.

Mrs Moloi: Mmm. I got the salary of Doctor Moloi. That's Alondwe.

Alondwe: Eish that will be my first salary. (everyone laughed) Well I got the salary of the Principal. My mother in-law.

Mrs Moloi: Relax you'll enjoy it. (We laughed)

Thapelo: I got the salary of an Architect. My mother in-law.

We didn't want to say her real job. Thandeka was now earning more than she earned as an architect. It wasn't like the first time when she started working with Muzi. We decided that if someone who got her salary wasn't me we won't give him or her the real amount that she earns. We didn't want them asking questions. Because it's quite easy these days to find out how much money someone earns. Specially on those well known careers. Even though Google doesn't give you the exact amount but the estimation is there. And the estimation for an architect salary was a figures less than my wife's salary. And sometimes it depends on the type of project that they did.

Thandeka: Well I got the salary of the Judge. Mr Moloi. Woah what an honour.

Everyone laughed.

Mr Moloi: I got the salary of an accountant. Mr Ndunakazi. I don't know if it will also include the salary of your position in your company.

We laughed.

Me: I am afraid it won't.

Mrs Moloi: That's unfair hey.

Mr Moloi: say that again my love.

Me: Sorry hey. I am getting the salary of the surveyor. My son in-law Thapelo.

We all clapped hands. Thandeka wrote down who got who. We then hand shake and hugged each other. This was a good start for us all.....

Alondwe Moloi....

That year ended. Thapelo did pay for my sessions with Sbahle and she was really helping me. She was very great at her job. She helped me a lot even with things that I thought didn't matter. Things that I thought won't affect my life and my marriage. She made you see everything on a bigger picture and actually believe that you can make everything work. With all the help that she was giving me. I was passing it to my husband. In a different method. Together with her we invented a method that we were going to use without making Thapelo realise that he is on therapy. The method included watching movies related to the things we went through and after the movie. We would just randomly discuss the movie. I would say the things that Sbahle say to me and that was healing. There were different things that I did. And he was different. I was just happy. I focused on my studies without worrying that I have to bear a kid soon. I was just enjoying my husband and we promised each other to enjoy ourselves together before we bring a little baby on earth and before Sphephile comes to live with us full time. That year we went to Nigeria for our honeymoon. I won't lie I was really mad when Thapelo said we are going there. Because according to me Nigeria was just an ugly place. You know their movies hey. But he proved me wrong the place was beautiful and

I really enjoyed myself there. I had the best time with Thapelo. My father in-law and his brother made peace. They were hating each other because their mothers were married to their father. Then the first wife killed the second wife because she wanted all the money for herself and her children after their husband died. So the children also ended up hating each other. Thapelo's father worked really hard to get where he was. December holidays we spent the Christmas together as a family. My son was also there. Well like I said my mother in-law was just putting on a front. She didn't really like me. And I didn't like her either so we agreed that we will tolerate each other for Thapelo's sake and the sake of peace. Mpendulo had a beautiful baby boy. His name was Mlamuli Christian. Well there is a story behind his first name. Him and his girlfriend had a very huge fight on the two last months of their pregnancy. They ended up not talking to each other. They would communicate through us until the baby arrived. They put everything behind them so they named him Mlamuli.

My final year was pretty hectic. I didn't think I was going to pass but hey God works in mysterious ways. I passed and I was going to graduate the following year. I was really proud of myself. And without my husband and my family's support I don't think I was going to make it. June that year. We went to Egypt with Sphephile. I was grateful that Thapelo was keeping his promise that he made to me of traveling the world with me. I thought he was going to refuse and change maybe say he doesn't have money but he didn't change. It was just beautiful. And being with the two of them was just precious. They were just two buddies. It made me happy to see them get along. My parents did the wedding for me and I was very happy. It was a beautiful day and even though they made me cry in the morning I didn't mind. It was just perfect. I won't lie I was really angry that my mother in-law was getting my first salary and I was getting her salary. It wasn't cute but hey I enjoyed her money shame. It was March. Thapelo and I were at the aeroplane back home. The previous day was Sphephile's birthday. He was turning 8 years old. He was still living with his father. I just wanted to settle down at work and take him the following year. Thapelo wanted us to buy a penthouse and I didn't like the idea. I wanted a house, with a beautiful yard for our kids to play around and have fun. Not a penthouse. Yes they are beautiful and big but not like houses.

Thapelo: You will like the idea of the penthouse you will see.

I didn't say anything. I just cried. He was making me angry. I was a month and a week pregnant and I haven't told him. I was really scared and Sbahle was out of the country the whole month. She was going to come back mid March. I told my gynecologist what happened the last time because I didn't want Thapelo to be excited about the baby and loose the baby in the end. I couldn't even reach Sbahle for an advice. It's been a week since I learned that I was pregnant. The Doctor told me that I must tell him after my first trimester. Chances were low for me to loose the baby after my first trimester. It was my Doctor who advised me not to tell him yet because he was going to be very excited about it. And put pressure on me about how much we need the penthouse that I don't want. And any pressure and stress wasn't good for me. I had to take everything easy because of anxiety. There were no records of my pregnancy in our apartment. I couldn't wait to tell him. I just wished that it was after three months already. And he was very annoying sometimes. And I hated it. I didn't know if I was going to be able to keep my **symptoms** from him for too long. At least I wasn't vomiting. But I had some sicknesses of fatigue. And being sleepy.

Thapelo: You're crying because of the penthouse?

Me: I don't want a penthouse. I want a house. Why don't you understand.

Thapelo: So you're crying? You're crying?

Me: Mxm. I need the bathroom.

I stood up and I went to the bathroom. And I cried. I didn't want a penthouse. I wanted a house. I wanted him to understand that but Mloi wasn't about to understand. A penthouse

was just boring! I finished up, washed my hands and face then I went back to my seat. Thapelo had his earphones on. I sighed. I just needed him to shut up. He talked too much and I hated being with him everytime. I just wished we were on separate houses. I closed my eyes and took a nap.

I was woken up by a flight attendant. I rubbed my eyes and looked at her.

Her: Mam we have arrived at our destination.

Me: Huh? Where is my husband?

Her: Your husband? Everyone has left the aeroplane mam. It's just us and you.

Me: Wow!

I stood up and my two bags were there. I couldn't believe this, he just left me like that? Just like that?

Me: This man is a bitch! And if I don't tell him tonight that he is a bitch I will never get a chance to tell him.

Her: I think that's a bit harsh mam.

Me: Harsh? So it's sweet that he left me here?

Her: No.

Me: Then he's going to know how harsh is like. Tsk!

I left. I took my phone and switched it back on. I requested an uber. It didn't take long and it was just where I was. My anger was boiling inside. How can Thapelo do this mara huh? I called Nkululeko. Maybe she was going to calm me down.

Nkulu: How was the party baby?

Me: Just forget the party. The man just left me on the aeroplane sleeping. He's gone.

Nkulu: (laughing) He did what?

Me: Ngiyalingwa Nkululeko. Ngiyalingwa.

Nkulu: Ah man. Maybe you didn't want to wake up too. You know you love sleeping.

Me: I am light sleeper (except when my pregnant. Maybe he did wake me up. I thought to myself.). Ah. You're making things worse. Bye.

I hung up the call. I paid the driver then I went inside the building. I took a lift to our apartment.

Thapelo was on the couch with food. It was kind of a lot of food. He looked at me, then back to his TV.

Me: You left me on the aeroplane sleeping.

Thapelo: Yeah. So?

Hawe ma! Guys the nerve he had. He didn't even deny it. He just didn't.

Me: How can you possibly do that to me. What if I got lost? Were you going to be happy?

Thapelo: Yes. I was going to marry another woman. Who won't always cry when I am talking to her. Being a whiny is not attractive anymore.

Me: Screw you Thapelo. Screw you!

Thapelo: Screw you too. Look you are already crying.

I took my bags and I went to our bedroom. I didn't want to cry anymore. I didn't want to be whiny. What if he marries someone else for real. Mxm he won't do that though. I changed my clothes and I went to make cereals for myself. I sat next to him.

Thapelo: Cereals are for breakfast.

Me: I didn't ask.

Thapelo: Tell me, did you buy groceries this month?

Me: Yes I did. You refused to go with me remember?

Thapelo: That's not the point. You must take your money and buy groceries again. You buy groceries and I pay the bills but there is no enough food.

Me: How can we have enough food if you eat like a pig Thapelo?

Thapelo: Twinkie. I eat like a pig?

Me: Yes. Can't you see that?

Thapelo: Don't sit next to me. Move. Sit on that couch.

Me: I don't mind. You don't smell good anyway. You smell like a pig.

I giggled and stood up. He was angry. I just sat on the other couch. I wanted to laugh at him. I got him good!

Thapelo: Tomorrow you will buy another groceries.

Me: With what money? My salary is just puff gone. Just like that.

Thapelo: That is not my problem. I want more food.

Mxm I stood up and pour milk on the dish with his meat and wors. He looked at me. I smiled.

Thapelo: Run Alondwe. Run and make sure that I don't catch you. Run.

I dropped the bowl and I ran. He followed me, running after me. I misleded him like I was going to our bedroom but I changed and went to the guest bedroom. I locked the door and laughed. Oh Lord it was fun....

Kimberly Smith.....

That year ended. To save myself from my husband wanting to see me wearing the earrings he bought. I just a new earrings for myself. They were the same as the one he bought for me. I saw relief on his face when he saw them. I kept a low profile but I didn't want to wait longer. Then it occurred to me that if I don't want to loose my husband. I had to wait longer. I didn't need Themba's friends anymore. I was going to do this alone. I told them I don't want revenge anymore. I didn't trust them. Firstly I just wanted to send her messages then try and speak to her. Reason with her. If she refused I was going to ask her husband for help. But my aim was to make her scared first. The year has been good to me and my family. On family day we went to see Themba in prison.

Uyathandwa was also there. They were doing role plays and showing us activities that they were engaged in prison. I must say prison is a better place now because there is education provided inside and a lot of programmes for inmates. But still I wasn't getting used to the idea of seeing my husband in a prison suit. I just wanted him out of that place. He belonged at home with us not somewhere else where we don't see him everyday. My daughter was growing pretty fast. She was beautiful and very bubbly. Looking at her I just thought about how her sister was going to be. She was going to be a good sister that my daughter was going to look up to. Sisipho was a thin short baby girl that's why her father didn't struggle with picking her up like a baby. That year she was 15 years old doing grade 10. At the beginning of the year she carried herself like a child but mid year all that changed. It was a challenging year for me because adolescent stage was just taking over. And she was very Chicky. But I did manage.

The second year began. And I was doing very well in college. The following year I was going to finish. I was very excited and proud of myself. Themba was also proud. That year was a busy year for me.

And Sisipho was doing grade 11. She wanted more help with her studies but I did try my best to be a good mother to her. But as it ended I was grateful that I could see the light from afar. Soon it was going to shine. December holidays my daughter and I went to visit my parents. We had a great time there. Themba wanted us to go there so that we can have a normal Christmas and be happy. And really we were happy. Sisipho was going to do grade 12. Themba told me to bring her to him. He wanted to speak to her as she was going to start doing grade 12. They hugged each other.

Sisipho: I can never get used to my father with no beard. The beard looked really good on you.

Themba: Thank you baby. As soon as I get out of this place I will have my beard again.

Sisipho: That will be perfect.

Themba: I am really proud of you Sisipho. You're a big girl now and soon you'll be leaving us for university.

Sisipho: It was going to be much easier if my sister was still here dad.

Themba: I know baby. I know. I want you to focus on your studies. This is your final year in high school. And you must excel if you want to go to university. There is no time for going out with friends and spending my money on clothes.

Sisipho: But dad –

Themba: No but dad. Listen to me. And do what I say. Boys? You will see them when you finish studying. They are going nowhere baby. There is no rush. I don't want to see you ending up being nothing in your life do you understand?

Sisipho: Yes dad. I understand.

Themba: I love you and I wish you all the best in life.

Sisipho: Thanks. Did my brother tell you that he bought me new sneakers and two pair of jeans.

Themba: No. He didn't but that's nice.

Sisipho: It's very nice that he's working now and his daughter is much bigger now.

Themba: Yeah I saw her. She's beautiful, exactly like your sister.

Sisipho: Yeah. She's the young Missy.

Themba smiled and we had conversation until it was time for us to leave. We shared our good-byes and we left.

The following couple of weeks were busy. Sisipho had went back to school and I have registered for the semester. It was time to work again. I was in the library getting some books. Some guy we go to the same class with came to me.

Siya: Hey Kim, can we talk?

Me: What do you want?

Siya: Can I take you out on a date?

Me: Isn't this a ring? Or it means nothing to you?

Siya: Come on. I know that your husband is in prison. You must be lonely. And I can keep you company.

He said holding me and trying to kiss me. I pushed him and slapped him. We were in between the book shelves. There weren't many students around.

Me: I will kick your balls. Cut them off and feed them to the dogs you moron. Don't you dare mess with me. I walk the streets without my heart, I leave the heart in my bedroom. I wore it for my husband and daughter. So I have no heart for dogs like you. Please stay away from me if you know what's best for your health. Tsk!

I left the fucking books and I went to my car. I felt so disrespected by that boy. Tsk! My phone rang.

Themba was calling. I answered.

Me: Baby?

Themba: Hey my love how are you?

Me: I am good baby and you?

Themba: I am fine but I miss you. Can you come over tonight. I will organise it.

Me: Uhm.. my love I am sorry. I have some assignments to finish off. I can come tomorrow.

Themba: Alright. Tomorrow it is then, and I need you to help me work on my project that I am going to start here in prison.

Me: I alright baby. I will be there. I love you.

Themba: I love you too Mrs Smith. Send my love to our daughter.

Me: I will do.

I hung up the call. I had no assignments. I was just angry and I didn't want to go and see him while I was angry. This anger made me wish that he was with me. I took the burner phone and charged it in my car. After a few minutes. It was on. I sent a text message to Thandeka.

"Miss me? Or you thought I died? No I am still here and things are about to get ugly Mrs Ndunakazi

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

It was a new year. Month end of March my wife and I were going out to our dinner date. I was downstairs waiting for she was taking forever to get ready. I was impatient. Thandeka can make you cancel everything because you'll have to wait for her taking her time to get ready.

Sphephile: Take a chill pill Mkhulu. She will take another hour.

Me: Ayi Ayi.

Kiara: Yini ichill pill? (What is a chill pill)

Sphephile didn't answer her. He just continued watching TV like he didn't speak about a chill pill.

Alupheli: Sphephile answer her.

Sphephile: Chill pill is for adults not kids.

Mom: Are you an adult Sphephile?

Sphephile: Yes uncle Alupheli said I am old now. I am eight years old now.

Mesuli: He was kidding. You're just a kid.

Alupheli: You're supposed to be studying for first term exams. Not speaking here with us.

Mesuli: It's Friday so please chill.

Kiara: Grandpa what is a chill?

Alupheli: Call your father and ask him.

Me: Are you her grandfather?

Alupheli: No. I am not.

Me: Then don't answer when she's not talking to you

Sphephile: Eish sorry Malume.

Me: To chill baby ukwehlisa umoya phansi.

Sphephile: That is to calm down.

They all laughed. I didn't. I looked at him.

Me: She asked you and you didn't answer so please zip your mouth.

They laughed again. My wife came downstairs. She was beautiful but I wasn't going to complement her. I didn't like the fact that I had to wait that long. The boys whistled and she smiled. Kiara clapped her hands.

Kiara: You look beautiful Gogo. Mncwa.

She stood up and went to kiss her. Thandeka bend over and kissed her.

Alupheli: Yeah umuhle madam.

Thandeka: Thank you.

I took my keys and headed to the door.

Sphephile: Awu Mkhulu. No compliments for grandma?

Me: Watch TV Sphephile.

I went out of the house and I started the car. Thandeka followed after me. I drove off once she was inside.

Thandeka: Like serious you don't notice that I went an extra mile tonight?

Me: Waiting for six hours made me blind. So I can't complement your beauty because I am blind.

She didn't say anything further. We made it to the restaurant. We ordered drinks while waiting for food. We were just quiet.

Thandeka: You know we should have just stayed at home and had dinner with them. I am sure their dinner is way better than this one.

Me: Yeah. I bet it's better than this one.

She swallowed hard and looked aside. I sighed and held her hands.

Me: Okay look at me.

She turned and looked at me.

Me: You're more beautiful tonight and you smell really sweet, different and lovely.

Thandeka: Ah thanks. You noticed. I wanted you to notice my smell too. I bought a new perfume with your bank card.

Me: Ah. I should have known that you used my bank card. I wonder what happened to your bank card? It is frozen?

Thandeka: Come on don't you like my smell?

Me: Okay. I love it. You smell like sweets, I wish I can put you inside my mouth so that I can taste your sweetness.

She giggled and blushed, looking down. She was so pretty and she was my perfection.

Me: Look phela baby. I want to tell you something.

Thandeka: Okay. I am listening.

Me: I love you so much my wife.

Thandeka: Ah. I love you too honey bear.

I kissed the back of her hands. Our dinner was served and we ate while having a conversation. It was just relaxing. A dinner table without the kids just us alone.

After our dinner date, Thandeka drove us back home. I was too full to drive. We arrived at home and surprisingly the kids were still watching TV. It was after ten.

Me: Why are you guys still here?

Kiara: We are watching TV Mkhulu.

Thandeka: Kiara. It's late now go to bed.

Kiara: No. I am still watching TV. I am not sleepy.

Sphephile: I gave her your chocolate Gogo. I didn't want her to sleep.

Me: You have the courage to tell us.

Sphephile: In the morning when we talk about this movie she was going cry for me and blame me that I allowed her to sleep while there was a hot movie on TV.

Kiara: Yes he's right. I was going to cry in the morning.

Me: Go to bed now. All of you.

Them: No.

Thandeka and I looked at each other.

Thandeka: Okay. We are switching off the TV.

Alupheli: It's just a cartoon movie mom and dad. It's for kids just let us watch, tomorrow is Saturday.

Thandeka: Yeah and the three of you have a garden to make. My flowers are dying because of unwanted plants.

Mesuli: I am studying tomorrow. I won't have time.

Sphephile: Yes. Uncle Alupheli and I have a project to complete.

Alupheli: Shuthi usuyoncenga ku Kiara.

Kiara: No. I can't I have a date with daddy tomorrow.

They all laughed. They were just making fun of us.

Me: And to think we pay for this TV.

Thandeka: Let's go to our room. Next month we are not paying.

Sphephile: Daily bread. (they laughed)

Kiara: Good night grandma and grandpa.

Us: Goodnight Kia.

Others: Good night.

Us: Good night.

We went upstairs. Thandeka sat on the bed. I took off my shoes.

Thandeka: The last time I used my phone was during lunch time. Alondwe is no longer chatting with me. Ayi.

Me: She's busy maybe.

I went to the bathroom and I left my wife undressing herself while reading her texts. I did my business, washed my hands and I went back to the bedroom. Thandeka was on her feet looking at her phone. I went to her. I took her phone and read the message. It was from the person who was threatening her.

Me: You need to trace this Thandeka.

Thandeka: I thought it was over. That first text was just a prank.

Me: This person is playing with fire. You must show this to your IT department.  
Thandeka: This is a blocked user, this person is using a burner phone obviously. It might take forever to trace them. I think they only switch it on when sending threats.  
Me: Maybe it's one of those bad guys you deal with. No I think you need to quit this job.  
Thandeka: What? I can't just quit my job because of this threat.  
Me: So what is important to you? Your safety or your life Thandeka?  
Thandeka: My safety is important but I won't be a coward and run away. That is not me. And I love my job.  
Me: Should you get hurt because of this job. I will never forgive you.  
Thandeka: You don't mean that.  
Me: Trust me I mean it. I think I will go and watch the movie with the kids too.  
Thandeka: Samkelo?  
I left. I went downstairs and I watched the movie too. It was way better than arguing.....

Alondwe Moloji....

Thapelo: Alondwe open the door.  
Me: No. What are you going to do to me?  
Thapelo: I want to use this milk on you.  
Me: No. I am not opening the door.  
I couldn't risk opening the door. What if he has the milk for real and he's going to pour it all on me. When a woman is pregnant. Her partner also gets hormonal sometimes. But some men don't. And Thapelo had his days but I understood that it was because of my pregnancy but he didn't understand my behaviour because he didn't know that I was pregnant. That was the part I hated about being pregnant, I was just an emotional bitch. Thapelo was worst but not everyday like me.  
Thapelo: You will sleep here tonight?  
Me: Yes alone.  
Thapelo: Okay. I am going out clubbing.  
Me: What? Over my dead body!  
I ran to the door and opened the door. He laughed.  
Thapelo: Run!  
I tried to close the door again but I was too late. He pushed back inside. I ran away from him. I was laughing. I tried climbing the bed but he held my hand. I fell on the bed but he didn't let go of my hand. My stomach was sore because I was laughing too hard. He was also laughing. Before I know it he was on top of me tickling me. I was laughing.  
Me: Stop.... Stop... Please. (He stopped) You're not a strongbow. Where is the milk?  
Thapelo: I got the milk here inside me.  
He said kissing me. I kissed him back. He took off my pyjamas and I did the same with him. I tried to speak while our lips were still locked.  
Me: I like your way of giving me the milk back. I will always pour milk on your meat.  
Thapelo: Do you realise that I was going to eat that meat all by myself.  
Me: And you say I didn't buy enough food.  
Thapelo was already inside me, moving in and out slowly and in circular motions.  
Thapelo: Yes you didn't. And I am going to give you slow motions for that.  
Me: I love slow motions. (singing) Take your time baby, slow motions.  
Thapelo: (laughing) Are you crying or singing?  
Me: I am doing both.  
Thapelo: Just shut up now.  
I smiled and he kissed me. We finished up everything and lay on our backs.  
Thapelo: Sorry for leaving you behind my little milky bar. But I don't like you when you are

crying.

Me: Why?

Thapelo: You're very ugly when you're crying. I just hate it. And you cry until you have mucus on your nose and that is just disgusting and annoying. It just makes me feel like I can just vomit. Agh! It's not a good sight. You are just too ugly when you are crying.

I looked at him and he wasn't joking. He was serious about everything that he was saying. I got off the bed. I took my pyjamas. I headed to the door.

Thapelo: You're crying again?

Me: Screw you!

I went to the bathroom in our bedroom. I went with my phone inside. I locked the door. I was really hurt. He said I am ugly? How can he say that to me. I am ugly. I called Nkululeko. She answered.

Me: Thapelo said I am ugly.

Nkulu: Wait are you crying?

Me: Of course I am crying. Were you going to laugh if he said it to you?

Nkulu: Alondwe is everything alright with you? What is going on?

Me: Nothing is going on. Bye.

I hung up the call. I sighed and held my tummy. I hated the fact that my hormones were all over the place and I couldn't control them. I didn't want Thapelo to figure it out before time. I spoke to my child.

Me: Baby... Please calm down.... Please baby I don't want to cry anymore.... I just want to have fun with you so please try to control yourself for us –

Thapelo banged the door.

Thapelo: Who are you talking to in there? Huh Alondwe?

Me: I am talking to myself.

Thapelo: Don't lie to me and please don't make me break this door. Who are you talking to?

Me: Myself honey.

Thapelo: Alondwe!

He banged the door again and I just laughed. I felt like laughing at him. He was jealous. I whispered "Daddy is jealous". I laughed once more. I heard his footsteps walking away. I stood up and washed my face. I was just cute. Thapelo was lying. I wasn't ugly. My phone rang. Nkululeko was calling. I answered.

Nkulu: When you were carrying Sphephile you we were always crying and complaining about things that Thapelo was saying to you. Are you pregnant?

Me: What? That's crazy. No I am not.

Nkulu: Are you sure?

Me: Love I am hundred percent sure.

Nkulu: Okay. Tell Thapelo that he must go to hell.

Me: (laughing) I will do. I love you.

Nkulu: I love you.

We hung up the call. I went to my bedroom and I just threw myself on the bed. I fell asleep immediately. I was woken up by water being poured on me. I jumped off my bed and Thapelo had that bowl with milk on his hands.

Me: Are you out of your mind?

Thapelo: I told you I will pour the milk on you.

Me: You're crazy! I am wet now.

Thapelo: Who were you talking to on the phone. You were calling him baby? Who was that?

Me: Who said it's a he?

Thapelo: Don't lie to me Alondwe.

Me: I am not lying to you.

Thapelo: Where is your phone?

He looked around and he searched for my phone. He found it, he unlocked it and went through it. He knew that I am not good at deleting things. I just let everything be. I don't have time to delete calls, texts, conversations, pictures and files. I just didn't spend time deleting. That's the one of the reasons I never cheated back then when we were dating because he was going to find out within a month. He smiled.

Thapelo: Okay. Sorry for pouring milk on you.

Me: So now I must sleep on a wet bed?

Thapelo: The bed is not that wet so relax.

Me: Mxm. Just get out of my face.

Thapelo: With pleasure.

He left. I screamed. Agh! I went to the bathroom to take a shower. I changed my pyjamas and I went to the guest bedroom to sleep. I wasn't going to sleep on the wet bed. Thapelo was going to sleep there alone. I locked the door and I went to sleep.

In the morning I woke up Thapelo's arms were around me. I shook him awake.

Thapelo: Alondwe please I don't want to play today. I just want to sleep.

Me: How did you get in here?

Thapelo: I broke the door, can we sleep now?

Me: I didn't want to sleep with you.

Thapelo: Okay I get it but you did anyway. Now please leave me alone.

I got off the bed. I felt dizzy. I held the head board for balance. I looked at Thapelo. He was sleeping. I kneeled and used my knees to leave the bedroom. I needed the bathroom. When I was outside the bedroom. I used the wall and I walked slowly to our bathroom. I didn't like the other bathroom that wasn't in the bedroom. I made it to the bathroom and I sat on seat. I did my business. I sighed. I was feeling weak. I washed my face trying to calm myself. I wasn't going to make it back to the guest bedroom I just slept on our bed. Thapelo woke me up while I was still sleeping so peaceful.

Me: Please don't disturb me.

Thapelo: There's church remember?

Me: I am not going to church. I am not feeling so great. I just need to sleep.

Thapelo: What is wrong Alondwe?

Me: I think it must be the running around that I did yesterday. I am tired.

Thapelo: That's being weak. Okay. I will stay at home and look after you. What do you need?

Me: For now I want to sleep and when I wake up. I will need breakfast. Just cereals. And you'll have to bath me.

Thapelo: Okay. On second thought I am going to church. Just sleep.

Me: What a husband you are.

Thapelo: I love you though.

I really needed him to stay with me that day but I wasn't going to ask him to. I just went back to sleep. When I woke up I was even weaker. I didn't want to risk anything I was going to stay in bed and wait for Thapelo to come home. I stayed in bed and when I looked at the time it was way passed after church. Maybe he was inside the house. I called his name and he didn't respond. So obviously he wasn't inside the house. I called him more than three times but he wasn't answering his phone. I just had to use my butts to go to the bathroom. I didn't want to risk anything. This baby was so special to me and I was going to protect it by all means. I made it to the toilet seat. I finished and I slowly walked to the bath tub. I took off my pyjamas and I went inside the tub. I mixed the water while I was inside the tub. I took the bath sponge and I bathed myself. When I was done I was scared to get out of the tub. What if I slip because I am wet and I will fall on the floor. I will never forgive myself if something can happen to my baby. I just sat on the tub hoping that Thapelo was going to come back

home soon. My water went cold, I drained them and I sat on the empty tub. This wasn't life. Why was I weak? Why?

Thapelo: Alondwe what's going on why are you on the empty tub naked?

Me: I told you to stay home with me and look after me but you refused. I am feeling weak.

Thapelo: I thought it was one of your jokes.

Me: And my calls were one of my jokes too?

Thapelo: I am sorry, we were watching soccer.

I didn't say anything. Soccer was more important than me. He came to me and he picked me up. He walked me back to the bedroom. He put me on the bed and he took the dry towel.

Me: I will dry myself.

Thapelo: But I said I am sorry for not being here. I am here now and we will go to see the Doctor together tomorrow.

Me: I will dry myself.

He gave me the towel and I dried my body. He looked at me for a few minutes then he left the room. I just had to tell myself that I can do it. I breathed in and I walked slowly to my dressing table. I got there, I sat on the chair and I moisturised my body. I finished up and I slowly went to my pyjamas. I wore them. I almost fell when wearing the long pyjama pants but I held the wardrobe door for balance. I hated feeling weak and useless. And Thapelo just walk out on me. He's good at that, just walking out when he doesn't get his way. I wanted to change the bed covers. I called Thapelo and he came to the bedroom.

Me: Please change the bed covers for me.

Thapelo: Now you need my help?

Me: Thapelo if you don't want to be here just say it. When you were sick last year. I never walked out on you even when you were throwing tantrums on me. But I never walked out but you have the balls to walk out on me and give me attitude on top of that while I am sick. You have the nerve.

He didn't say anything. He changed the bed covers. I sat down until he was done. He picked me up and put me inside the bed covers.

Thapelo: What do you want to eat?

Me: A cup of soup will be fine for me.

He nodded and left. I closed my eyes. Just trying to breath in and out. He came back later with food and a cup of soup. I took the soup I didn't even want to look at the food. I didn't have much appetite. This first trimester was a bitch who has no heart.

Thapelo: No. You will eat first then drink soup.

Me: I don't want to eat. I don't have appetite.

Thapelo: It's alright I will feed you.

Me: No. The soup is fine for me.

Thapelo: How on do you think you can gain strength if you don't eat. Do you want to die here?

Me: Of course I don't want to die. But you can't force food into my system. I don't need it. I need soup.

He took the tray and left. I drank the soup and I felt much better. Thapelo came back and joined me inside the bed. I was sleeping. He held me tight.

Thapelo: What's wrong with you?

Me: I don't know.

Thapelo: I think you need laxatives.

Me: Maybe. Can you hold me until I sleep.

Thapelo: Anything for the Queen.

I smiled and closed my eyes.

The following day Thapelo insisted we go to the Doctor so I suggested my Doctor who knew

what was wrong with me. The Doctor knew exactly what to say without revealing that I was pregnant. Days went by and Sbahle was back in town. I had an appointment with her at 1pm. I was in my office checking my bank balance, I had to buy more groceries because they were serious running out. I wasn't eating regularly and Thapelo was eating for all of us but he denied it. My bank balance was just four figures. I didn't understand this. What was happening with my money. I tried to think of the things I bought but it was just groceries. I was really trying to figure out what was wrong. But I just didn't know. I took a cab to Sbahle's office. It was almost 1. I arrived there in time and the receptionist let me through. We greeted each other and we sat down.

Sbahle: Shall we continue or you have something different today?

Me: It's like you read minds. I do have something that's happening. Well last month was February and it was my first time using my salary. My husband and I agreed that he will pay for the apartment bills and other things and I will buy our groceries only. He just wanted me to enjoy being a worker and getting paid for a while before I start helping him out. But I don't enjoy it because I don't see where my money went. I just don't know where I spent it. I remember debating with myself whether to withdraw it all or not. But I didn't. I used the card to buy groceries. I don't even for my accounts at the clothing stores but I am left with four figures balance how can that happen?

Sbahle: You're a Christian right?

Me: Yes I am.

Sbahle: What happened to your January salary you spent it well?

Me: No I transferred it to my mother in-law. It's a family tradition thing. We exchange salaries.

Sbahle: So your mother in-law who doesn't like you had your money on her hands?

Me: Yeah.

Sbahle: Do you pay tithe at your church?

Me: No I don't.

Sbahle: Does your husband pay it?

Me: No he doesn't.

Sbahle: If you are a Christian couples who believe in Jesus Christ, God and the Holy spirit. It is important that you pay tithe. There are spirits that eat at your money. And by paying tithe you are protecting your finances, your food, your house, your family and your marriage. You name the rest. It's just ten percent of your salary. It's not too much. Take tithe as a spiritual insurance policy for your family. You gave your money to someone who doesn't like you and someone who strongly believes in witchcraft and traditional healers powers. So you don't know what she did to your money. That was your whole salary. So next time be careful.

Me: Mmm. Okay. So what should I do?

Sbahle: Talk to your husband about paying tithe. If he doesn't want to, it's okay you can pay it alone. Then you'll see that will break whatever curse they put on your money. It's just exactly ten percent not less not more.

Me: Sbahle thanks. I will do it. Oh God that woman.

Sbahle: Just don't show her that you know something.

Before I could answer her, I got an emergency pager from work. I just stood up.

Me: I hate to do this but that is work.

Sbahle: I understand Doctor. Let me drive you.

I thanked her and we left. She drove me straight to the hospital.

We arrived at the hospital and I rushed to my office. Only to find Thapelo behind my desk paging the emergency for me. I literally clicked my tongue. He looked at me and smiled. I didn't smile back. It was one of those days where I don't want to see his him. There was another man with him in my office.

Thapelo: They let me in and I needed you urgently.

Me: I just had a half session with my Doctor thinking it's an emergency Kanti it's you. What do you want?

Thapelo: It's alright. I pay for those anyway. I want a Penthouse. This guy is going to help us choose the best of the best.

Me: Which part of I don't want a penthouse don't you understand.

Guy: Mam.

Me: Shhh. Leave us I want to speak to him. (He left)

Thapelo: What is wrong with you?

Me: I don't want to raise our kids on a penthouse.

Thapelo: Oh come on the kids will love it.

Me: If you buy it you will live there alone and I am not contributing. I on the other hand will live on the house with our children.

Thapelo: That's not a bad idea. Let me be on it.

Me: What? No!

Thapelo: I love you.

He kissed me and left. I called his name but he didn't come back. Oh dear God I can't do this. He's too much now

Kimberly Smith....

I made some calls and tried to keep tabs on Thandeka but there was something off about her workplace. The place that she was working at the last time when I called they said she doesn't work there anymore. I didn't know how I was going to get her new work place details. I tried to call them again. The lady answered. She said all that greetings people from companies say.

Me: I am Mrs Luthuli, an old friend of Thandeka Ndunakazi. The last time I checked she was working there?

Her: Yes she was working here but now. She resigned years ago.

Me: Oh do you know her new work place. I really need to contact her. I have been out of the country for too long.

Her: We don't have the details of her new work place and even if we had them. We are not allowed to give people personal information.

Me: But I am desperate here. I really need to see her.

Her: I am sorry but I can't help you.

I hung up the call and clicked my tongue. That girl was just useless. I sighed. Maybe I should just call her house and ask for it. Maybe a kid will answer since it's Saturday. But I couldn't use my house phone. I took my car keys and I drove to the nearest by telephone. I dialed the number and the phone rang. A boy answered.

Boy: Ndunakazi residence, Alupheli speaking how can I help you?

Me: Hey Alupheli. This is your mother's old friend. I need your mother. Do you know where she works.

Alupheli: What's your name?

I tried to remember the name of Thandeka's high school friend. I looked through her Facebook account from high school till now. I wanted to learn more about her.

Me: I am Lizeka Mfeyane.

Alupheli: Well mom has one friend. And that friend is a man. Ain't you a woman?

Me: Yes I am but your mom was my friend in high school. Please help I really need to see her.

Alupheli: I don't know where mom works, all I know is that she draws buildings for a living and even if I knew where she works I wasn't going to tell you. You're a stranger.

Me: I am not a stranger I –

Alupheli: Yeah lady I heard you the first time. You're her old friend. Mom is not here. Do you want to speak to her husband?

Me: No. It's fine. I will try some other ways to find her.

Alupheli: Good luck with that bye.

He hung up the call. So much trouble for nothing. Agh! That boy had attitude. Tsk! I drove back to my house. On her Facebook page her workplace was the previous place that I called. It was just dead end. I had to go to Durban that was my only option. I knew where her house was so I was going to start there in the morning and follow her until she gets to her workplace.

I needed something valid that I was going to give Themba. I don't think I was going to be in Durban for a day. But first I needed to ask someone who was going to look after my daughter. I called the mother of her friend. Mrs Nkosi. She answered.

Mrs Nkosi: Kimberly?

Me: Hey Pretty how are you?

Mrs Nkosi: I am fine and you?

Me: I am good. But I need your help.

Mrs Nkosi: I am listening.

Me: We have to go on trip to Johannesburg. We are going to visit a certain places there and municipalities. So can Sisi stay with Mimi for those few days please.

Mrs Nkosi: You don't have to ask dear. They are friends so it's no problem.

Me: Thank you so much.

Mrs Nkosi: My pleasure.

I hung up the call. Now I needed to speak to my daughter. I went to her room. She was busy studying. I sat on her bed. She looked at me.

Sisipho: What's going on mom?

Me: I need you to go and stay with Mimi for three days. I will be going to Johannesburg.

Sisipho: Oh alright. Did you speak to her mom?

Me: Yes I did and she agreed.

Sisipho: But mom you should have asked her to come here. We were going to manage together.

Me: No. I don't trust that. You want to invite a bunch of your friends from your school to come in my house. Sorry.

She didn't say anything. She just continued studying. I knew she was angry but I wasn't going to allow that to happen. Never!

I have finalised everything and I had the fake college letter to show to my husband just to support me. I was with him and he was reading the letter.

Themba: This is a great opportunity for you as students. It's great.

Me: Yeah. It's really great.

Themba: You'll get to network with other people. And actually see the world of the workplace.

Me: Yes.

Themba: So Sisipho will go to Mimi's house?

Me; Yes. Can you believe she wanted to trick me into letting her and Mimi be on the house alone.

Themba: Don't you dare allow that. It doesn't sound good. Teenagers alone in our house. No.

Me: Yeah I didn't agree. And she's still angry.

Themba: Ah. She'll suck it up.

My phone rang. It was unsaved number. Themba allowed me to take it.

Me: Kimberly Smith speaking hello?

Siya: Hey Kim. It's Siya here baby.

Me: Oh for fuck sake where did you get my number?

Siya: I am a genius. Computer is my second best thing. And tracing you was easy.

Me: You're a stalker. My husband is right here next to me. Do you want to talk to him maybe repeat your words again?

Siya: What? No!

He hung up the call. I laughed and shook my head. Maybe I can use him to track down Thandeka. But no I won't do that. I don't need people.

Themba: Who was that?

Me: Just a boy in my class who has a crush on me.

Themba: He better not –

Me: Relax I got this. You're enough for me.

I said, he smiled and I kissed him.

Thursday afternoon I was on the cab to the airport. I had everything I needed with me. I was going to buy a gun eMlazi just for protection. I didn't know what I was dealing with so I had to be ready for anything. Thandeka has a cold heart I saw that when she put my husband in jail. I wasn't going to be soft on her. I got a call from Mrs Nkosi. I answered.

Me: Is everything alright?

Mrs Nkosi: Please hurry back home. Sisipho is having some reactions I don't know. I think she's sick. Please come back.

I hung up the call. Clicked my tongue and I told the driver to drive back. This was my daughter and she had to come first in everything. Agh but my plans. Tsk.....

Samkelo Ndunakazi...

In the morning, we were having breakfast. The kids were speaking about the movie that they were watching last night. Kiara was talking too. She was really excited to talk too. They always watch movies without her and she'll have nothing to talk about in the morning. That made her sad. Her father walked in while they were talking.

Mesuli: Kiara someone is home.

Kiara: That's definitely my daddy.

Sphephile helped her get off the chair. She ran towards her dad shouting "Daddy" she reminded me how excited Alondwe use to be when she sees me at her younger age. Children are just beautiful.

Uyathandwa picked her up and hugged her.

Uyathandwa: I thought you'll be ready by now for our date. But you're still on your pyjamas.

Kiara: I told Gogo and Mkhulu last night but they didn't take me serious.

Thandeka: I thought she was just joking. I didn't think she was serious. Come let me fix you now.

Thandeka stood up and went to take her from her father. They went upstairs together. Uyathandwa sat down and greeted us.

Mesuli: You're leaving us behind?

Uyathandwa: It's a father and daughter date. You will never understand.

Sphephile: And you're supposed to be studying remember that's why you ditched grandma's garden.

Mesuli: For once will you not talk.

Alupheli: He must talk because mom is giving us money to do her garden.

Uyathandwa: What do you know about gardens?

Alupheli: Don't underestimate us. We know a lot of things. We are true definitions of men.

Mom: A man doesn't talk this much.

Alupheli: Grandma we won't be quiet like Mesuli. That can never happen.

Mesuli: You must go and join EFF on the parliament.

Alupheli: Well we are not that desperate.

My son can talk. That I give him!

Me: So how much is your mom paying you?

Sphephile: Uncle Alupheli told me that you will ask that Mkhulu. And I have the answer for you.

Me: Okay what is your answer?

Sphephile: Do we know how much you are getting paid for doing your job?

Me: No.

Sphephile: Then you don't have to know our wages.

They looked at each other.

Sphephile: Did I say that well?

Alupheli: I couldn't have said it better.

Uyathandwa: Dad I think someone must go to Johannesburg between these two. Alondwe could use some help maybe.

Alupheli: Don't be jealous.

Sphephile: Mom can take us both.

Mesuli: Weee after what you did in Miami I doubt that she will want to stay with the both of you.

They didn't say anything.

Mom: At least someone can put you in your place.

Still they didn't say anything. I shook my head. Miami was a deep topic. Thandeka and Kiara came back downstairs. She was looking beautiful like a little princess.

Kiara: Mkhulu I am beautiful?

Me: Yes baby. You're beautiful.

Kiara: Thank you. Daddy let's go. Bye everyone.

Us: Bye Kia.

They left. After breakfast Thandeka cleaned and she left. She was going to her work place to see how they can trace that person threatening her. I spent my day working on my study room. Mesuli was studying. Sphephile and Alupheli were in the garden. Mom was watching TV.

Later I went downstairs. Thandeka was back. She was in the kitchen cooking. She was talking with Alupheli who helping her cook.

Thandeka: You said it was a lady who called and asked about me today?

Alupheli: Yes. She said she's your old friend.

Thandeka: Did she say her name?

Alupheli: Yes it's Lizeka Mfeyane. I remember correctly.

Thandeka: What?

She banged the table. Alupheli got a fright.

Me: Calm down Thandeka.

Thandeka: No I can't.

Alupheli: Mom and dad is everything alright?

Me: Yes everything is fine. Go to Sphephile I will talk to your mother.

Alupheli: Okay. You don't have to panic mom. She said she just wants to see you.

Me: Alupheli I said go!

He listened and he left.

Thandeka: What does she want from me?

Me: I don't think it's her.

Thandeka: How do you know Samkelo?

Me: Think about it Lizeka is living her life with her family. What can she possibly want from you.

Maybe the person who wants you, used her name so that you'll go after Lizeka while she/he comes from the back for you. You won't even see it coming because all your attention will be on Lizeka. I am sure that it's not Lizeka.

Thandeka: You have a point. I don't know what to do. Tracing that user was just useless. It's a burner phone and they might have disposed it or switched it off after using it.

Me: That's why I say you need to quit your job.

Thandeka: I can't quit my job Samkelo specially not now. I can't just run and hide in this house while you and our kids are out there everyday. Don't you get it they might come after you if I run.

Me: So what should we do then? Huh? I don't want you to continue working there. Just stop.

Thandeka: No Samkelo. Are you even listening to me? Are you listening to me?

Me: I am listening to you but there's nothing we can do. We can't just go house to house and search for people with burner phones. Quitting is the best option we got.

Thandeka: And I am not taking that option.

Me: Because you don't care about us right? You don't care what will happen to you? And how that will affect us?

She didn't say anything.

Me: Answer me danmit!

Mom: Samkelo! Hhayi hhayi. There are kids in the house and you are busy shouting at each other. What's going on?

Me: Maybe your daughter in-law will tell you.

I went upstairs and left them. I was angry at everything. I shouldn't have agreed in the first place to let her work in that place. Now her life is danger with the monster that we don't even know. I took my phone and I searched for some available bodyguards service. I called the ones I found. I couldn't just risk everything. Thandeka is my wife and I couldn't just watch her be in danger without trying to protect her.

Me: I need a secret bodyguard. Who is going to follow my wife around just to make sure she's safe.

Lady: You don't want her to know that you have hired a gaurd for her?

Me: No I don't want her –

Thandeka took my phone from me. I didn't even hear her when she walked in. She spoke to the lady on the phone.

Thandeka: My husband won't be needing your services thanks.... And who are you to tell me that?...

You know nothing about my life so please. Tsk!

She hung up the call and put my phone down.

Thandeka: A bodyguard?

Me: What do you want me to do?

Thandeka: I was trained to protect myself. I can defend myself.

Me: Well if I knew who we are dealing with I was going to let you protect yourself but now I don't know just like you don't know.

Thandeka: Samkelo just relax please.

Me: You better relax too if something happens to you. You better.

Thandeka: Nothing will happen to me.

Me: Have it your way then if they continue threatening you. Don't bother telling me because you won't listen to me anyway.

Thandeka: So you're leaving me alone in this?

Me: It's your life I won't tell you what to do.

I wasn't going to tell her what to do. I am not that kind of a person who detects everything for my wife if she doesn't want to listen to me. It's her choice. I just had to hope that it won't hurt my children....

Shanell held Samantha's hand and looked at her.

Shanell: Mom before you go, could you please pass the remote.

Samantha: Surely honey, I will be back.

I grabbed her arm and went to a quiet room where we couldn't be heard. I closed the door.

Me: I think Shanell died long ago, we are still dealing with an evil spirit.

Samantha looked confused.

Samantha: What do you mean, the Bishop just told us everything is going to be fine and her soul is restored.

I whispered with a firm voice.

Me: do you remember when the Bishop told us that a baby was found inside a burnt house and that

baby was Shanell?

Samantha: Yes I remember.

Me: Well that happened 50 years ago, how do you explain that?

Samantha: Baby that's probably a different house that burnt down.

Me: it isn't I ...

She interrupted me before I could finish my sentence.

Samantha: No baby, that's the past I don't wanna go back there. Remember the Bishop said to be strong in spirit and believe in the Lord.

She kissed me and walked away to go chill with Shanell and the kids.

I didn't chill with them I went on my own business and sat alone in my room. Later at night it was time for us to sleep. She came to bed and joined me.

Samantha: are you angry at me because you didn't come for dinner.

Me: no I am fine.

She came closer to me.

Samantha: Are you sure?

Me: Yes I am sure.

She kissed me and said goodnight and we slept.

[03:00]

[A kid laughing running around the house]

Baby wake up!

I tried waking Samantha up numerous times until she woke up.

She started talking with a sleepy voice.

Samantha: Baby what is it?

Me: do you hear that?

She kept quiet a bit, to listen to the strange sounds around this time.

Samantha: Yes I hear them, it must be Nicole let me go and check.

Me: I am going with you.

Samantha: No baby I will be fine.

She got up and put on her sleepers that were lying next to her side of the bed and went. After 2 minutes the sounds stopped and she came back.

Samantha: it was Nicole playing around.

Me: isn't it strange?

Samantha: Kids will be kids baby and Shanell was still sleeping by the way.

I took her word for it. She got in the bed and I slept on my Right side facing her. After 15 minutes of trying to sleep, I felt something breathing at the back of me. You could tell it was close to me because I felt warm air breathing on my neck. I was hoping that I was dreaming or it was just a window that was opened and releasing hot air. I started hearing this thing breathing. It sounded like someone running out of air like an asthma attack. I was still trying to figure out what I should do. Should I look at the back of me or quickly jump out of the bed. I felt the blanket moving slightly and what bothered me is that Samantha was not moving at all. I started doing a count down in my head to look at the back of me.

5

4

3

2

....

I quickly turned my body to look at the back of me and there was nothing!.

I looked back and Samantha was still there sleeping. I then felt something on under the blanket, it kinda like touched my right leg. It felt cold and slimy, like how a snake would feel if it could touch you. I quickly jumped out of the bed and pulled the blanket away and still there was nothing.

Samantha woke up.

Samantha: baby what the hell!?

Me: shhhhhh

Samantha: don't shush me.

Me: There is something here.

Samantha kept quiet. The scratching sounds started and the kids started laughing again from the other room. Samantha began to become scared.

Me: Let me go check this time.

I got off my bed and walked barefooted out of my room. I got to the passage and it felt really cold, as if it was winter. I took few steps and I felt something walking behind me but when I looked back there was nothing. I got to the kids room and I found Shanell and Nicole standing at the door as if they were waiting for me.

Me: What are you guys doing up so early?

The kids kept quiet. I crouched and put my hands on Shanell's shoulders.

Me: Who are you?

Shanell looked at me and said with the most innocent voice.

Shanell: it's me daddy.

I started shaking her violently asking her again.

Me: Who are you!

Shanell started crying.

Shanell: it is me daddy! It is me daddy! It is me daddy!

Her voice got deeper and deeper Everytime she said it is me daddy, it got more base and sounded more evil. And then she said.

Shanell: I am Lucifer himself.

I took my hands off her and took steps back, I heard Samantha screaming in the other room. I quickly grabbed Nicole and went back to my room. When I got there Samantha wasn't around and no where to be seen. The lights suddenly went off. It was now pitch black. Nothing to see, only a little bit of light that the moon casted. I put Nicole down.

Me: baby don't move stay here while I look for my phone we need to get some light.

I started feeling with my hands to find where I've put my phone, I looked ontop of the bed and in the drawers and I couldn't find it. I got down my knees to search under the bed. I put my hand deep under the bed, hopefully I could feel my phone. I then felt something. It was sharp and wet, I started feeling it more wondering what it was. I then felt a slimy thing. It was wet too but it felt like it also had tumors. I realized i was touching some creature or animal's mouth. It was teeth and a tongue. I freaked out and stood up quickly and backed off. Nicole screamed.

Nicole: Pappa monster!

She pointed at the under the bed, I jumped ontop of the bed. And saw my phone there. I quickly grabbed it and got off and ran back to nicole. I started touching my phone trying to open it, it had pattern but the pattern kept on failing. The room was getting dark, and darker. I could feel that something was in here. I feared it might grab Nicole so I picked her up while using my other hand to try to unlock my phone. While I was trying to unlock my phone I something kept coming close and Nicole raised her hand and pointed as if she's trying to tell me this thing is now really close to me

Samkelo Ndunakazi.....

Things between Thandeka and I were just dull. I just let her do what she wants. I didn't want to fight. It's a waste of energy and time. We were meeting with the Audi car dealership. We were going to buy A3 for Alondwe. Her graduation was on Monday.

Thandeka: What colour should we choose? I think navy blue will be great.

Me: Yeah. It's great. We should take it.

Salesman: So you're taking Audi A3 navy blue?

Us: Yes.

Salesman: Can I have payslip for qoutation?

Me: We are paying cash. We won't pay installments.

Salesman: Oh please follow me.

We followed him. We have saved up more than enough for that car. We knew we were going to buy it for her and we didn't want to pay installments. We opened an account for it. We gave him the card. He did everything and we wrote it under our daughter's name. I was proud of her. I didn't think she was going to get her qualifications in time. But she did it. That was a very proud moment and buying her a car was just our way of expressing our joy to her. We wanted the car in Johannesburg on Monday. They were going to organise that. After everything we drove back home.

Thandeka: So you really don't want to know what is happening with that person who is threatening me?

Me: No I don't.

Thandeka: Our daughter is graduating on Monday. We will be like this until when?

Me: Until you quit your job. This does not stop us from being happy for our daughter.

Thandeka: Wow! I can't believe you.

Me: I can't believe you too.

We arrived at home and everyone was ready. We were going to Johannesburg. They all wanted to go and we didn't want to deny them that chance to see Alondwe after her graduation. They were going to skip school for her. We weren't going to go with them to the actual ceremony. My mom, my wife, Uyathandwa and I were going to the ceremony. We had to pay extra because Alondwe had limited free tickets.

Sphephile: Mom doesn't know that we are coming?

Me: No she doesn't.

Sphephile: It's a great surprise. I know she likes surprises.

Kiara: Let's go please. I can't wait now.

Uyathandwa: Yeah the cabs are here.

We were seven in total so we were going to take a bus. An aeroplane was going to be very expensive. And when budgeting we didn't know that the kids would also want to go. The cabs drove us to the bus station. Our bus was leaving at 1. We arrived at the station. I paid and we made our way to the bus.

Thandeka: No making noise then, there are adults in this buy Okay?

Them: Yes.

Alupheli: I won't promise anything.

Me: I will throw you out, through this window. Misbehave you will see.

He didn't say anything. They all shut up. The bus left the station at 1 o'clock. By 9 pm we were in our rooms in Johannesburg. We were in separate rooms. The ladies were alone and me and the boys were on the same room. We were going to see Alondwe after church. They were going to church so we did not want to stop them because of us. I was tired so I wanted to sleep early. But they were busy talking.

Me: Guys can you sleep.

Uyathandwa: We are too young to sleep at 9:30 on a Saturday night.

Alupheli: Yeah we are young. And please don't sleep. We just want to talk.

There was a knock on our door.

Mesuli: We did not order room service.

We all laughed at that.

Thandeka: Well you all have an awful laugh.

Uyathandwa: Oh mom come on. We are men and what do you want here. Are the other ladies asleep already?

Thandeka: Yes they are sleeping now.

Sphephile: Go to sleep too grandma.

Thandeka: I don't want to sleep.

Sphephile: We don't have space for you here.

Thandeka: Is your grandfather asleep?

Sphephile: No he is here.

Thandeka: Tell him I need to speak to him.

Sphephile: Mkhulu, ugoto wants to speak to you.

I sighed and I got off the bed. I went to her. She was leaning against the wall.

Me: What's wrong?

Thandeka: Samkelo can you not do this to me, please. I need you. I am sorry okay? But I can't quit my job and I don't want to lose you either.

Me: What do you want Thandeka?

Thandeka: Just a hug.

I pulled her hand dragging her closer to me and I hugged her. She started crying. I didn't like all this but how was I supposed to protect her if she doesn't want to listen to me. I know running wasn't an option but what other options did we have? There were none. I looked at her. She couldn't even look at me.

Me: The threats haven't stopped?

Thandeka: No they haven't and she or he is using a different burner phone now. Camille tried to trace it when I got the text on Friday and that person is near or in Western cape. We were close to getting the exact location then we disconnected. They must have disposed the phone. So I need these people I can't just quit. Please don't turn your back on me now. I wiped her tears and kissed her forehead.

Me: Don't cry now. We are here for Alondwe. And if you're not quitting your job. You're going to change that SIM card. Just take it out of your phone crash it and throw it away now. And we'll see how they'll find your new number.

Thandeka: Yeah I think I should do that now.

She took out her phone on the gown pocket and she opened it. She took out the sim card. She gave it to me and I broke it.

Me: Okay now that's out of our way. Do you want me to sleep with you?

Thandeka: Yes please. Kiara is sharing a bed with your mom.

Me: Let me say goodnight to the boys then.

She nodded and I opened the door. I just showed my head. Sphephile and Alupheli were near the door.

Me: What are you two doing here?

Sphephile: We are worried about you.

Me: Why would you be worried?

Uyathandwa: They said you've been fighting.

Me: We are not fighting.

Alupheli: Yes you are and this started last month. We see everything and you are worrying us.

Me: If we fight it doesn't mean, we are going to break up and break your home.

Sphephile: Parents in TV say that too.

Me: We are not in TV. And I won't lie to you.

Them: Okay.

Me: Uyathandwa come and lock the door.

Them: What?

Alupheli: You're not sleeping with us?

Me: Yes, your mother is not feeling well so I have to be with her.

Them: Okay. Goodnight.

Me: Goodnight.

I closed the door and I went to sleep with my wife. She just wanted me to hold her and I was there for her.

In the afternoon we were at Alondwe's place. Thapelo had given Uyathandwa the key in the morning, so my wife and Uyathandwa cooked. Uyathandwa loved cooking with his mom.

Alondwe: I can't believe you guys are here all of you and my little champion man.

Sphephile: We wanted to surprise you mom.

Alondwe: Thank you mom and dad. For everything.

Thapelo: She's going to cry. Please say something immediately.

Thandeka: Don't cry baby.

Alondwe: I am sorry I can't help it.

Alondwe cried. Thapelo excused himself. They were being wired and I didn't understand what was going on. I looked at Thandeka. She shrugged her shoulders.

Mom: What are you going to wear baby?

Alondwe: You'll see grandma. You will love it.

Mesuli: Is it me or you are too hyper Alondwe?

Mom: Mind your business Mesuli. She's happy can't you see that?

Sphephile: Now that's the first.

Alupheli: You can say that again. It's rear stuff.

They were talking about mom talking to Mesuli like that. They believed that Mesuli was mom's favourite.

Kiara: Why did Uncle leave aunt?

Alondwe: He's just moody Baby. Don't mind him.

Kiara: But I want him to come back. I like looking at the holes that he has on his cheeks when he smiles or talk they appear.

Everyone laughed at her statement.

Uyathandwa: It's not holes my love it dimples.

Kiara: Oh dimples. Aunt please tell him to come back. Please.

Alondwe: Okay. I will go ask him to come back. But don't be sad if he doesn't come back with me.

Mom: Let Sphephile go and he'll ask him.

Sphephile: I will go.

Sphephile left. Kiara was smiling waiting for her uncle to come back. And in deed he came back. Kiara was so excited. Everyone on the table made sure that they make Thapelo laugh or smile so that Kiara can see the holes. When we had to go back to the hotel. She didn't want to go with us. She cried and asked to sleep with Alondwe and her husband. She was on her father's arms.

Uyathandwa: Kiara would you stop crying.

Kiara: I don't want to go.

Thapelo: It's alright she can sleep here with us. Come to me Kiara.

She stopped crying and smiled. Thapelo took her from her father. We said our good-byes and we left.

After the graduation ceremony, Monday afternoon we were at their apartment. There were snacks and drinks. Thapelo's parents were there, Alondwe and Thapelo's friends, My sister Melokuhle and us. We were on the table eating. They hired table and chairs.

Mom: I really loved your attire Alondwe it was so beautiful.

It was a Zulu traditional gear for women.

Mrs Moloi: Yes it was a unique style.

Nkulu: I made it. (Everyone laughed)

Sphephile: You were a Makoti again.

Thapelo: Yeah. Champ she was my Makoti.

Kiara giggled first very loudly and we laughed after her. She was still loving Thapelo's holes.  
Uyathandwa: Thapelo I think you got yourself a second wife. You must start thinking about paying me lobolo for this one.

Thapelo: (laughing) No problem I will do it.

Mr Moloi: She's beautiful. When are you two having children?

Alondwe cleared her throat. They both didn't say anything.

Mrs Moloi: I don't think our bride is the type that wants children.

Thapelo: Mom and dad that topic is for another day please. Now can you all give my wife gifts. Please. She loves gifts so please.

Thandeka: Loving gifts Thapelo that one she took after me. (We laughed)

Alondwe: It's a good gene mom. That's if it is a gene.

Me: I think all the genes you took from your mom includes money and more money.

Thandeka: Ah Samkelo let's give our daughter her gift please.

I nodded. Everyone gave her gifts and she opened them thanking them. She was so excited.

Alondwe: Thapelo I thought you were going to buy a bigger present.

Thapelo: Just open it.

She smiled and opened it. She had a surprised look on her face.

Alondwe: Oh dear God I thought you said –

Thapelo: I was just kidding I wanted to surprise you.

Thandeka: What is it?

Alondwe: It's a car. The tag on this key says it's an Audi Q7.

Alupheli: Oh god damn! Woah!

Uyathandwa: Tjo Thapelo you are a man Brah.

They clapped hands for him. My daughter was going to faint dear God two cars. She opened ours.

Alondwe: Oh hell no! Mom and dad I thought I wasn't getting a car because I am married now.

Us: You're still our daughter.

Mesuli: Wait? So now you got two cars?

Alondwe: Yes. Baby please kiss me before I faint.

Us: HHAYBO!

Thapelo: But what if she faints?

Me: Boy there is water we are going to wake her up.

Sphephile: Everyone close your eyes my mom wants a kiss.

Me: Sphephile!

Sphephile: Okay just kiss her cheek.

Thapelo kissed her cheek. Alondwe stood up with her tears and hugged her husband.

Me: I love you so much my nagging baby. Thank you for such a beautiful gift.

Thapelo: I love you too my cry baby. And I am happy to see you happy.

They baby kissed each other and Alondwe proceeded to hug us.

Alondwe: Thank you mom and dad. I really appreciate everything you have done for me. I love you very much.

Us: We love you too baby.

Alondwe: I would like to thank each and every one of you for being here. It means a lot to me and I am very grateful for the beautiful gifts you bought for me. I would also like to dedicate a special thank you to my friend Nonkululeko for making me look beautiful for free (we laughed) my brothers for skipping school just be here with me. Thank you guys and I really miss you.

Them: We miss her too Thapelo.

Thapelo: I didn't hear that. (We laughed)

Alondwe: Thank you to my in-laws for being here, my grandmother, aunt and Mpendulo. Mom and dad thank you for raising me to be this woman that I am today. I learnt a lot of things from you two. From mom, that a woman should know her worth and she should never let any man walk all over her. I learned that there is a difference between respecting a man and being a puppet for a man. And that just because you are a woman it doesn't mean you should take every nonsense men give you. Those weren't things that you told me mom. It's things that I saw from you and I adopted them to be mine. From my father you made me see and know and you taught me that how a man who claims they love me will treat me. You told me all the red cards to check in a man and the pass cards to check that's why I never left Thapelo because of the things I saw in you. And from the way that you treat mom I knew how a man should treat a woman she loves. You two gave me education, love and wisdom. You beat me and did everything to discipline me and that is what made me who I am today. For that I say thank you and I love you.

Us: We are proud of you baby. (They clapped hands)

Alondwe: And lastly my two champion men. Sphephile baby thanks for coming to see mommy and for being a beautiful boy that you are. My husband thank you for the love and support. And for being here with my crying difficult self. Thank you. My grandmother you are my rock. My ride or die. I love you so much. Thanks for everything.

We clapped hands and celebrated. ....

This is to say no matter how much longer it takes, no matter how hard it can be don't give up you will reach your goals. You will make your dreams come true. Don't just sit there and think your life is over. It isn't over, stand up and do something. Use that brain think of all the possible ways you can make your life better. Don't wait for the government to provide everything for you. Try and try and try again it will happen in the end. The kind of job you are looking for may not be available today but it will be available some day but don't sit and wait for it. Do something while waiting for it. Don't give up on that grade or course you are doing. There is a light and a reward waiting for you. My story is not about showing you lavish lifestyle but it's about giving you hope that it can happen to you too. That the beautiful kind of love will find you some day. Don't let heart breaks make you believe that there is no true love there. This is to show you how love supposed to be. They might say you are poor today but that is not how you will end your life. Black's, Indians and coloureds reading this story I say to you don't give up its not over yet.....

Alondwe Moloji.....

Days went by pretty fast my husband and I were happy. We were always playing. It's like we were kids again. There was no room for fights and arguments. It was just fun. He encouraged me with an idea of what I was going to wear for my graduation. I wanted to represent my roots, who I am, where I come from so I asked Nkululeko to design. Imvunulo for me. I was going to wear it on my graduation. I was proud of myself and where I come from. I just wanted people to see that "hey I am Zulu and I just graduated" that is a very proud moment. End of March Thapelo and I started paying tithe and I can say it was a breakthrough because I used the rest of my salary to handle costs for my graduation. Thapelo and I had just picked up my attire from Nkululeko. I was trying it on.

Thapelo: Do you see the difference? You bought a lot of things with your salary. Whoever gave you that advice is a gotsent.

Me: Yes it is a breakthrough and I am happy that our finances and everything will be protected.

Thapelo: Amen to that.

Me: So how do I look?

Thapelo: You look beautiful. I just can't wait for Monday to come and you will be rocking this outfit. My Zulu wife.

Me: Aybo do you have a Sotho wife?

Thapelo: Yes I have a Sotho wife back where we come from far away from here.

Me: Thapelo don't play please.

Thapelo: I am kidding. You're the only one. And Bokang will definitely kick my balls if I do that to her mother.

Me: You don't know for sure that it's a girl.

Thapelo: I know that it's a she. Don't ask me why but I know.

Me: Alright. Our little Bokang is happy I can feel it.

Thapelo: She hasn't started moving yet?

Me: No. It's the beginning of the third month. Maybe by the end of it. She'll move a little.

He smiled and kissed me. I then took off my attire and I put it back on it bag. Thapelo and I went to make dinner together. It was much better for me. I could eat a few spoons or bread. My baby was moody. Some days were good and some were bad. But I survived and my husband was supportive. My family coming to Johannesburg for my graduation was a very big surprise for me. I didn't expect them to come. I thought mom and dad were going to be there only. After dinner my grandmother wanted to speak with me in private. We went to my bedroom.

Gogo: I can see that you are glowing.

Me: I am happy Gogo. My husband is treating me well and we are just happy.

Gogo: And pregnant.

Me: Ah how do you know?

Gogo: I have been in this world for too long. And I can see how you two behave around each other. So you cry a lot?

Me: Yes and he hates it. Please Gogo don't tell anyone just yet.

Gogo: Don't worry baby I understand. I am sure everyone will be happy.

Me: I am happy too so they better be.

She laughed and hugged me.

Gogo: I am happy for you my child. You deserve to be happy. You've been through a lot. And I am proud of you.

Me: Thank you grandma.

Dad called us because he wanted to leave. We went back to the others.

Alupheli: What were you two gossiping about?

Gogo: Mind your business Alupheli.

Sphephile: It's like that a new sentence that Khulu has learned.

Everyone laughed at Grandma. I hugged my son and my niece. And everyone else.

Dad: We will see you tomorrow.

Me: Okay. Good night.

Them: Goodnight.

I took Kiara's hand and I gave it to her father but she started crying.

Me: What's wrong now Kia?

Kiara: I want to sleep here with you.

Uyathandwa: No you're going with us.

Uyathandwa picked her up. But she cried and started kicking while she was on her father's arms.

Mom: Sphephile stay with her here. You will sleep on the guest bedroom.

Sphephile: No. I want to go to the hotel.

Me: Huh? You don't want to be here?

Sphephile: No mom. I want the hotel.

Uyathandwa tried to convince her to go with them but she didn't want to go with them. She stopped crying when Thapelo took her from her father. She was all smiling. Everyone left. Thapelo went to the couch with Kiara and I went to take a shower. After the shower I went to check on them. They were just playing together. They were so cute. Seeing them like that made me happy that I was giving Thapelo a child. He was going to be a good father. I went to them and they had toys on the floor. I sat down.

Me: Okay. Where did you get these toys?

Thapelo: They are Sphephile's toys.

Me: No they are not. These toys are new.

Kiara: You don't like them aunty?

Me: I like them baby but your uncle in here knows what I said about being wired.

Thapelo: Okay. I admit. I was just passing by at the mall and I saw this beautiful baby shop. I couldn't help myself. I bought a few things. And a few clothes. That's not wired, wired because you're almost three months now right?

Me: It's wired, wired big time and I say it's wired. But be happy baby. But don't buy anymore clothes. You'll make me scared. Mom won't be here like she was with Sphephile so that is kind of scary for me.

Thapelo: Don't worry I am here.

Me: Thank you.

Kiara: What are you talking about aunty and uncle?

Me: Okay let me go and sleep. Your uncle will answer you my love. You two will join me in bed when you are ready.

Them: Okay. Good night.

I went to sleep. The following day was my big day.

Receiving my qualification was a very proud moment for me. Being on my graduation gown was the moment I have always dreamed of and I was happy to see my dreams come true. I was more grateful for my gifts. I couldn't believe that I had two cars. It was a moment I didn't really expect but it was just precious and beautiful. That meant Thapelo and I had three cars. It was beautiful. Kiara didn't want to leave but they forced her because they couldn't leave her behind. It was so sad but cute. I was officially a qualified Doctor.

\*\*\*\*\*

TWO MONTHS LATER....

It's been two months since I graduated. I was five months pregnant starting my sixth month as it was the beginning of July. My parents were happy for us and our friends were also happy. My in-laws were happy too. I don't know about my mother in-law I have learned not to expect happiness from her. But since her son was happy I guessed she was happy too. I was still seeing my therapist. She was more like a friend now than therapist. But not a friend. But yeah still my therapist. I had my appetite back and I have gained weight. We were expecting a baby girl. I was so excited I could not wait to meet her. Just four more months I was going to hold her in my arms. Our Bokang. That was her name given by her father. Being sick and weak was still happening but not regularly. I had my days. It was Friday after work. I was really tired I didn't want to drive myself back home. I called Thapelo.

Thapelo: I am on my way home now. Are you there?

Me: No. I can't even leave my office chair.

Thapelo: Why? what's wrong?

Me: I am tired and I don't want to drive. Can you please come and take me.

Thapelo: And your car?

Me: You will come using a cab. Just drop yours at home then come get us here.

Thapelo: The way you say drop. It's like this is a toy.

Me: It is a toy don't you know that?

Thapelo: Yeah. I know. I will be there in thirty minutes.

Me: Okay. My love Thank you.

We hung up the call and I waited.

After about an hour. We were home eating. We were eating two different dishes. We cooked them ourselves. We did that sometimes, cook different dishes and compete on who's dish was the best.

Thapelo: Try this meat. It's better than those dry chops you're eating.

Me: Okay feed me please.

I opened my mouth and he fed me. Ew! It was awful. I took it out of my mouth. I put it on my plate.

Me: What spices did you use on this awful meat?

He laughed and took his meat back. He ate it.

Me: Thapelo that's disgusting. It's from my mouth.

Thapelo: So? I always kiss you. And lick you so what is wrong with eating this meat? This is our money. We can't just throw it away.

Me: Amen.

We had dessert after that. We loved food equally and I was happy that I wasn't alone in this.

Thapelo: So little pudding I am going to KZN. For one week. It's work.

Me: What? No!

Thapelo: It's just a week.

Me: And I will be alone here. You know what I think it's better if I go with you. I will take leave and I will go visit my parents.

Thapelo: No. That's not happening. You will stay here with Bokang and go to work.

Me: But –

Thapelo: I said no you are not going to KZN.

Me: Okay fine.

Thapelo: Thanks. I love you.

Me: Ayi. You are leaving me here.

Thapelo: And one more thing baby.

Me: What?

Thapelo: Do not lose any part of that ring because I will not buy another one.

Me: Ave uphapha shame wena!

I bite his ear, he laughed and groaned. I laughed too. I wasn't going to lose my ring shame.... Not again.....

Alondwe Moloji.....

On Monday Thapelo left for KZN and I was alone. I was bored and lonely. I didn't think as much as Thapelo can be annoying I will miss him like that. It was a Wednesday afternoon I was in the apartment catching up on TV. There was a knock on the door. I stood up and I went to open the door. It was my friend with a packet of goodies. I screamed and hugged her.

Nkulu: Look at you mama choco.

Me: Ah please drop it. (We went to sit down)

Nkulu: Come on I was calling you mama bear because we used to call Sphephelo a bear when we grew up and Thapelo is chocolate man so it's only fair that we call you mama choco.

Me: Do you really have to have names for everything and everyone.

Nkulu: Of course. That's me.

Me: Alright. So how is the business going?

Nkulu: Very well. I quit my job last week. I want to expand my line. I am really happy that my dream is coming true.

Me: You know I was thinking about how good you're at organising events. How about you open that business before you expand your line. My brother wants to be in business so he wants to start investing before he starts his own thing. And I can also invest on the business and help you run it. We can also hire more help when money starts generating real.

Nkulu: Wow! Alondwe that's great. Who's idea was this?

Me: My brother called asking me to tell him if there are investing opportunities. So I suggested this to him last night and he loved it.

Nkulu: It's great. I won't even think about it. We will draw up the plan and proposal together.

Me: Okay. That's great.

Nkulu: So how is being married and pregnant?

Me: No. I don't want to talk about me today. I want to talk about you. You know I always

complain to you whenever pregnancy gets tough.

Nkulu: Yeah. You should start paying me.

Me: Woah shame. Then you're supposed to pay me for those bad times after doing transgender. You were a horrible friend.

Nkulu: Yoh! Don't remind me of that time. I was throwing tantrums on you and my hormones were changing. But you stuck by me. You never left me. Even after I have slapped you.

Me: Kahle Kahle you like slapping me because even in the club you slapped me.

Nkulu: Tjo. I was very angry that night.

Me: We come a long way hey?

Nkulu: Yeah. I remember after the transgender Peter left me because I was too much. I still miss him and I still love him. My love for him was real.

Me: Hey don't cry.

She tried to smile. I hugged her. I didn't want to see my friend crying. Peter really loved her. He didn't understand what she was going through that time and when he wanted to come back Nkululeko didn't want him. Maybe I should set them up. It will be fun

Nkulu: I was supposed to take him back that time.

Me: He's not married yet and I don't think he's in a serious relationship. You still have a chance.

Nkulu: No. I don't want to try maybe he'll reject me. Anyway I wanted to tell you something.

Me: Okay.

Nkulu: I found my birth mother, actually she found me. I just don't know how to feel.

Me: Wait? She didn't die. She's alive?

Nkulu: Apparently the bitch has been alive all those miserable years of my life. We did a DNA test, my parents wanted to make sure and they came back positive. She's my mom. And now she wants to take me away from them because I am her child. She wants to fix her mistake. According to her I am supposed to be a man.

Me: Woah! That's – No she can't just take you away from your two amazing parents. They understand you and she doesn't. Like no. It's not like you're twelve years old. You're 24 years old now.

Nkulu: I hate her Alondwe. She left me because his boss didn't want her to come to work with her child. She was a domestic worker and my father was a loser. Then she gave me up to the social workers. She also grew up as an orphan.

Me: Even if her boss didn't want you. I think parents in children's homes are allowed to see their kids.

Nkulu: Yes they are. I am not ready to see her again. I don't know what to do.

Me: I don't want to say the wrong things to you my friend so can I refer you to my therapist she will help you I promise.

Nkulu: Okay. Maybe that can help me.

I nodded and I hugged her. I kissed her cheek.

She smiled and said: I love you.

Me: I love you too.

We then spoke about other things and ate a lot. That night she slept in my house.

Thursday morning Nkululeko left super early. She had to go back to her place and get ready for work. I was alone in my bed and waking up was a mission. It was one of those mornings where I feel weak. Thapelo did everything for me when it was that time but he wasn't with me. I just wanted to go to the bathroom and eat then take a shower. But I was helpless. I tried to go to the bathroom and I did my business. I slowly went back to my bed. I was dizzy and my head was hurting. I sat on bed and I took my phone. I called Nkululeko but her phone was on voicemail. I remembered one of her clients was having a gown fitting so she must be busy.

I was crying I didn't know what to do. I was hungry, and I needed water. I needed to take a shower. I needed something for my headache. I called Thapelo. He answered.

Thapelo: Morning my angel.

Me: Thapelo I am helpless in here.

Thapelo: Okay. Try to calm down and stop crying baby. The baby won't like it if you are crying. She'll be sad too.

Me: I need food, I need to bath, I have a headache. And I am just a potatoe who can't even move a foot. Please do something.

Thapelo: Alright. I will call someone urgently. Don't worry just calm down.

Me: Okay.

I hung up the call and I waited but I couldn't stop crying because my needs were screaming. After about an hour my mother in-law walked in my bedroom. She sat on the bed next to me.

Mrs Moloi: I am here now. What do you need first?

Me: He called you?

Mrs Moloi: Yes because I am his mom and I know this baby is important to him. So can we work together to take you out of this misery?

I nodded and said: I need a cold bath and after that I will need breakfast. Then I can sleep.

Mrs Moloi: Okay let's go to the bathroom.

She took my hand and we went to bathroom. I sat down on the chair while she ran the water for me. She then help me bath my baby was moving and kicking. It's like she knew that her grandmother was helping me. Maybe she was the one who was going to bring real peace between us. After that she helped me dry my body. I was even shaking. Then she moistened my body and helped me wore my pyjamas. She put me back to bed and went to make breakfast. My phone rang it was next to me on the bedside table drawers. Thapelo was calling. I answered.

Me: Baby.

Thapelo: My mom is there?

Me: Yes and she's making breakfast for me now.

Thapelo: Oh thank God. Don't worry I will just come back tomorrow morning. I don't want you to sleep alone tomorrow night because you are sick.

Me: Okay baby thanks. I love you.

Thapelo: I love you too. Let me go back to work. I have reported you that you are sick.

Me: Okay. Thanks.

Thapelo: Tell Bokang I love her.

Me: I will tell her and I know that she loves you too.

We said our good-byes and we hung up the call. My mother in-law walked in with mouth watering breakfast. I thanked her and I started eating.

Mrs Moloi: I made both tea and soup you will choose.

Me: Don't worry they will both do. Thanks.

She nodded and she went back to the kitchen. I finished up and she came to take the dishes. I wanted to take my nap so I asked her to give me my daily medication. She did. After that I told her I was sleeping.

Mrs Moloi: Okay. When you wake up you will call me if you still need me for now I will go back to work.

Me: Okay thanks.

She nodded and she left. I dozed off immediately.

I was woken up by the great pain that I was feeling on my tummy. I screamed. I looked beside me and my phone wasn't there anymore. It was far away from me. I removed the blanket. I was going to try and reach so that I can call for help. I was bleeding, my bed was full of blood. I cried and held my tummy.

Me: No. I can't loose you too. I just can't.

I tried to get off the bed but I was too weak I just fell on the floor. I should have known better. That bitch must have done something to me. Maybe the food and drinks. She even removed my phone next to me. How can she so cruel. I was thinking all these things as I could see my phone from afar and I couldn't reach it. I passed out there

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

Thandeka had changed her number and we were worry free. I didn't want to see her unhappy because these threats were making her unhappy. What was comforting is that who ever wanted her did not know where she was working. We went back to living our lives and trust God to handle everything. It was Thursday night. My phone rang. I didn't want to wake up. I just ignored it.

Thandeka: Samkelo your phone please. And who's calling you at this time of the night?

Me: I don't know and I am not answering my phone.

Thandeka: I can't sleep with your phone ringing like that and that horrible ringtone.

Me: Jealous never ends in you.

The phone stopped ringing. My wife's phone rang after mine.

Me: Look who's phone is ringing now.

Thandeka: Whatever. It must be important.

She sat up straight and answered her phone.

Thandeka: Nkululeko darling what's going on, why are you calling us at this hour?....

What?..... When?... Oh dear God.... Yes... We will be there first thing in the morning.

She hung up the call. I looked at her waiting for her to tell me what is going on. She got off the bed.

Thandeka: My love get up. We need to go to Johannesburg now.

Me: What's going on?

Thandeka: It's Alondwe. She's in the hospital. Nkululeko said she found her in her room on the floor bleeding. She took her to the hospital. They are operating her by now.

Me: What? No she's only five months. And where's her husband?

Thandeka: Alondwe told me that he's in KZN working. My guess is that he's going to back home tomorrow night or Saturday.

Me: Okay. Let's go.

We changed our clothes and Thandeka packed a few clothes. She took her purse and she made the bed. We then went to my mom's room. She was sleeping with Kiara. I shook mom awake.

Mom: Samkelo. What is it?

Me: Mom. We are going to Johannesburg now. It's Alondwe. She's in the hospital.

Mom: Hhaybo. What time is it now?

Thandeka: It's quarter pass eleven. They are operating her mama. We need to go now.

Something is wrong because she was found alone on the floor.

Mom: Okay. Please go and call me in the morning. Samkelo drive safe on the road.

Samkelo: Alright mom.

We left. I started the engine once we were inside the car and we drove off.

8 am we were in the hospital waiting for the Doctors. Nkululeko was still there.

Me: Did you call her in-laws?

Nkulu: No you're the first people I called. I didn't even call Thapelo. He doesn't know that we are here. But I have Alondwe's phone with me. If he calls we will answer it.

Thandeka: Oh dear God. I wonder what happened.

Nkulu: I think she was sick because on her voice messages she was crying saying she needs me to come and help her for the day.

Thandeka: Yeah she told me that she normally get sick sometimes maybe she was trying to leave the bed and she fell. Oh my poor baby.

Me: Do you think the baby will make it?

Thandeka: I don't know but the baby has to. They can't afford to lose this one too. No.

Nkulu: She lost a baby before?

Thandeka: Yes they did and they never told anyone about it.

Nkulu: Oh my God this is bad.

Me: I think we have waited for too long. I will go and ask maybe the Doctors who operated her have left.

Thandeka: Yeah. Please go.

Nkulu: Thapelo is calling.

Me: Give it to Thandeka.

She did and I left them. I went to look for information. I asked and they told me that they will bring the Doctor who took over to us. I then went back to Thandeka and Nkululeko. I told them what they have said. Thandeka called my mom and told her what was happening.

After a few minutes Thapelo walked in and he came to us. He was in great panic.

Thapelo: What's going on? Where's my wife? And my baby? Are they fine?

Me: Sit down. We don't know yet. We are waiting for the Doctor.

Thapelo: I can't just wait I am going to find the Doctor now.

I tried to stop him. It's like he was going crazy. He must have been shocked and scared. I would be too if it was my wife. And I was because it was my daughter. The Doctor came to us in time.

Doctor: Where is Mr Moloi?

Thapelo: I am here what's going on?

Doctor: Are you all family? I only need family.

Us: Yes.

Thapelo: Just tell us what happened!

Doctor: Your wife is out of theatre. She's stable and for now she's sleeping.

Thapelo: Thank God. (He sighed) So they are both fine. My baby girl is fine too?

Doctor: I am afraid the baby didn't make it.

Thandeka: No! Doctor what went wrong?

Doctor: I can only tell the father of the baby what was the problem. Then he can tell you if he's comfortable with it.

We agreed and they stepped aside. Nkululeko asked to leave. She said she couldn't take it.

She was going to come back when Alondwe was awake. We let her go. My wife was crying so painfully that it even pain my heart x4. I was hurting because I lost a granddaughter, hurting because I didn't know how I was going to tell my daughter, I didn't know how I was going to help her get through it and my wife was also hurting that too was hurting me. It was like I was reliving the pain of losing my kids and knowing that Alondwe's child died because of us. I held Thandeka tight. No words came out of my mouth. Thapelo came back to us. He was literally crying.

Me: What did they say?

Thapelo: Your daughter killed my child. My only chance at being a father. She took it away from me.

Me: Wait you are not making sense.

Thapelo: She took abortion pills. I know this pregnancy was too hard on her. She was always sick but to do this. I will never forgive her for this.

Thandeka: No Alondwe would never do that.

Thapelo: I thought I knew her. And I thought she loved me but clearly I was wrong.

He then left. I was speechless. I didn't even know what to say. I just hugged my wife.

Me: It will be alright.

Thandeka: Life is too short. I am just going to quit my job. I can't risk anything.

I just hugged her and brushed her back. From there I just didn't know what was going to happen... I couldn't even predict or assume.

Alondwe Moloi.....

I woke up my body was hurting like someone has been beating me all night. I tried to move but it was impossible. I opened my eyes. I saw my mom and dad. They were sleeping on the hospital chairs next to me. What were they doing here? What's happening? I tried to remember. I remembered the blood, falling, my baby. I immediately touched my tummy it was still big but jelly or woobly I don't know how to explain the feeling .

Me: Mom and dad. Mom and dad!

They both woke up and called my name.

Mom: Oh baby you're awake.

Me: Mama where's my baby? Where's Thapelo?

My mom looked at my dad and dad looked down. I knew that something was wrong.

Me: Mama?

Mom: Baby what happened back on your apartment? What went wrong?

Me: I was sick, I called Thapelo and I told him that I am sick. I can't do things for myself so he said he'll call someone who will help me. Then his mom came. She helped me and she made food for me. She gave me tea and soup. I fell asleep after eating. I woke up with a great amount of pain. It was in my tummy. I looked for my phone and it wasn't next to me anymore. It was far from me. I was scared mom. I was alone, I didn't know what was going to happen, there was too much blood. I tried to reach the phone all I could think about was my baby. I was too weak I fell on the floor and I passed out. My baby is safe right? I know she'll be a premature but she'll live mom right? She'll live.

My mom cried and called my dad's name. My dad held my hand. I looked at him and I tried to smile. But the memory of what I went through in my apartment just made me scared. Tears were flowing out of my eyes.

Dad: Baby last night they operated you.

Me: Okay. Can you take me to my baby?

Dad: Baby the baby didn't survive.

Me: What do you mean?

Dad: The baby died. I am so sorry my baby.

Me: No! No! Daddy? Mom?

Mom: Alondwe baby –

Me: Why? Mom? Why did she die? Why did she leave me? Am I not a good person? I don't deserve to be a mom again?

Dad: It's not like that baby.

Me: What did I do to deserve this? What did i do?

Mom: Baby you've done nothing wrong.

Me: I need Thapelo mom. I need him now please.

Mom: Samkelo?

Dad: Baby Thapelo left when the Doctor told him that you took abortion pills. That's what killed the baby.

I slowly stopped crying. My parents looked at me. I just went quiet. I didn't move an inch everything just went off like there was a drug in my system that made me numb.

Mom: Alondwe?

Me: Can I be alone?

Dad: We can't leave you alone here. You need us here. Alondwe.

Me: Mom and dad I want to be alone.

Dad: Let's leave her Thandeka.

Mom: We can't possibly leave her alone here.

Dad: We won't be far. We'll be outside the door.

My mom nodded and they left. Thapelo left? What does this mean? He believes what the Doctor told him? I killed my baby in his eyes? I removed the drip that was on me. I was trying to get off the bed when the Doctor walked in. She rushed to me and she pushed me back.

Doctor: Doctor Moloji please don't leave this bed.

Me: I want to go.

Doctor: I can't let you do that.

She immediately sedated me. I tried to fight her but my parents walked in and assisted her put me down. I didn't even care about the pain in my body. After a few minutes. The drug kicked in. It was lights off.

When I woke up again. My parents were gone. Thapelo was on the chair looking at me. I looked at him. A glimpse of hope came through, maybe he knows that his mom did it.

Me: Thapelo?

Thapelo: How could you Alondwe?

Me: How could I what?

Thapelo: You killed our baby? Why? Because you were sick? Why did you do it?

Me: I didn't do it. Your mom –

Thapelo: Stop! Stop right there. What are you going to say? My mom feed you poison and the baby died and you survived?

Me: No. She's the one who gave me food and when I woke up she had removed my phone next to me. I fell on the floor trying to get my phone to call for help.

Thapelo: You're lying! I spoke to my mom when she was done helping you and she told me how desperate you are. And I asked my mom after the Doctor told me what happened. My mom told me how bad you were crying, complaining about how hard the pregnancy is and how you want an easy way to bring this baby to earth. And you thought abortion pills were a good idea? Let me think? You thought they won't kill the baby because she's five months and you will get an emergency c-section? Is that what you thought will happen?

Me: I see you got it all figured out? I am the murder here. I am. Where was I going to buy abortion pills while I was sick?

Thapelo: Don't play this game with me. I am trying to understand your actions because I don't want to hate you for what you did to my daughter. You are a Doctor you can get anyone to do that for you.

Just then his parents walked in. I wondered where my parents were? Clearly I was going to be under attack.

Mr Moloji: I trusted you and I welcomed you into my home and you do this to my son. Because of your selfish reasons.

Me: I see the family is sticking to the idea of mother in-law.

She slapped me hard. I almost saw the stars.

Thapelo: Mom! She's still my wife don't lay a hand on her please.

Mr Moloji: You're still defending her?

Thapelo: She mustn't be hit that's what I am asking.

Mrs Moloji: Don't you dare enjoy hurting us little girl. Don't you dare. You're not even showing some remorse.

Me: I should show remorse for something that you did? I must show remorse?

Mrs Moloji: Don't blame me for your wicked ways. You thought just because I didn't like you. It was going to be easier to put this on me. And everyone will just believe you and

blame me for it?

Mr Moloi: Well we are clever than you are. I thought you were good for him.

Mrs Moloi: And for a second you had me fooled.

Me: I supposed you are rejoicing inside your heart Josephine. You'll finally get what you always wanted. Your son will divorce me soon and he'll come back crawling to you. He'll hide behind your skirt again. You must be happy hey?

Thapelo: You think I am going to divorce you just like that? And give you a free pass? You are mistaken. You will pay for what you did.

Me: It's fine but remember this Thapelo and I want you to remember this clearly. One day you'll see your mom for who she is, you'll see how evil she is and by the time you realise that it will be too late for us. And I will need you to run back to her. Believe me on that.

Thapelo: You're the evil one here. Trying to use my mom as an escape. I should have listened to her –

Mom: Enough! Listen here boy take your parents and leave my daughter alone. She was with Sbahle. But my dad wasn't with them.

Thapelo: I am not done with her.

Mom: If you dare lay a finger on her. Just one finger you'll see the real evil I tell you. I dare you hurt her.

Mrs Moloi: She must have seen that evil from you.

Thapelo: Alondwe is still my wife. And I would never lay a finger on her.

Mom: I said take your parents and leave. Yeah go hide behind your mom. I have no words for you Josephine. Leave now!

Thapelo looked at me with hate on his eyes. They left with his parents. I didn't even feel like crying. I had no tears. My mom sat down.

Me: Do you think he'll ever believe me? Mom? Sbahle? Will he ever believe me?

Mom: Sbahle Nkululeko said you are her therapist. I don't know what to say. All I could think about now is that you just need to leave him.

Sbahle: That was anger talking Alondwe. His mom planted the clues on his head before he even knew what was happening. We were listening to your conversation, You heard what he said his mom called him after she had helped you and she told him how desperate you are to get out of the misery of carrying a child that is making you sick. Feel helpless and useless something you hate. And your husband knows how much you hate those feelings. And he has seen how hard the pregnancy was and how intense your sicknesses were. You told me that he even said he wish he can feel it for you. He knew the hardships you faced.

Me: And he believed his mom over me. He saw how happy I was. He saw what loosing our first child did to me but he believed his mom over me.

Sbahle: Alondwe listen. That boy loves you so much. But right now you got to understand this, he's in pain a very great amount of pain. The pain that you are trying to block right now. That pain is mixed with the manipulation that his mom has done to his mind and broken heart. At this stage everything that is good that he knows about you is being brainwashed by his mom. His mom saw that playing with your money didn't succeed and she took a much more darker turn. As a wife you are being tested now. Will you just leave your husband and let that evil woman who calls herself a mother poison his mind? Will you leave him because he believes his mom over you or you will stay and pull him out of that place his mom has put him in?

Me: I don't want to leave him in that place. I don't want his mom to corrupt the good in him.

Sbahle: Then you'll fight Alondwe. It won't be easy, you must know that, he'll hurt you with words, he'll neglect you, he might even go as far as trying to hurt you using other women but you will just have to tell yourself that it's not him. It's not your husband. If you fail you will see your love will deal with him. If that doesn't happen then in the end then you can say I

tried. If Thapelo was an abusive husband who is controlling you I was going to advise you to leave him but now is not the time to leave him. But first you need to grieve your daughter.

Me: No I am not grieving yet. If I let grief kick in I will lose this hard heart I have now and I will be weak. If I am weak I will give up on him. I won't pull him out I will leave him. I don't need to grieve now.

Sbahle: But Alondwe you just lost a child.

Mom: She's right Sbahle. Right now this is the different woman that I have never seen.

Alondwe needs to keep blocking grief if she'll help her husband. If she can start crying now everything that Thapelo is going to do to hurt her will hurt her for real. But if she's like this it will all bounce. She'll understand it and she won't stop pushing until she reaches her goal. She needs this heart of a cold man. Then when she pulls Thapelo out. They'll grieve together and it will be easier to forgive him.

Sbahle: Okay I am allowed to have trust and faith in my clients. And Alondwe if you slip and if you feel like you want to give in to grief or you want to give up just think of his evil mom and pick up your phone and call me anytime or call your mom okay?

Me: Yes.

Mom: If you don't mind Sbahle, can we pray?

Sbahle: Yeah.

We held each others hands and we prayed. I prayed for strength and wisdom. I needed it and I needed faith the most too. I wasn't about to give up on the man that I love...

Samkelo Ndunakazi.....

After the Doctor sedated Alondwe, Thandeka and I went to eat. We were both quiet. The words that Thapelo said were ringing on my mind.

Me: Do you think it's possible that she really did it?

Thandeka: What? No she didn't do it. You heard her story and you know that woman doesn't like her.

Me: But they have accepted her.

Thandeka: So what does that mean? Accepting her doesn't mean they like her. They did it for their son. That woman wants to tear them apart.

Me: I don't really know what to believe because remember you also tried to take an abortion pill. That I was told by you.

Thandeka: Wait Samkelo, where are you heading with this? Are you saying it's my fault.

Me: I don't know, clearly now Thapelo is going to divorce Alondwe. Does it mean she will go back to Sphephelo. I don't know her life seems to follow your pattern.

Thandeka: Wow! I have heard it all but this? Really?

Me: If you lived right –

Thandeka: No. If you lived right she wasn't going to be pregnant. Maybe if she is destined for Sphephelo they would have done this relationship thing the right way not him hurting because of you.

Me: Oh maybe if you were not stubborn the first time you saw that I am a player none of this would've happened. I wasn't going to have her or marry you.

Thandeka: Oh so you're blaming me for saving what was left of your soul? You're blaming me?

I didn't say anything. My mind had a lot of things running through.

Thandeka: It's okay then Samkelo. This is easy. You can still go back to your life of being a heartless player. Leave me and my kids. Go and start a new life where you'll get any bitch you want. They drool over you anyway. Everywhere we go.

Me: What does that supposed to mean?

Thandeka: Don't make yourself a fool. Even this waitress who is serving us is looking at you

like some meat ready to be eaten. You want that? This is your chance to walk away from it all. Your chance to be free from me.

Me: I didn't say I want to leave you. You know I love you and our family. I didn't mean what I said.

Thandeka: Well since we are playing the blaming card. If you didn't block me out when I was pregnant. I wasn't going to meet Themba. I wasn't going to have this health problems because of all the shit him and his family put me through. So you can blame me but we have each other to blame not me alone. And Alondwe did not take the pill.

Me: You will find me home.

I wiped my hands and mouth.

Thandeka: You're leaving me here with Alondwe?

Me: I need some time to think about all this situation she is facing.

Thandeka: There's nothing to think about. Alondwe did not kill her own daughter.

Me: I want to believe that but the thought of you trying to take that abortion pill when you were carrying Uyathandwa makes me believe that she might have. Seems like she inherited a lot from you. Take care of her. I love you.

I kissed her forehead and I left. I needed to clear my head. I needed to be away from anyone who was going to feed me more information about what happened to my daughter. Maybe my mother was going to help me make sense of things.

Before 5pm I was in Durban. I took an aeroplane. I left the car for my wife. When I arrived at home mom was on the lounge alone. I sat next to her.

Me: Where are the boys?

Mom: They are with Uyathandwa and Sphephile's father. Kiara left with them too. Where is Thandeka?

Me: I felt her in Johannesburg. They say Alondwe took abortion pills.

Mom: What? That's insane!

Me: I don't know what to believe mom.

Mom: You believe that? Alondwe would never do that. She was so happy.

Me: I don't blame my daughter but her life seems to be following her mother's life patterns.

Mom: Thandeka once had an abortion?

Me: She almost did but Themba caught her. Then she didn't go through with it. What if Alondwe was meant to take that pill that her mom didn't take.

Mom: Samkelo stop it! Alondwe has been married to this boy for two years and a few months. Thandeka didn't even last a year with Themba on their marriage. Thapelo does not abuse your daughter. He loves her.

Me: Maybe it's a curse. Maybe someone from my past cursed me that my first child will suffer similar to her mom's suffering.

Mom: Oh dear God what's happening to you? This thing you are doing will destroy your marriage and your family. What's wrong with your mind?

Me: I don't want to see my daughter suffering anymore mom. If this was on all our kids. We are supposed to see it on Mesuli by now. He's turning 17 years old and he only has one girlfriend. That white girl, he's dating. He's not a player like I was so what's happening with my daughter?

Mom: Hey baby look at me.

I looked at her. She held my hands.

Mom: God knows what is happening. There is no curse on Alondwe. She just has an evil stepmother. Don't worry about everything this much. Leave it all to God.

Me: You know mom Thandeka gave me a choice today. To leave her and the kids. And I will go and start a new life. What's strange was there was a part of me that wanted to take that offer and walk away from it all.

Mom: But you didn't. Why?

Me: Because I am no good without my family. But I feel guilty and bad for wishing to take that offer.

Mom: My son no matter how good we can be there's always evil that is following us. That evil wants us to do bad. Mostly we find that evil in pain, suffering, disappointments, then we will think being evil is better than being good but that's not true. Evil or good people, life throws lemons to either of them just that the evil don't really care about it all. And you don't want that. Do you?

Me: No I just want my kids to be happy. My wife to be happy. My grandchildren to be happy, you mom and my whole entire family. I want us to be happy.

Mom: We are happy just that we won't always be happy but what matters is that we are together alright? Thandeka loves you and you're still going to be together and witness more happiness of your kids and grandkids. I have witnessed yours, your sisters and of my grandkids now I have great grandkids. It will be alright. Come here.

I sighed. I took off my shoes and my mom hugged. I will always feel like a child with my mom. I will always feel like that little boy who needs his mother's love. I was grateful that she was there. I was tired so I ended up sleeping on her arms. I heard whispers. It was my kids I could hear them. But I didn't want to open my eyes.

Alupheli: Guys hurry up and witness this. Dad is sleeping like a baby on grandma.

Uyathandwa: Woah such rear stuff. Snap a picture.

Me: I will kick off your balls all of you.

I opened my eyes and I sat up straight. Mom woke up too.

Uyathandwa: Too late. I have taken a picture and I will show it to mom.

Me: Don't you dare do that.

Kiara: You're a baby too grandpa?

Me: Yes I am.

Kiara: But how? A baby who babies and grand babies?

Mom: He's a baby to me. That's why you call me Khulu. Do you understand?

Kiara: Yes I understand.

Me: Where is Sphephile?

Mesuli: They had an argument with his uncle Alupheli so he left with his father.

Alupheli: I don't want to talk about it dad. Don't ask me about it. Where is my mom? I want to be a baby too to her?

Me: She's in Johannesburg. Your sister lost her child. So your mom is with her?

Uyathandwa: What happened?

Me: She was alone in the apartment. Her husband was in KZN working. She fell trying to get off the bed. The baby was hurt so she died.

Mesuli: Oh God. How is she dad?

Me: She's not taking it well but she's strong. She'll be fine don't worry. She has a strong support system.

Alupheli: Grandma please hug me.

Mom: Come baby.

Alupheli went to his grandmother and she hugged him.

Me: So don't tell Sphephile. I don't think we should tell him. He's too young for this kind of things. Did you hear that Alupheli?

Alupheli: Yes I won't tell him. It will break his heart.

Me: Let's pray for your sister and her husband.

They came closer, we held hands and we prayed for Alondwe and her husband

Alondwe Ndunakazi.....

I spent two weeks in the hospital Thapelo didn't come to see me not even once. The last day I saw him was when he was with his parents. Mpendulo, my aunt and Nkululeko used to come. Sbahle too. My mom went back home after two days. I didn't want her to stay. She was supposed to go and be with her husband, grandchildren and my brothers. I was going to manage. I trusted God that I was going to manage. My stitches were still new but not painful like before. I suppose I was going to get used to it. The Doctor told me that the Molois took the tiny body of my daughter for burial. Thapelo wanted it to be done but he didn't tell me nor ask me to come. That was all his ways to hurt me but I didn't need to go to the funeral because it was going to trigger my grief and everything was going to break. So it was Friday afternoon I was being discharged. I was going to ask Nkululeko to drive me home. The Doctor came in with my husband following him. I swallowed hard and pressed my teeth together. He came to me and he kissed my forehead.

Thapelo: How are you feeling?

Me: I am much better.

He faked a smile and nodded. The Doctor gave him the papers and he signed.

Doctor: Please Mr Moloji. Make sure that she takes her medication. And she must look after herself.

Thapelo: I will do that Doctor. Let's go.

He gave me his hand. I looked at him and he looked back at me. I held his hand and we walked slowly together. He was just quiet. Outside the hospital he let go of my hand unexpectedly I almost fell. I held my breath and tried to balance.

Thapelo: You're not a child you can walk by yourself.

I didn't say anything I walked up to his car. I opened the back door and I stepped inside. He stepped inside and he drove off. He was something I have never seen before. He was full of rage and hatred. We made it home and the place was a mess.

Me: What happened here?

Thapelo: I was waiting for you to clean all this. I was angry and hurt so I crashed everything. I didn't say anything. The TV stand, the TV, the decorations, coffee table. It was all crashed. Couches were still in one piece. There were glasses everywhere.

Me: You've been living in this place?

Thapelo: Yes, I was waiting for you to clean it up. Clean up all this mess you created. And oh I have a gift for you come to your room.

He led me to the guest bedroom. I figured I won't be sleeping with him anymore. He gave me a white envelope. I sat on the bed. He unpacked my things that I came back with from the hospital. I opened the envelope. It was pictures of our baby girl. It was a very disturbing sight. But I looked at them all. I didn't cry. I kept on pressing my teeth together and imagining Mrs Moloji, the she devil, to block crying and pain.

Thapelo: You're not even crying? How can you be so cruel after you've done this to her little body. You don't even cry.

Me: Crying won't bring her back. You can take your pictures Thapelo.

Thapelo: No you keep them. You'll feel this pain I want you to feel.

He took my medication and he left the room. I stood up and I followed him. He was making his way to the bathroom. I couldn't go faster but I tried. Before I could stop him. He flushed all my pills. All of them down the drain. He turned back and looked at me.

Thapelo: Now you will know what pain feels like. You'll feel the pain of those stitches and you won't have medication to make it better. Now I want you to clean this mess you have created in our lives. While cleaning I want you to think about what you have done. Was it really worth it?

He left the bathroom. I thought about just walking away. This was too much hatred for me. I

won't have something to lose. I can live without his love. I closed my eyes and pictured Mrs Moloi. I remembered I am not doing it for myself only. I am doing it for him too. Slowly I tried to clean and it took me more than hour to finish. I was tired and my stitches were hurting like hell. Thapelo was looking at me all the time. When I was done I went to him.

Me: My stitches are painful can you buy painkillers for me? Please.

Thapelo: I would be a fool if I can do that.

I didn't say anything. I just went to sleep with that pain. Though it was hard but finally I did sleep. Thapelo had changed the lockers to the bedroom doors so I couldn't sleep with my door locked and I couldn't enter our bedroom because it was always locked.

In the morning when I woke up Thapelo was gone. I took my phone and I went to sit on the couch. I requested help from the Doctor friend of mine. I told him I lost my medication and I needed a new one. I was going to send someone to fetch them. He agreed to help me. I told him not to tell my husband. I then called Sbahle. She answered.

Sbahle: Mrs Moloi.

Me: Good Morning Miss Zuke. How are you doing?

Sbahle: I am good and how are you?

Me: I am fine. Are you busy?

Sbahle: No I am working from home today. I don't have sessions until tomorrow. Do you need anything?

Me: Yes. I need you to pick up my medication on the hospital. There's a Doctor who will give them to you. Thapelo flushed my medication last night.

Sbahle: Oh I am so sorry. I will be on it right now.

Me: And please buy me something soft to eat. We only have milk in this house. I think he wants me to starve to death.

Sbahle: Don't worry. I will do that for you.

Me: Thank you. I will send the number of the Doctor.

Sbahle: Okay.

I hung up the call, sent the number and I went to shower. I moistened my body and wore warm pyjamas. I waited for Sbahle and she finally came. I took the medication first and I hid it on my shoes box in my wardrobe where my clothes were. I then went back to Sbahle and I started eating while we were talking.

Sbahle: Do you see any glimpse of care for you in him? Any tiny care?

Me: No I don't. He only pretends when he's in public. I saw that yesterday in the hospital. Just then the door swung Open and Thapelo walked in with some boxes. There were two guys with him. He greeted us. We greeted back. The guys left.

Thapelo: Well Doctor I would like to let you know that this will be your last session with my wife.

Sbahle: Why?

Thapelo: I will be working from home, keeping an eye on her. You don't need to worry. But I will let you finish and say goodbye.

Sbahle: You're doing me a favour anyway.

Thapelo and I: Excuse me?

Sbahle: I was tired of listening to her stupid problems. I continued doing it just for the money. She makes dumm decisions.

Thapelo: You will mind how you talk about her. She's still my wife.

Sbahle looked at me and smiled a little. I figured out that she was just putting on a front. She gathered her papers together.

Sbahle: If I was her I was going to leave you.

Thapelo: Well I am glad that you are not her. Me and Alondwe has some things to fix. That she broke.

Sbahle: Then I am glad that I will no longer be her therapist because believe me I was going to slap reality back to her if she was going to continue with this relationship.

Me: You can't leave me Sbahle.

Thapelo: Yes. She's leaving you. If you dare try to come back into her life. I swear I will make your lonely miserable life more miserable. And nobody will lay a hand on her while I am still alive. Now leave my house. Now!

Sbahle faked a fright. She took her things left. I looked at Thapelo.

Me: Why are you doing this to me? Chasing people who care about me?

Thapelo: She doesn't care. Tsk!

He went to the bedroom. I sighed. If there's still a glimpse of care why is he still trying to hurt me? That I didn't understand. My phone beeped. Sbahle requested Mpendulo's number. She had a plan that she wanted to test and she was going to ask Mpendulo for help. Mpendulo was on my side but Thapelo didn't want to listen to him either.

I sat alone on the lounge. Thapelo made food for himself. I figured all the food was on our bedroom. He kept the food there.

Me: I am hungry too.

Thapelo: I am not making any food for you. I want you to eat your evil thoughts and deeds. He went to the bedroom. I sat there waiting for Mpendulo. My phone beeped. It was a text from Mpendulo. "Stand up from where you are and stand against the wall. I am going to come in now. I promise I will try not to hurt you. Delete this message now"

I quickly deleted the message and I went to stand against the wall like he said. I stood near the window and pretended to be looking outside. The door swung Open and Mpendulo came in shouting my name. I tried by all means to act scared. Thapelo came out of the bedroom and Mpendulo's hands were on my neck. He made it look like he was strangling me.

Mpendulo: How can you do this to my friend's child.

Me: I didn't do it!

Thapelo quickly removed him away from me and he punched him twice.

Thapelo: Are you out of your mind that's my wife Dammit! I thought you were on her side.

Mpendulo: I was on her side until I called your mom just now and I wanted to hear her side of the story. I didn't think Alondwe can so twisted! (He spat)

Thapelo: I know okay! I know! (He held him with the collar of his shirt) But don't ever again lay your hands on her, Mpendulo do you understand me?

Mpendulo: Look at you, you said you are dealing with her but you're fighting for her now, defending her? What's wrong with you?

Thapelo: She's still my wife and I love her okay? Yeah I still love her and I will punish her my own way for her actions. So ain't no dog who's going to come in here and hurt her under my watch. Now leave my apartment. Now!

He let go of him and Mpendulo clicked his tongue. He left the apartment. I stood there on the Conner shaking for real. I was scared that he was going to do more to Mpendulo. Thapelo sat on the floor and cried. I slowly went to him. I tried to sit next to him. He looked at me and he opened his arm for me. He held me and made me lay my head on his chest.

Thapelo: Did he hurt you badly?

Me: No he didn't go that far.

Thapelo: I am sorry that he did that to you. I am sorry. Do you want me to put you to bed?

I nodded quickly. He stood up and he carried me to the guest bedroom. He put me under the covers. He kissed my forehead and he left. He didn't say anything. My phone vibrated on my pocket. I took it out and answered it, Sbahle was calling.

Me: I am confused Sbahle I don't know what just happened.

Sbahle: Mpendulo told me what happened. You see I told you that your love will deal with him. That was your love together with the love that he has for you dealing with him. Your

mother in-law can do anything to you him but he will not mess with your love. Just be patient when all this is over you two will be alright but strong because he won't stop trying to punish you or hurt you for what he believes you did.

Me: Thank you.

We said our good-byes and hung up the call. I still didn't understand that if he still loves me why would he want to hurt me???

Samkelo Ndunakazi.....

It's been two days and Thandeka hasn't come back home yet. We haven't spoken on the phone because she wasn't taking any of my calls. Everyone was sad and grumpy they wanted to talk to Alondwe but I told them that they must give her time. We were having dinner quietly.

Kiara: When is grandma coming back?

Me: I think tomorrow.

Alupheli: Why don't you let us speak to Alondwe?

Mom: Alupheli give Alondwe some time. You will speak to her.

Mesuli: This is unfair. Is there going to be a funeral?

Me: I don't know.

Kiara: What is a funeral?

Me: It's nothing you should worry yourself about.

She nodded and continued eating. She was messing herself up with food and she didn't want us to feed her. Only Thandeka can get her to agree to be fed. But she agrees if she's going to feed her. There was a car that pulled over.

Alupheli: That must be mom.

He got off his chair and ran to the front door. Kiara wanted to follow him so Mesuli stood up with her and they all went to the front door.

Me: Do you think they'll be a burial mom?

Mom: I don't know you should call the father of the baby. I am sure what he wants will be done.

Me: Alright.

Thandeka walked in with Kiara on her arms. Mesuli had her bag and Alupheli had her handbag. They went upstairs with the bags. Thandeka sat down and greeted us.

Mom: How is she Thandeka?

Me: She's trying to be strong but she has put grief on hold in order to help her husband.

Me: Help him from what?

Thandeka: Kiara baby go upstairs and tell your uncles that there are goodies in my bag. Eat them with them in Alupheli's room. We want to talk okay?

Kiara: Yes grandma.

She put her down and she left. Thandeka sighed.

Thandeka: Alondwe has a therapist who has been helping her. It's been a long time since she's been seeing her. She made my daughter see that Thapelo is being influenced by his mom and the only person who can help is Alondwe.

Me: And you allowed that?

Thandeka: What was I supposed to do? Alondwe loves that boy and she refused to let his mom corrupt the good in him. I didn't like the idea but I couldn't make that decision for her. We lost her the last time we made a decision for her I wasn't going to let that happen again.

Me: That boy chose to believe his mom over our daughter and you think he deserves her help.

Thandeka: There was nothing we can do. And you have no right to make that call and turn this on me because you left. You weren't there Samkelo.

Me: I needed to clear my head. If I stayed there I was going to make things worse because the

second best thing I was thinking about was to kill that old bitch who is trying to make my daughter's life miserable.

Thandeka: Well killing is not an option. Alondwe will handle her marriage. Just trust her.

Mom: Thandeka is right Samkelo. She loves the boy and she can't let his mom have her way with him. That's something you must understand. You would also do anything for your wife.

Alondwe is doing the same for her husband. Just trust her.

Me: Okay. But in the end I want my daughter alive.

I stood up and I went upstairs.

I needed to call Thapelo. I wanted to know if they are planning the burial or not. His phone rang without answer. I called again. It was answered.

Mrs Moloi: Mr Ndunakazi how can I help you?

Me: Where is your son?

Mrs Moloi: What do you want with him?

Me: I want to speak to him?

Mrs Moloi: To try and do damage control for what your daughter did to our granddaughter?

Me: Let's not pretend like you cared for that child. I thought you have accepted her but you were faking it all along. You are playing with my daughter's life and you have taken the best thing that was going to change her life for much better.

Mrs Moloi: I don't know why people find it easier to blame other people for the things that happens to them. Like why don't you just take responsibility for your daughter's actions because clearly you haven't raised her right. You, accusing me means that if my son can die tonight I will have to blame you because you didn't like him in the beginning?

Me: Oh so God help me. Are you going to do the burial for the child?

Mrs Moloi: My son will, but he doesn't want you or your daughter to come.

She then hung up the call. I clicked my tongue.

Thandeka: What did she say?

I turned back and looked at her.

Me: Thapelo is going to do the burial but he doesn't want us there and he doesn't want Alondwe too.

Thandeka: I think it's best if we don't fight it.

Me: Yeah. If this plan of this therapist will work she mustn't go to the funeral.

Thandeka sat down and held my hand.

Thandeka: Please trust that she will be fine.

Me: I just don't want to bury my daughter because of the love she has for this boy.

Thandeka: We won't bury her believe me. She's strong and her therapist will help her.

Me: Okay.

Thandeka: I am sorry for everything that happened back in Johannesburg. That argument we had. We might have been apart and what happened, happened but we were never wrong for each other. And maybe we needed that time apart so that we can be more stronger for each other.

Me: Yeah. That's true and I am sorry too for what I said. You're the best thing that happened in my life. With you I am a better man. Loving you makes me want to do more good but I hate it when someone threatens your happiness and our children's happiness. I love you and I will always love you.

Thandeka: I will always love you too.

I hugged her and we kissed each other....

Weeks went by Thandeka had submitted her resignation notice. She had two weeks left with the centre then she was going to leave them. Alondwe told us that there was hope for her husband. Though it was hard but she was trying. I didn't like the idea but I wasn't going to stop her. I was letting her fight for her marriage while she can. But I wasn't at peace with Mrs

Moloi. Monday we were in our room getting ready for work.

Thandeka: This is week is my last week in that place. It felt like home and I was enjoying working with them.

Me: I know how much you loved your job.

Thandeka: Yeah but I must put my family first so I guess I must start looking for another job.

Me: Yeah. But changing your number did work.

Thandeka: Yeah it did. She/he must have been devastated when it didn't go through. Clearly this person is a stupid little bitch who was hiding behind the burner phones.

Before I could answer her. Her cellphone rang. She answered it. She put it on speaker and continued doing what she was doing.

Thandeka: Nonkululeko?

Nkulu: Mrs Ndunakazi I am sorry but I tried to do all my best.

Thandeka: Okay. I am not following up. What's going on? Please calm down.

Nkulu: It's Alondwe. She's sick and her husband doesn't want me in the house anymore. He told me never to come back and he's not even looking after her. He works from home but he lets her suffer alone.

Thandeka: That was his plan all along. Thanks for telling me. I will be there before the end of the day.

Nkulu: Okay please hurry up.

Thandeka hung up the call. I looked at her.

Thandeka: Don't say it Samkelo. I know what you are going to say.

Me: You're not going to work now. You're booking the next plane ticket and you are going to Johannesburg. If you don't Thandeka I will go there myself and you won't like it.

Thandeka: Hey look just stay away Samkelo. You're too angry. I don't want you hurting or killing someone. I will handle this. Our daughter will be fine

Samkelo: I will stay away but if he doesn't stop. Believe me him and his mom will see the real me. Angeke sizale ingane siyizalele ukuthi kube khona abantu abazodlala ngayo. If you are failing, call me.

Thandeka: I promise I will call you.

Me: Now start packing.

Thandeka: Okay.

She started packing. I was hoping that it doesn't come to war because I didn't mind facing whoever stands in my way. Alondwe is my only daughter and I don't want people bullshitting her.... Specially not while I am still alive....

Alondwe Moloi....

Weeks went by it was now end of May. Living with Thapelo was torture. He gave me all the reasons to cry and hate him but I didn't cry and I didn't hate him. I always had the picture of his mom in my head and as much as I wanted to give in to grief I knew I wasn't going to until I save my husband. He was always there in the apartment. He'll give me food when he likes to give it to me. When he didn't I used to ask Nkululeko to come visit me and hide the food from him. It went on like that until Nkululeko wasn't allowed to come everyday in the house. I think he must have seen that I was getting better. Nkululeko was only allowed to come twice a week and my therapist was burned from coming. We only communicated through the phone. Some days he will come to me and we will talk generally like we are friends. He would ask me how am I doing, what do I want for dinner and he would tell me that he doesn't like doing what he was doing but he had to do it because I hurt him. I tried to tell him I didn't do it but he didn't believe me. I even asked him to check my medical aid records to check the things I have bought or paid for. He saw that was no abortion pills bought but he didn't believe me because I am a Doctor I can get pills anyhow. Some days he would just spend day

without talking to me or even saying hello. Through all that I stayed. I didn't walk away. I believed in that part of him that still cared for me. The truth was going to come out some day and we were going to be alright.

I ran out of medication and I didn't know how I was going to get more because Thapelo didn't want anyone to come and see me. I was very sick and by the look of things my stitches had an infection. I needed serious medical attention. Nkululeko and my aunt had fought with Thapelo until they gave up. They even brought a Doctor home but he told him I was just fine. If he went a few days without speaking to his mom, he would be good and try to look after me but if he spoke with his mom. It's like the evil is renewed in him. He was in my room cleaning the room for me.

Me: You want me to die in here Thapelo?

Thapelo: No. I will send you to the hospital when I am convinced that you have suffered enough.

Me: I am your wife, how can you do this to me? It's me Thapelo. Me Alondwe!

There was a knock on the door. He left without saying anything. I heard him arguing with whoever was on the door. The argument died down and he came to my room followed by my mom. I smiled when I saw my mom. She quickly came to me and she hugged me.

Mom: Oh my baby. We need to get you a Doctor.

Thapelo: No Doctor is coming in here.

Mom: Listen here boy. This is my child. We gave her to you because we thought you love her and you can take care of her.

Thapelo: I do love her but she's the one who hurt me. Why should I suffer alone and cry every night in that bed thinking about how I am supposed to be touching her stomach so that I can feel our daughter moving and kicking. Is that fair?

Mom: You are punishing the wrong person.

Thapelo: You know what I will go and live with my parents. You'll call me when you are gone then I will come back to my house.

Me: No! Please don't go.

Thapelo: It's either me or your mom.

Me: Mom please don't let him go.

Mom: I am sorry baby but he must go.

Thapelo nodded and he left. I looked at my mom pressing my teeth even harder. I closed my eyes and thought of Mrs Moloji. I couldn't imagine what she was going to do to him to turn him against me.

Me: I have lost my chance to save him.

Mom: Right now we are saving you. If something happens to you. Your father will do things I don't want him to do. He's very angry Alondwe and right now I am also trying to keep him from trouble. So I am taking you to the hospital. The cab is waiting outside.

I agreed and mom assisted me. After packing a few things for me. We then left for the hospital. The doctors attended me immediately. After all their work, they sedated me and I got to sleep.

Thapelo Moloji.....

I was trying by all means to fight this hatred within me that kept on pushing me to hurt Alondwe. I didn't want to hurt her but I was really hurt. It was hard carrying on knowing that she killed our child. I know that the pregnancy was hard for her. She was sick now and then. She was feeling weak but she should have held on just another four months then our baby girl was going to be born. We would have been happy and she was going to be the most beautiful baby. But her mother took it away from me. As much as I wanted to hate my wife I couldn't. My love for her kept on pushing me to forgive her and move on but I couldn't bring myself to

it. I had left the apartment. I was at home. I had my three back rooms. It was a house for a maid but when I started working my dad gave it to me. It was a kitchen, bathroom and bedroom. I was always there, I went back to work because Alondwe was with her mom. Being in that house alone made me miss her a lot. I wished I could just take my phone and say can we just forget it all and start afresh but I just couldn't do it. It was in my wishes but I couldn't. I was still hurting. I had my hopes and excitement that I was going to be a father. I was given a second chance and I was going to make the best of it but my wife took it away from me because she was thinking of herself. From where I was I didn't see myself forgiving her. I was typing some reports in my room. My phone rang. I answered it. It was an unsaved number.

Me: Thapelo speaking hello?

Sbahle: It's Sbahle your wife's therapist.

Me: I thought I told you to stay away from us.

Sbahle: Well your wife didn't want me to stay away. Thapelo do you think running away from her will solve your problems.

Thapelo: I want her mom gone. I won't come back unless she leaves.

Sbahle: You want Thandeka to leave so that you can mistreat your wife?

Thapelo: I am not mistreating her. Look I have to go.

I hung up the call. I couldn't believe that Alondwe can be so stupid and continue talking to that therapist. I just couldn't believe it....

\*\*\*\*\*

Alondwe Moloji.....

My mom really helped me a lot. They kept me in the hospital for a week. Thapelo called once to ask how I was doing. That counted for something to me. So it was a Monday afternoon I was being discharged. My phone rang. Thapelo was calling. I answered.

Me: Hello,

Thapelo: Hi, how are you doing?

Me: I am doing better and you?

Thapelo: Can't say much. Alondwe I have been thinking. I don't get this why are you still talking to that therapist because you heard all the things she said to you.

Me: You left me alone, you want her to leave me too. Thapelo: She doesn't care about you.

Me: You've been hurting me Thapelo so you also don't care about me.

Thapelo: I care about you and I love you but I am angry at you. And you don't want to admit what you did. That's why I keep hurting you. Just admit it.

Me: Keep hurting me then because I will not admit something that I didn't do.

Thapelo: Your mother is still with you?

Me: Yes.

He hung up the call after that. I sighed. This was just a dead end.

Me: I am divorcing him mom.

Mom: What?

Me: I can't do this anymore. I have tried. I did all I can. I can't anymore. I am tired.

My mom hugged me tightly. Her phone rang. She backed away and answered it.

Mom: Ndunakazi.... Yes.... She's going home now... Yes she's better now what's going on.... He did what?... Is it bad?... Alright. I will be home soon... Yes... I love you too.

She hung up the call and clicked her tongue.

Me: What's going on?

Mom: Alupheli was writing a test today, you know he writes at the school, then he was involved on a fight with a much older boy. He broke his arm. He's in the hospital. They say he's crying. He wants me.

Me: It's okay. You can go. I will manage.

Mom: Okay baby. Let me take you home. I will buy some groceries for you.

I nodded. We finished up everything and we left. Mom dropped me off the apartment and she left after cooking for me. I just wondered what made Alupheli fight. It might have been serious. I sighed and ate my food. I was taking a nap on the couch watching TV. Thapelo bought a new one. He replaced everything that he broke. The door was opened and Thapelo came inside. He was surprised to see me. I stood up.

Me: Hi.

Thapelo: Hi. When did you come back?

Me: A few hours ago. Are you coming back?

Thapelo: No I am here to take more clothes.

Me: Mom is gone. She went back home just a few hours ago.

Thapelo: Oh. Let me grab my things and be on my way out.

Me: Thapelo please stay.

Thapelo: I would love to but mom is cooking special dinner for me so I have to be there.

Me: Oh.

I took the dishes and I went to the kitchen to wash them. I cleaned up the kitchen and I went back to the couch. I was much better than before. I continued looking at the TV. Or it was looking at me. I needed a way out now I was tired. I felt Thapelo's hands on my shoulder. I tensed up. He kissed my head. Then he headed to the door.

Me: I think I want a divorce now.

He stopped walking. He didn't turn back but he just stopped. Like he was thinking.

Thapelo: Maybe that will be the best solution.

He closed the door behind him. I swallowed hard, maybe this was time for me to let grief in. I tried to bring myself to tears. But they didn't come. I tried and tried but still nothing happened. I called Sbahle. I didn't understand what was happening. She answered.

Sbahle: Is everything alright?

Me: I want to feel it all. I want to feel the grief but nothing is happening.

Sbahle: Maybe it's a sign that you don't need to grieve just yet. Try one last time to talk to him. Show him phone records. Think of something. Just try.

Me: Okay.

I hung up the call. I took my Q7 keys and phone. I left the apartment. I drove to Thapelo's home. It was late but I needed to talk to him.

I arrived and I parked my car outside the gate. I had the gate controller and keys to his back rooms. I opened the small gate and I went to his house at the back. The lights were on. I knocked on the door. He asked who is it. I didn't say I knocked again. He came to open the door. He had a towel wrapped around his waist. He was surprised or shocked to see me.

Me: Okay I am sorry okay. I don't want to lose you Thapelo I love you please don't do this to us. Maybe if you can investigate the house you'll find some proof. Believe me when I say I didn't kill our daughter. I loved her with all my life –

I was disturbed by a voice coming inside the house.

Girl: Who's on the door honey?

I held my mouth. I closed my eyes.

Thapelo: Alondwe it's not what you think. She-

Girl: Oh it's you.

I opened my eyes and I just laughed sarcastically. Cassandra was butt naked. That was my breakthrough tears came pouring like waterfall. I turned back and I headed back to my car. As I reached the small gate I dropped my keys. Tears crowded me I couldn't see clearly. I wiped them and I found them. I opened the gate, Thapelo followed me running. He was dressed on his tracksuits. I was just walking up to my car because I couldn't run. He grabbed my arm. I turned back and I slapped him hard. He held his cheek.

Me: Don't you dare touch me. Not with the hands you were touching that woman with. Uyangizwa Thapelo? Don't touch me.

Thapelo: Please don't leave now. I can explain Alondwe.

Me: I don't need your explanation. I suppose your mom is happy right now. Let me guess that special dinner was Cassandra. She couldn't wait to bring her back. It's not even two months since your little girl died but your mom is already organising another woman for you. Have you grieved enough? No. But she doesn't care about that all she cares about is making Cassandra her daughter in-law. And here you are saying that I killed our child. While your mom is rejoicing by pushing you to the arms of another woman and you say that is the mother's love? Did she even ask you how you feel after losing your child? Or all she cared about was feeding your mind about how bad I am for you? I don't think so but hey you chose your side so I hope you will be happy with your new wife and your mom. Bye Thapelo. You won't find me in your apartment you can move back in with Cassandra by tomorrow night maybe.

I opened the door of my car. He held my hand, I felt some rush on my body that I never felt before then I had goosebumps all over my body. I looked at him. He was also crying.

Something in me didn't want to see him crying. I wanted to get off the car and hug him and tell him it will be alright but that sight of Cassandra blocked me from doing it.

Thapelo: Alondwe I can't live without you.

Me: Then go hang yourself. Tsk!

I removed his hand from me, I closed the door. I closed my eyes and opened them. I started the car and drove off. I couldn't stop crying. I was driving slowly on the road. Everything was coming back rushing in and crashing my spirit. I noticed that Thapelo was following me. I stopped crying and I picked up my speed. I made it to the apartment. I saw some guy in the lift and I asked him to help me. He agreed.

We went inside the apartment and I locked the door. I asked him to push all the couches to block anyone from coming in. He did just that.

We sat on the couches.

Guy: You're running away from your husband?

Me: Yes.

Guy: But you guys always seem happy. And the baby that was cooking in there where is him or her?

Me: We were happy. She's dead.

Guy: I am so sorry for your loss.

Me: Thanks.

We heard the key being turned but he couldn't open the door. He knocked on door.

Thapelo: Alondwe please open up.

Me: Didn't you just opened?

Thapelo: You closed the door with couches? Who helped you with that because you have stitches?

Me: None of your business. Why don't you go back home? Just go home.

Thapelo: I will try and find the evidence. I will make things right Okay. I didn't mean to hurt you. I didn't want you to see all that. I want no harm to come to you Alondwe I love you.

Me: It's too late for that. I don't want any of this anymore. (Tears started all over) I love you and you chose your mom over me. I know that you still doubt me even now so please do us both a favour just go. Please leave.

Thapelo: I wouldn't be here if I doubt you.

Me: You're here because I caught you with that woman who you know exactly how I feel about her. But you went on and sleep with her.

Thapelo: It didn't come to that.

Me: Oh so I disturbed your moment? I am sorry you can go back and finish off what you started.

Thapelo: I love you okay. I love you and I have never loved anyone like I love you.

Me: You forget easy. I can see. I don't have time for this I am going to sleep.

Guy: Eh! No! What about me?

Thapelo banged the door.

Thapelo: Who's in there? Huh? Alondwe open this door now! Who are you with in our house? Alondwe!

Guy: I think you should open up for him. He loves you man. I don't know what is going on but he messed up just forgive him.

Me: You can remove the couches and go. I will just go to bed. Thanks.

He nodded, I took a knife and I went to the guest bedroom. I changed and wore my pyjamas. I took the knife and went under the covers. Thapelo opened the door. I took the knife and I pointed it on him.

Me: If you dare come anywhere near me I will use this knife on you. Don't come close to me.

Thapelo: I just want to be here with you. Please. I can even sleep on the floor please. I just don't want to go back home. This is my home. I will just sit on the chair and watch you sleep. I clicked my tongue. I put the knife under the pillow and I tried to sleep. I cried silently..

Samkelo Ndunakazi.....

A week passed Thandeka was still in Johannesburg. I was coping with the kids because my mom was there but I hardly knew how to do things for myself. I was just used to have everything done for me. Thandeka kept on telling me things were going well but I knew that she was saying that to stop me from going to Johannesburg. I was going to keep cool. I was on the middle of a meeting when my assistant budged in and disturbed me.

Me: What's wrong now?

Tina: I am sorry Mr Ndunakazi but it's your last born's school. They told me to tell you that he's been sent to city hospital. He was fighting and he broke a bone.

I sighed and looked at my client, it was a woman. I was hoping that she was going to let me go.

Client: It's okay Mr Ndunakazi. We can reschedule. Go to your child.

Me: Thank you so much. He's a trouble maker.

My client smiled. We took our things, shook hands and we went our separate ways. I drove straight to the hospital. I didn't understand why on earth can Alupheli fight. He better have a good explanation. I arrived at the hospital. And I spotted her home schooling Teacher. He also goes to school with him if he's writing a test.

Me: What happened?

Teacher: I don't know exactly but he went to buy food after writing. I was waiting for him in the car then I was called and told that he was fighting.

Me: Oh hhayi! What are the Doctors saying?

Teacher: They are fixing him, he broke an arm so they will put a cast on.

Me: Okay. Let's wait. But you can go if you don't want to stay.

Teacher: No I will stay. I want to see him.

Me: Okay. How is he treating you anyway?.

Teacher: He's good. But we always have a big struggle in math. He doesn't want maths.

Me: Yeah I know. All he want is art. He's just different from the others.

Teacher: So next year he must go to high school. What are you going to do about that?

Me: I will have to talk to him and ask him what he wants to do. If he can go to high school after so many years of studying at home I think there'll be more fights like this.

Teacher: But with a child like him it's best to do what he wants before he becomes a rebel.

Me: Yeah that's true. If he wants to continue with home schooling I will have to find another teacher?

Teacher: I can continue with him till grade 9. Then from grade 10 you'll have to find someone else. I only did intermediate and senior education.

Me: Alright. Do you speak to his art coach?

Teacher: Yes and he also speaks about her. That's what excites him. He's good with English and creative writing. He's a smart boy.

Me: Yeah.

The Doctor came to us and he allowed us to see him. We went to his room and he was crying. I went to sit next to him.

Me: Alupheli?

Alupheli: Dad where is mom?

Me: She's in Johannesburg what's wrong?

Alupheli: Please tell her to come back.

Teacher: What happened?

Alupheli: I won't talk until my mom gets here dad please tell her to come back.

Teacher: I think you should do that.

I nodded and I left them. I called Thandeka and I told her what was happening. She promised to come back. I went back to the room. His teacher was gone.

Me: Your teacher has left?

Alupheli: Yes I told him that he can go.

Me: Do you want anything to eat?

Alupheli: No I want mom.

Me: Okay. She's coming. Stop crying now. Is your arm painful?

Alupheli: No I am crying because I want mom.

Me: Your mother will come. Should I go or?

Alupheli: No don't leave me alone I am scared.

Me: What happened at school?

He didn't say anything. I figured he will talk when his mom arrives. He cried until he was asleep. That gave me a chance to go and eat. I told his brothers that he was in the hospital. Thandeka finally arrived. In the room it was me, Uyathandwa, and Mesuli and his girlfriend Britney. Alupheli had stopped crying. We were just having a conversation when their mother walked in.

Alupheli: Mom?

Thandeka: Hey baby.

Thandeka hugged him. He started crying again. Whatever that happened was big. Thandeka looked at Mesuli's girlfriend.

Thandeka: Hello?

Britney: Hi mam how are you?

Thandeka: I am fine and how are you?

Britney: I am good thanks.

Thandeka: Okay. Ukhona mhlampe ongathanda ukungazisa ukuthi ubani le ntombazane? (Who would like to tell me. Who's this girl)

Alupheli: Intombi Ka Mesuli. (It's Mesuli's girlfriend)

Britney: I can wait outside if you're uncomfortable with me.

Thandeka: I didn't say I am uncomfortable.

Mesuli: Mom please can you be nice.

Thandeka: I am nice.

Britney smiled and said: I will be outside Kuhle.

Mesuli nodded. The girl left. I looked at Thandeka.

Thandeka: What? This is not a good way to meet your daughter in-law specially when she's white. You know. I thought I will see a dark beautiful girl. And she'll be coming home for dinner not here.

Me: Thandeka awukahle. Please.

She raised her hands and touched Alupheli.

Thandeka: What's wrong why were you fighting?

Alupheli: That boy wanted to know where you work.

Thandeka and I: What?

Alupheli: He called me a cheese boy who doesn't wear uniform. I told him that I don't school there and he said you're exactly the boy I am looking for. He said where is your mom Thandeka's workplace. I told him you draw buildings for a living but he said I am lying. He became aggressive and we fought. He said he will find you. When the teachers saw him, he ran away. I don't think he schools there.

Mesuli: Mom are you in danger?

Thandeka: No it's nothing to worry yourselves about. Don't worry.

Alupheli: No we should worry. This is not the first person asking about your work. Where do you work?

Uyathandwa: Yeah mom where do you work. We deserve to know.

Thandeka looked at me.

Me: Just tell them.

Thandeka: Uhm... I work with an organisation that takes down bad, bad guys.

Alupheli: You kill people?

Thandeka: No we don't kill people. We just close down their dirty activities using different methods and some end up in prison.

Uyathandwa: With dad –

Thandeka: No with your father it wasn't me.

Mesuli: Mom that's dangerous. You should stop.

Thandeka: Yeah I know. This was supposed to be my last week. I will go there now take my things and go. Don't worry.

Uyathandwa: You can't go alone.

Thandeka: It's 4 pm now. They are still working. No one can do anything to me on the daylight. And besides I must consult with my partner. It will be alright don't worry.

Mesuli: Call dad if something happens.

Thandeka: I will, baby can I take your car?

Me: Alright. Let me walk you out.

Thandeka: Okay. Bye guys I will see you when I come back. I love you.

Them: Bye mom. We love you too.

We left the room. Thandeka went to Britney. I followed her.

Thandeka: My name is Thandeka Ndunakazi, I am the mother of that cute boy you're dating. Britney smiled and said: It's nice to meet you mam. I am Britney Hills.

Thandeka: Nice to meet you too. Please take care of my son. I went through a very hard time to bring him here on this earth so don't break his heart. And don't shout at him. He doesn't like to shout. If you have a problem with him just talk. He'll understand you better if you talk. And love him Okay?

Britney: Yes Mam.

Thandeka requested a hug and they hugged each other. We left.

We were outside the hospital in my car.

Me: Who could be this person?

Thandeka: You know for a second I am thinking of Themba's friends.

Me: Could they do it? They know you're Uyathandwa's mom I don't think Themba can wish

you harm or anything cruel.

Thandeka: But his friends can, maybe they are angry since he's in prison.

Me: Okay. We will have to talk to them when you come back.

Thandeka: Okay. Alondwe is much better now. She's thinking of divorcing her husband.

Me: It's that bad?

Thandeka: That woman is cruel Samkelo. What she has done with her son is unspeakable. You can hardly recognise Thapelo. He's in the dark place you see that in his eyes. He needs someone to save him. And Alondwe is thinking of giving up.

Me: He was a good boy but we can't gamble with our daughter. This game Mrs Moloji is playing is dangerous and I don't want my daughter to get more hurt than she has already have. She tried.

Thandeka: Only if she can just push one last time. Thapelo still loves her and he even defends her. So as much as he wants to hate her I think he still loves her as much.

Me: Let's just trust God to handle it. It's out of our hands and control. It's between them and God. And we can't always solve problems for her. But I don't want her dead.

Thandeka: She won't die relax. Now let me kiss you. It's been a week. No wait.... Why didn't you tell me you know Mesuli's girlfriend?

Me: Oh come on it's between father and son. Now back to the kiss please. I want it to be longer. Cover for every day you were not home.

She laughed. I smiled, she kissed me and I kissed her back. She kissed me five times. We broke the kiss. I kissed her forehead.

Thandeka: I love you honey bear.

Me: I love you too nanesh. Drive safe on the road.

Thandeka: Alright.

I stepped out of the car and she drove off. I went back to the kids inside.

Kimberly Smith....

When I get back home my daughter was just faking being sick. They wanted to go my house with her friends. I was really mad because I cancelled my trip for nonsense. I told her father and he spoke to her. I had to stay at home and keep a close eye on her. She was just starting to become something I don't like. And she had attitude. I kept on sending threats until they were not delivered. I called Thandeka using my phone. And her number didn't exist. I was so angry I didn't know how I was going to get her new number. I had no choice but to go to Durban. When I arrived in Durban Thandeka wasn't home. No one was home actually. The neighbour told me they went to Johannesburg. Thandeka's daughter was graduating. I had to go back home. I wanted to give up but sleeping alone without my husband, waking up and he's not next to me. I was hell tired of that shit. I wanted Themba back home.

I finally got Thandeka's attention using his younger son. I paid a boy to find information to her son. I knew that her younger son wasn't going to school. That was being cheesy. Clearly their kids rule them. I wouldn't have let my kid tell me what to do. If he was my son he was going to go to school whether he likes it or not. I told the boy to break just one bone so that we can have Thandeka's attention because she was in Johannesburg again. Bheki's wife Olwethu was the one giving me information because they lived on the same neighbourhood. And Olwethu hated Thandeka because it seems like she was behind her mom's disappearance. It seems like she had many enemies. The boy that I sent came back to give me feedback. I was outside the school. Far from the gate. Just under the tree. I opened the door for him.

Me: How did you manage to get out?

Boy: Mam I am street kid. I know these things.

Me: So how did it go?

Boy: He doesn't know where his mom works. But what you can do is, you can follow the ambulance. As you can see it has arrived. Then maybe you see his mom going inside the hospital. Then from there you can start following her until you find her workplace.

Me: Yeah that's great idea. Thanks. Here's your cash. Please take these new clothes and change that school uniform.

He took them and he changed inside the car. My car was parked under the tree. There were no people passing by. He finished and he left. I waited for a few minutes and the ambulance came out of the school. I followed it. Though it was flying on the road. I managed to figure out where it was heading.

I was in my car outside city hospital. I could see everyone who was coming in and out. I saw Samkelo going in. Hours later I saw Uyathandwa and other his brother, they went in with a white girl. I waited and finally Thandeka also walked in the hospital. Later she came out with her husband. They got in the car and stayed there talking. Samkelo went back inside the hospital. Thandeka drove off. I followed her. She was driving pretty fast. I thought she was working around the suburbs but it was far from her neighbourhood. We passed Alpine and I didn't even know where we were heading. She made a turn leading her to a building that was like a warehouse but it looked new like it was recently renovated. There were lot of cars parked on the parking lot. Beautiful cars not just cars. Thandeka went inside that place. I found a spot where I could see everything without anyone noticing my car. By 5 pm. People were leaving. It was different kinds of races, black people, white people, Indians, coloureds some looked like African Americans. I just wondered what kind of work were they were doing. They looked fancy and rich. I stayed hoping Thandeka will come out too but she didn't. The time was now 7 pm and it was dark outside. She finally came out with a man. They both had boxes on their hands. They walked towards Thandeka's car. I got out of my car, I had my gun with me and I walked closer to the tree where Thandeka can see me when she leaves. They put the boxes at the backseat of the car. Thandeka walked the guy to his car. They handshake and hugged each other. The guy stepped inside the car and he drove off. Thandeka went back to the building. I took my chance and went inside the premises before the gate closed. I stood next to Thandeka's car. It was the only car left. I waited for about 30 minutes she finally came out with a small box. She noticed that I was standing next to her car. She locked the doors and walked up to me walking slowly. I met her halfway.

Thandeka: Wow! Wow! I must say I am impressed.

Me: What? You thought you're the only who is smart? Well you're not alone. So is this the place where you draw buildings?

Thandeka: You're such a bitch you know. To have my son's arm broken just to have my attention.

Me: I just had to take a drastic decision.

Thandeka: What do you want Kimberly Smith?

Me: I want you to free my husband. Just like you managed to put him in jail.

Thandeka: That's cute. How do you want me to do that konje?

Me: Just come up with a plan just like you came up with that plan of putting him in prison.

Thandeka: And if I don't come up with that plan?

Me: Then I will start from the bottom. Break another bone until there are no bones left to that mean little boy of yours. Then we have the smart boy with the glasses and your daughter with that baby boy she has. Oh and lastly the husband. You don't want to loose them one by one. Just like you took my husband away from me.

She put the box down. She walked closer to me.

Thandeka: Listen here baby girl. Your husband will be the first person to know about this little threat you're saying. Do you think he'll stay with you if he can find out that you're here threatening the mother of his kids?

Me: He loves me. Themba loves me and he'll understand why I did this.

She laughed sarcastically. That made me mad.

Thandeka: You got the manners, the respect, you clean, you cook, and you have experience in looking after kids. And as a bonus you have the vagina of course he likes you. That's why he cheated with an almost copy of me because he likes you enough because of those things you can do. If I were you I would go back home and continue to be a good wife and wait for him to come out of prison. If you can walk away now I will forgive you. I won't tell him about this and I promise I won't tell my husband. It will be water under bridge. But if you don't then be ready to say goodbye to Themba, his money, his beautiful house and his beautiful daughter. Which is which? Because honey believe me he will leave your flat ass.

Me: There are lot of good things I have done for him. He will forgive me.

Thandeka: Let me see there were lots of good things I did for him too. I even reunited him with his parents. I stayed away and raised our son. I still took him back even after that. I gave him a daughter. I found our son when he was missing. I won't count the rest but still he left me. And you think he won't leave you?

I slapped her, she was making me angry because she was bringing in kids and she knew that I couldn't give Themba kids.

Thandeka: You don't want to fight me Kimberly believe me. You don't.

Me: I am not scared of you.

I said and punched her. If I wasn't getting my husband back I was going to mess her face up just to feel better. She grabbed me by my hair and I screamed. I punched her stomach, she groaned and kicked me in an unbelievable way. I thought she was just a suburb girl who knows nothing about fighting. I didn't get down. We just fought as much as she was messing my face I was doing the same to her until she had me down. I had no strength to fight back anymore. She was on top of me. I slowly took my gun and I shot her on the stomach. She had that look with pain written on her face. She was on the ground holding her wound. I stood up.

Thandeka: Themba will never forgive you for this.

Me: Maybe that's where you're mistaken. You think he's still head over hills in love with you but honey he's not.

Thandeka: One last advice. If I was you. I would take my daughter, some of his cash and leave this country because it's not him only who'll be after you. My husband will find you. And his hatred matches his goodness. You don't want to mess with him. There's Uyathandwa. He doesn't like you for a bit. He'll find you and I don't want him exposed to all the hatred that comes with pain so for his sake please just leave. And there's my partner and everyone that I work with. They'll destroy you. You will be nothing. Just go Kimberly.

Me: That's where you're mistaken. I can never be nothing. It's you who will be just a useless woman on the wheelchair. You won't even be able to satisfy your husband's needs. I want you to feel pain when he starts sleeping with other women. Then you'll remember my face. I shot her again on the stomach. Then I shot both her legs. I shot her shoulder once. I then took her phone on that box. I called the ambulance. I didn't want her to die. I wanted her to be useless. I then left her bleeding. I opened the small gate and I went to my car. I drove off. I was going straight home. I wasn't going to run.....

Samkelo Ndunakazi.....

The time for us to leave Alupheli came. Uyathandwa was going to drive us.

Uyathandwa: Mesuli should we drive Britney home?

Mesuli: Yes.

We all stepped inside the car and Uyathandwa drove off. Uyathandwa was not asking for directions to Britney's house.

Me: Do you know where she lives Uyathandwa?

Uyathandwa: Uhm... Yes I know.

Me: Heeh Ayi.

Britney: Mr Ndunakazi don't you think you must follow your wife. Maybe she'll be in danger there.

Me: Don't worry, she won't be alone.

Britney: Okay.

She had a conversation with her boyfriend. I was on the front seat and they were both at the backseat. Uyathandwa kept on looking at me.

Me: What?

Uyathandwa: Worried about something?

Me: No. I am not.

He laughed and nodded. When I first met Mesuli's girlfriend they were both outside the school gate waiting for their rides. I asked Mesuli to bring her to me I wanted to greet her. She was nervous but I just kept my cool. She's quite a decent girl. Uyathandwa parked his car by the girl's home. Mesuli got off the car with her.

Britney: Goodbye Mr Ndunakazi and Ethan.

Us: Bye.

Mesuli walked her to her house.

Me: She calls you Ethan.

Uyathandwa: Yes. She can't pronounce Uyathandwa. What do you think about her?

Me: She's fine. I don't see anything wrong.

Uyathandwa: Me too. I think they are good together. They both love science.

Me: Heeh! You know a lot about them.

Uyathandwa: I am the older brother dad remember? I must know a lot. And Mesuli doesn't make friends so he speaks to me.

Me: I am glad that you're there for him. He hardly opens up.

Uyathandwa: Yeah. And he share other things with grandma.

I nodded. Mesuli came back and Uyathandwa drove off. I looked at him.

Me: Why didn't you kiss her?

Mesuli: Dad come on.

Me: I saw that you wanted to kiss her.

Mesuli: Well remember you protested when Alondwe wanted to kiss her husband.

Me: No Alondwe is a girl. I can't see her kissing. Ayi that's not good.

They laughed. I shook my head.

Mesuli: I will kiss her next time.

Me: Does she like the way you kiss her.

Them: Hhaybo Dad!

Me: What? I just want to know. You see your mom, we also started dating in Grade 12. And she liked the way I kissed her. And whenever she was mad or when she starts shouting if I don't want to argue I would just surprise her and kiss her. Then she'll just shut up and stop shouting.

They laughed. I laughed too. Those were some of the good moments.

Uyathandwa: Mom has been like this since high school?

Me: Yes and she hasn't changed. She talks too much and she loves shouting. I remember when I was falling in love with her. Some day we were inside her class and her teacher humiliated me in front of her classmates. What made me angry the most was that she was also there. It doesn't feel right if you're humiliated in the presence of the girl you love.

Thandeka pushed me out of the classroom and we were outside. She was busy talking about how much I was rude to the teacher. I just kissed her there everyone was watching. Teachers and pupils. And they beat us for that.

They laughed.

Mesuli: Y'all have such secrets?

Uyathandwa: Why you never tell us? anyway how did you guys fall in love and end up together.

Me: You should ask your sister. She knows. Our relationship were her bedtime stories. And her mom used to tell her about it because she was always asking about Matthew and Joy.

Uyathandwa: We want your version of it.

Mesuli: Yeah I want to hear it.

Me: I will tell you one day don't worry.

Them: We won't forget.

I nodded. We arrived at home. Mom was with Kiara. I went upstairs. Uyathandwa and Mesuli filled her in about Alupheli.

Time went by Thandeka didn't come back. The time was about 6: 39 pm. Thandeka wasn't home. I took my phone and Called her.

Thandeka: My love?

Me: A.a don't my love me, you're supposed to be home now. Where are you?

Thandeka: Muzi and I are wrapping on some things I will be home soon don't worry.

Me: Please be safe.

Thapelo: Don't worry I will be.

I hung up the call and I started working on financial reports. After 7 I called her again.

Thandeka: Okay. I am on my way out now.

Me: Where's Muzi?

Thandeka: He's gone. I am alone now but I am leaving now.

Me: Are you insane? How can you be alone there. What if they followed you? You can be careless sometimes yazi. Tsk!

I hung up the call and I took her car keys. She called me back. I didn't answer. I was mad at her. She's just careless.

Uyathandwa: Dad where are you going?

Me: Your mom is alone in that center by the look of things she's not planning on leaving.

Uyathandwa: I am coming with you.

Mesuli: I am coming too.

Me: No. You stay here and study. Don't you have a test tomorrow?

Mom: Your father is right go and study.

He nodded. Uyathandwa and I left. I was driving pretty fast on the road. I called her again. She didn't answer her phone.

Uyathandwa: Why isn't she answering?

Me: I don't know she must be angry maybe.

Uyathandwa: Ah mom is in no position to be angry right now. She shouldn't be.

Me: Please tell her that when we see her. Tsk! Thandeka!

Within thirty minutes I was was at the gate. Her car was still there.

Uyathandwa: Dad there's a body on the ground can you open the gate?

Me: Yeah I know the code combination.

I punched it and the gate opened. I drove in. We got off the car both of us.

Me: Shit! No!

I ran up to her. I held her. She was still alive. She tried to talk.

Me: No! Don't talk. You're loosing too much blood. Uyathandwa you'll drive my car. Take her box and her phone.

Uyathandwa: Okay.

As I was trying to take her. The ambulance arrived. I quickly ran to the gate and I opened it. They drove through. They quickly attended her. Uyathandwa was crying. I couldn't cry. I

shouldn't cry. I had to be strong for her.

Me: Hey don't cry.

Uyathandwa: So much blood dad.

Me: Hey she's strong. She'll pull through.

I hugged him tightly and eventually he was calm. We followed the ambulance. They were driving her to the hospital. I was driving her car and Uyathandwa was driving mine. On the road I was praying and hoping that she survives. But she will survive. She has to. I mean she knows that I can't make it without her. She just has to survive.

We arrived at the hospital, I did the paperwork and I gave them the medical aid card. They took her to theatre immediately. Uyathandwa and I waited. I told him to call his uncle Andile. I was going to call Muzi. He did that. I called Muzi.

Muzi: Ndunakazi?

Me: Hey man I think you have to do something, my wife was shot. She was still on the center. Soon they will call the police and I thought maybe you might do something about that because they'll ask questions about your work and all that.

Muzi: How did this happen? Is she shot badly?

Me: It's bad man but I have hope.

Muzi: Don't worry about the police our organisation is registered. We do work with them sometimes.

Me: Okay.

Muzi: Do you need anything?

Me: No. We're still waiting here. She's in theatre.

Muzi: Alright I will be there first thing in the morning.

Me: Okay sure.

I hung up the call and I went back to Uyathandwa.

Uyathandwa: Malume said he'll be here in the morning. He'll come with Alondwe. He'll go to her in the morning.

Me: Okay. She also needs to be around her family right now.

Uyathandwa: Who was on her dad? Any clues?

Me: The clue we have is that, the person is near or in Western Cape. And that earring.

Uyathandwa: Wait? Western cape? There's only one person who doesn't like mom in western cape that I know of.

Me: Who?

Uyathandwa: My stepmother Kimberly. Do you still have the picture of the earring?

Me: Yes. Let me show you.

I paged through my pictures and I showed him the picture. He clicked his tongue.

Me: What?

Uyathandwa: Why didn't you guys ask me about this? Or tell me. This earring belongs to Kimberly my dad was with me when he bought them for her. For her birthday.

Me: That bitch! Oh she better pray that I don't find her. She better pray.

Uyathandwa: Not if my dad finds her first.

Me: But your father –

Uyathandwa: He started this project inside and it was a huge success it was big. They wanted him to take it to the world because it is going to help many people. So they let him out yesterday. He was planning on coming here to thank you and mom for taking care of me.

Me: But still your father. Kimberly is his wife.

Uyathandwa: Weee you don't know my father, that will count zero to him. This is my mom we're talking about and he loved her. So that won't count.

Me: But I want Kimberly myself.

Uyathandwa: No dad, don't. You must be here with mom. She needs us now. We can't leave.

I will call dad now.

Me: Okay. I will go check your brother.

He nodded. I went to wash the blood on my hands and I zipped my jacket. I went to Alupheli. He was watching cartoons, laughing and eating. I sat down.

Me: Hey.

Alupheli: Dad? You're back.

Me: Yes. How are you feeling? You're good?

Alupheli: Yes I am good. Is mom fine?

Me: Yeah. She's good.

Alupheli: Okay. Tomorrow she said she will discharge me. I just want to be a baby and sleep with my mom. Just like you slept on grandma.

I smiled a little, I didn't expect that one

Thapelo Moloi.....

When my mom said she was making special dinner for me I didn't know that she was bringing Cassandra along. I was just surprised to see her. At the dinner table I was just quiet.

Mom: Are you enjoying your dinner Thapelo?

I didn't say anything.

Dineo: My sister Alondwe will not like this Thapelo.

Mom: Dineo! Don't you mention that name ever again. Not in this house.

Tsepo: I don't believe a single thing you're saying about Alondwe. She's kind and sweet.

Cassandra: But I am also kind and sweet.

Dineo: And you are nothing to our brother.

Cassandra: Thapelo please say something.

I didn't say anything. All I was thinking about was what Alondwe said to me. "I think I want a divorce" No! She can't divorce me. We can't divorce each other. I love her and maybe things can still work between us. I just couldn't bring myself to think about my life without her. I have been with her my whole life. Since high school till the present year that was my whole life. I stood up.

Mom: Thapelo you haven't touched your dinner.

Me: I am not hungry anymore.

I left the main house. I went to my room. I looked at our wedding picture that was on the wall. We were just happy. I couldn't let her go. I felt hands touching me.

Me: Alondwe?

I turned back quickly and it was Cassandra.

Me: Don't you have a boyfriend and a life?

Cassandra: I do have a boyfriend but I left the second your mom told me about what happened. I still love you Thapelo.

I needed to release my anger and she just brought herself to me. So I was going to take it out on her. She has no self respect clearly she just wants to be used for sex. I wasn't going to let the opportunity pass me by maybe after it I can think rationally and try to think how can Alondwe say my mom killed our baby because mom had accepted her and they got along. Or maybe they were both pretending? Those questions were for after. Now there's a chicken in front of me and she needs me to eat her. I wasted no time I kissed her. She kissed me back. I ripped off her tiny dress. She had no panties and bra underneath. I smiled wondering how was she going to leave my house because after I was going to chase her out. Cassandra has been wanting me for years so I was going to give her what she was after.

I took a condom.

Cassandra: No baby I like it raw.

Me: You're not my wife. You don't get to choose or say the rules here. You want this or not?

Cassandra: I want you.

I put it on and I fucked her as hard as I could. All my anger that was burning inside me I was expressing it to her and she was just enjoying everything. From there I knew that she's not the woman for me and she can never be the woman for me. If I had a tough day at work or if I go home angry. I do try to use sex to release my anger but Alondwe always feels that I am angry and she'll stop me. And tell me to talk about what is bothering me. This one was just screaming my name she didn't even notice that something was wrong with me. Even if Alondwe can divorce me I can never go to Cassandra. I came and I got off her. I went to dispose the condom and I took a shower. She joined me inside the shower.

Cassandra: That was amazing.

I didn't say anything. I just closed my eyes. I wanted to cry but I wasn't about to cry in front of her. If Alondwe can find out about this she can never forgive me. That was stupid of me. I hit the wall.

Cassandra: What's wrong?

Me: Can you please leave me alone when you're done with the shower?

Cassandra: But your mom said I will sleep here.

Me: You can sleep in my old room inside the main house but not here. I want to be alone.

Cassandra: Okay. I will give you time.

If she cared she was going to make me talk and be available for me emotionally but she didn't care about my emotions. I left the shower and I dried my body. She followed after me and did the same. There was a knock on the door.

Cassandra: Do you want me to get that?

Me: No.

I wrapped myself with a towel and I went to attend the door. I was sure that it was my mom. I opened and I was shocked to see my wife on my door. Hearing her say all those words I just wished I could just hug her and put everything behind us. But Cassandra just had to show her face. Alondwe was hurt and she left. I went back to wear something.

Cassandra: You can't go to her. She killed your daughter. You're even crying for her. What kind of man are you?

Me: You must be gone when I come back.

I ran after her and the pain on her eyes. What was I thinking on the first place? Sleeping with Cassandra? Out of all women Cassandra? I had to follow her. In the apartment she threatened me with a knife. I wasn't going to leave. I slept on the chair looking at her sleeping.

In the morning we had an argument. I wasn't going to admit that I slept with Cassandra.

Never! That didn't even count to me. I hid the whole truth. I just told her that I almost slept with her. She wanted me gone so I respected her wish and I went back home. No one was home so I used that chance to search for some evidence. I searched everywhere but there was no evidence. I went to my old room in the house and I searched it. I went to my pill cabinet. I saw the container. It was an abortion pills container. It was written my mom's name on it.

She must have bought it with her medical aid. I sat on the floor and I cried. I stood up and destroyed everything in my room. I then took my dad's golf stick. I destroyed all the precious dishes that my mom loved so much. I finished it wasn't enough. I took the washing basket and I went to her room. I took all her graduation gowns. I took her qualifications that were on the wall, I took the brandy of my dad. I went to the empty garage and I set everything on fire. I drank half a bottle of the brandy. They came back home. They saw me on the garage and they all came to me. Cassandra was still with them.

Mom: Oh my poor baby.

She tried to hold me. I pushed her. She screamed.

Dad: Thapelo!

I stood up reluctantly.

Mom: What's going on Thapelo?

Me: I destroyed all your precious dishes. I took all your graduation gowns and your qualifications I burnt them all.

Dad: Why would you do that? Do you want me to punch you. I can do it boy.

Me: It's not enough mom. All those things I did, they are not enough because you can still get them back but my daughter. My little baby girl. I won't get her back. She's gone forever. You knew how difficult it was for me to lose my first child but you continued and killed my only hope.

Mom: That girl must have poisoned you.

I took the pills out of my pocket and I showed them to her and dad.

Me: Are you going to tell me that Alondwe took your medical aid card and bought these? And plant them here? In my old room?

Mom: I don't know maybe she did. She's a Doctor after all.

My dad sat down on the floor.

Dad: Tell me it's not true Josephine.

Mom: Honey I didn't do it.

Me: I thought maybe you'll be sorry but you're not even sorry.

I took the pills from them and I walked away slowly.

Cassandra: What about me Thapelo? We made love last night?

Me: My mom will marry you and make you her daughter in-law she always wanted that anyway.

Cassandra: Maybe I am pregnant you know. I know we used protection but maybe it broke.

I laughed and shook my head. I looked at her.

Me: You need redemption.

Tsepo: Brother you can't drive you are drunk.

Me: I need to see my wife. I need to apologize.

Tsepo: Okay. I will drive you to her.

Dineo: I am coming too. I want to see her.

I agreed and they drove me to my wife.

\*\*\*\*\*

Alondwe Moloji....

I woke up in the morning Thapelo was sleeping on the chair facing my direction. I prayed and I went to shower. When I was done. The bed was made and he wasn't inside the room. I moisturised my body and wore warm pyjamas. I went to the kitchen. He was making breakfast. I sat down.

Me: Why are you still here? It's rude to have sex with a lady and leave her alone.

Thapelo: I didn't have sex with her. Here's your breakfast.

Me: Thanks. You didn't have sex with her?

Thapelo: Where's your medication?

Me: I asked you a question Thapelo!

Thapelo: Where's your medication?

I told him where it was and he went to get it. We had breakfast together.

Thapelo: We can't get divorced.

Me: Why?

Thapelo: Our kids won't like it. We must be together forever so that they can be happy to see us together. And we must be happy for us and them.

Me: So you tasted Cassandra's cake and you felt the difference now you're here using our kids as an excuse?

Thapelo: Okay. We can't let my mom win. Alondwe I love you please don't leave me. I will hang myself then. I will be with our kids and you can live your life without us.

Me: STOP IT! STOP!

He didn't say anything. He looked down.

Me: I don't want to fight with you please go back home. I want to be alone and think.

Thapelo: I love you I can't –

Me: If you love me you'll leave me alone.

He nodded, he took his things and left. I sighed. I took my medication and I went to watch TV. I ended up falling asleep.

I was woken up by a knock on the door. I went to the door. I opened. My uncle Andile was on the door. His eyes were red and puffy. He hugged me. I hugged him back.

Me: What's wrong?

Andile: We need to go to KZN.

Me: Why? What's wrong?

Andile: It's your mom. She's in the hospital. She's been shot. It's not looking good.

Me: Oh God. No!

Andile: Please go and start packing.

I nodded and I went to pack my clothes. I couldn't stop crying. Who must have shot my mom? What happened. I changed my pyjamas and I called my uncle and he took my bags. I took my medication, keys and we headed to the door. I opened the door. Thapelo was on the door with his siblings. He was drunk. I wiped my tears.

Me: What are you doing here?

Thapelo: I love you and I want to be with you. I am sorry.

Andile: I will give you guys some time. You will find me outside in my car.

I nodded and he left.

Me: Are you drunk? (He nodded) Why were you drinking Thapelo? Please bring him inside guys.

They went inside with him. They put him on the couch. Then they hugged me both.

Them: We are sorry about what happened to Bokang.

Me: Thank you. Can you give us some time?

They nodded and went to the guest bedroom. I sat next to Thapelo. He took out pills box and he gave them to me. I read them.

Thapelo: I am sorry I didn't believe you.

Me: Baby can we not do this now. I need to go home my mom is in the hospital. She was shot.

Thapelo: You called me baby?

Me: No. I mean Thapelo.

Thapelo: I will go with you. Maybe she'll be happy if we are together.

Me: No. You're not coming with me you are drunk.

I stood up and he stood up too.

Me: Thapelo You're not coming with me. Dineo! Tsepo!

They came to me.

Me: Please look after him I have to go.

They nodded. Thapelo was looking at me crying. Oh dear Jesus! I just hugged him. He hugged me back.

Thapelo: I love you.

Me: I know. I will come back and we will talk Okay?

He nodded, we let go, he kissed my forehead and I kissed his cheek.

Thapelo: Your mother will be alright. Have a safe trip

Me: Thanks. Bye guys.

Them: Bye.

Thapelo: I will walk you out.

Me: No! Stay. Guys please hold him.  
They did and I left....

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

I didn't know what I was going to say to Alupheli. He was really looking forward to be a child to his mom but his mom was in the hospital. When he was asleep I went back to Uyathandwa. I sat next to him.

Uyathandwa: I can't get hold of dad.

Me: Maybe he must have disposed his phone. If they released him I don't think that phone was still with him. You'll call him tomorrow.

Uyathandwa: Yeah. Maybe because the last time I spoke to him was yesterday morning.

Me: Okay.

Uyathandwa: I don't know what can I do if she can die. I don't think –

Me: Please don't even think about it. I don't want to talk about or even think about it.

He nodded. I didn't want to think about that nor even talk about it because I couldn't imagine my life without Thandeka. My phone rang. I took it out.

Me: Mesuli?

Mesuli: Dad why are you guys taking this long to come back home?

Me: I am so sorry for not calling you. Your mother is in the hospital. She was shot boy. The line went dead. Maybe I shouldn't have told him. But you don't hide such things.

Uyathandwa: What did he say?

Me: He did not say anything. He just hung up.

Uyathandwa: Call him again dad. Tell him not to come here. He must study. Mesuli will come.

I nodded and I called him again.

Mesuli: I am coming.

Me: No you're not going to come. Just stay at home study or rest. Your mother is still in theatre there's nothing you can possible do here do you understand?

Mesuli: Yes dad.

Me: Good.

I hung up the call. After an two hours or so. I was sleepy. The Doctors finally came to us.

Doctor: You're must be her husband?

Me: Yes I am and this is our son. What is happening?

Doctor: Your wife lost a lot of blood and she was shot badly on the stomach. The other bullet damaged her womb and she might not be able to walk for a long time. Not forever but for a long time. But we managed to take the bullets out. It was five bullets. She needs blood and luckily we do have her blood type. She's unconscious but maybe by the end of this month she'll wake up. Or even earlier than that.

Me: Thank you Doctor. Can we see her?

Doctor: Just for a few minutes not longer than fifteen minutes. She must rest.

I nodded. I didn't understand how can she say she must rest while she's unconscious. Isn't she resting? I was angry, very angry. That stupid woman shot my wife five times.

Uyathandwa: Five times? Because of my father's penis really? That's why she shot her?

Me: You'll be amazed, things people do for a dick. It's not like Themba was dead and they are married. Married couples in prison are given privacy.

Uyathandwa: She must answer for this.

Me: Don't worry she will.

We arrived to her room. I asked them to put her on a private room. We sat down beside her. She was just laying there with the machine beeping, and a lot of pipes on her body. I held her hand.

Me: Hey it's me. I hope you can hear me. I just want you to know that I love you. I know you'll fight for us. Our kids need you. Alondwe just lost a baby and she can't lose you too. And I need you in my life Thandeka please just fight. Please –

Uyathandwa held my shoulder. I buried my face on the bed. It was painful. I couldn't imagine the pain she was feeling, what was she thinking? Did she even think? Was she near death? Or she was still with us on earth? I wished someone could answer me but nobody could.

Uyathandwa: Mom it's Uyathandwa. Please mom don't leave us. I know you might see some peace and light shining through don't follow it. We still need you here. Your work isn't done. Mom please. We love you.

I let go of her hand. I wiped my tears and I kissed her forehead. We then left. We decided that we will not tell them who shot her. I drove her car and Uyathandwa drove mine.

When we arrived at home, mom and Mesuli were still on the lounge. Mesuli stood up and he came to hug me. I hugged him back.

Mesuli: Is she fine?

Me: She's still breathing and she'll be fine. Don't worry she'll come back to us. It may not be now but she will.

He nodded and we went to sit down.

Mom: How did this happen?

Me: I don't know mom but she was on the ground on the parking lot where she works.

Mom: Do you think her bosses didn't want her to leave the job?

Me: No. It's not like that. There were people outside who didn't like her and we didn't know who those people are. They are the ones who are behind the fight that Alupheli was involved in.

Mom: Oh Nkosi Jesu! Can we pray?

We held each others hands and we prayed together. After prayer I went upstairs.

Mom: You should eat Samkelo.

Me: I will eat in the morning mom.

She nodded. I went to my room. I locked it and I tried to sleep but it was hard sleeping. I kept on looking at her bedside. I just didn't want her to leave me. I couldn't survive without her.

In the morning I was late for work. Uyathandwa and Mesuli were gone. I went downstairs dressed up. It was 10am. Alupheli was on the dinner table having breakfast.

Me: Hey boy. Who brought you?

Alupheli: You lied to me last night. You said mom is fine while mom was in the hospital. You made me believe that she will hold me like a baby tonight. Why did you do that dad?

I sat down with him. I looked at him.

Me: I am sorry for lying to you. But you were so happy watching those cartoons and you were laughing again. I didn't want to make you sad.

Alupheli: Uyathandwa took me to her. She can't even speak or move. Will she wake up?

Me: Yes. We just have to ask God to wake her up because we need her. Everything will be alright.

He nodded and said: I love you dad.

Me: I love you too my son. Now eat your breakfast.

He nodded and ate his breakfast. I had cereals then I left for work. Lunch time I went to the hospital. Thandeka was still the same. Thobelani was also there. I found him inside the room. We spoke for a few minutes. I didn't stay much longer. I went back to work. I was going to come back after work. I couldn't stay at home and do nothing it was going to drive me crazy. After work I drove home first. I wanted to change before I go to the hospital. I arrived at home and everyone was on the lounge. It was just crowded. I stood by the door and looked at them.

Me: What's going on?

Andile: We were just waiting for you so that we can go together to the hospital.

Me: Oh.

I sighed. It was just my family. Alondwe stood up and she came hug me.

Alondwe: Dad.

Me: Hey baby don't cry.

Alondwe: She's going to be alright, right?

Me: Yes. She will be. She has to be alright.

She nodded and we let go. I went upstairs and I changed. I then went back downstairs. I drove with my kids and mom. Andile was with Uyathandwa, Sphephile and Kiara. We arrived at the hospital and we went to her room. She was the same. I sat down and mom sat down because there were only two chairs. Everyone was just quiet.

Kiara: Gogo are you feeling pain?

Mom: She won't answer you baby she can hear you.

Alupheli: Mom, dad is wearing that ugly t-shirt you bought for him. The one that he didn't like.

They all laughed at his statement.

Me: Don't say it's ugly, your mom cried when I told her that.

They laughed. I smiled and held her hand.

Mom: Thandeka you can't leave my son now. And the kids we all need you.

Alondwe: I just lost a baby and my husband was in that dark. He still needs me. I need you mom. You can't die and leave me too.

Andile: And Thandeka we love you. You had your way of seeing us all through. You glued us together so if you can go now we don't know who'll be there for us. Even if you had your own problems you tried to be there for us all. We need you.

Mesuli: And I don't want to say goodbye. I am not ready to say goodbye. You are supposed to see me becoming a scientist and be proud of me. Please mom don't go.

She held my hand tightly. I stood up.

Me: Thandeka!

Thandeka: I love you....

She let go of my hand and the machine started beeping fast.

Alupheli: Alondwe you're a Doctor. Do something.

She went closer to the machine and she just cried. I felt like something in me was dying with her, like she was leaving me, she was taking something from me, why did she leave me??

Alondwe Moloi.....

We arrived at home, everyone was there except for my father. They all looked at me with pity. I tried to smile and looked aside. They all stood up. My grandmother was the one who hugged me first.

Gogo: How are you holding up baby?

Me: Some days are bad, some worst and some better. I don't know if I will survive.

She looked at me and wiped my tears.

Gogo: You're grieving now?

Me: Yeah. He pushed the last button and I couldn't take it anymore. But he knows the truth now.

Gogo: That's very much better. You see? There's hope after all.

I smiled and nodded. Uyathandwa hugged me.

Uyathandwa: I am happy to see you here. Everything will be alright.

Me: Will it really be alright?

Uyathandwa: Yes time will heal the wounds.

Me: Thank you bhuti.

Mesuli came next. He smiled and hugged me.

Mesuli: You won't break Sisi. You're mom's daughter and breaking genes are not on us.

Me: Thank you.

Alupheli: I had high hopes that my team is growing. Kiara is also on my team. I got the sauce so bonke abashana baphethwe yimi. I am sorry Sisi.

Me: I supposed she'll be looking over you wherever she is and she'll wish that she got the chance to know you and everyone else.

Alupheli: I also wish I had known her. Maybe she was going to have dimples like her dad then that's a reason for Kiara to smile always. But God will give you another one don't worry.

I nodded and hugged him. I then went to sit down next to my son.

Me: Hey champion man.

Sphephile: Grandma is sick.

Me: I know but she'll be alright.

Sphephile: No. She won't be alright. She will leave us

Me: Why would you say that?

Sphephile: Every people who are shot in movies they die mom. What if grandma dies?

Me: She's the starring baby she won't die.

I hugged him and kissed his forehead. He touched my stomach, then he looked at me.

Sphephile: Where's Bokang? She's at home with chocolate man?

I looked at him and cried. Uncle Andile sat next to me and he held me very tight.

Sphephile: Khulu why is mama crying?

Gogo: Bokang left your mother baby. That's why she's crying.

Sphephile: She died?

Gogo: Yes.

Sphephile cried. The pain didn't stop, it just kept on hurting and hurting. I cried. My grandmother started praying. I cried until I was sleepy. I closed my eyes and I fell asleep.

I woke up later and my grandmother gave me food. Kiara was awake. She came to sit next to me. I ate the food. My medication was next to the food.

Kiara: Aunty where is uncle?

Me: He's at home baby.

Kiara: He will come to see grandma?

Me: I don't know. You want to see him?

Kiara: Yes I want to see him.

Me: Okay.

I finished eating and I took my medication. Sphephile took the dishes and he went to the kitchen with them. Dad came back home when he looked at us it was like he was waiting for us to say mom is dead. I could see that he was very scared. I was happy to see him. Seeing mom on that hospital bed looking like that was hard. I didn't see any hope and when the machine beeped faster I just knew that she was gone. Everyone cried. My dad held her body and he cried. He cried so bad that it cut through my heart. I just left the room when the Doctors came inside the room. I walked around and I took out my phone. I called Thapelo, he didn't answer his phone. I tried again he didn't answer his phone. I stopped who knows maybe he went back to Cassandra. Maybe I am a fool to think things can work between us. Obviously they slept together. My mom just died and I will loose my husband too after loosing my baby.

Voice: Alondwe?

I know that voice, I stopped crying and I turned back. It was him, I just cried he came closer to me. He opened his arms, I snuggled myself on him. He hugged me tightly.

Thapelo: I asked your brother for the name of the hospital. How is your mom?

Me: She's gone Thapelo. She just left without saying goodbye. Without giving us a warning. She just left.

Thapelo: I thought –

Me: I thought that too. I thought she was going to fight but she didn't. Maybe she found peace and she just decided to leave us behind. Why did she leave us. She left my dad with who?

Thapelo: Do you think she'll see –

Me: It's an after life, maybe she will see them all. Her parents, her two dead kids and our kids.

Thapelo: She's not suffering anymore Twinkie. There's no pain and misery where she is. You will go through it. I am here for you.

Me: Can you take me home?

Thapelo: But your family?

Me: I just want to go home..

He nodded, we backed away from each other and we went to take a cab. We arrived at home and I sat down on the couch. He sat next to me. We sat in silence I wasn't crying anymore.

Me: Your mom and I were just pretending. We didn't like each other. It was just a front to make you happy and for the sake of peace.

Thapelo: Wait. You mean all those times you agreed to go home and you'll cook dinner together for us. It was just you two pretending?

Me: Yes. We were just pretending. She never accepted me. And I wasn't going to spend the rest of my days trying to prove myself to her. When she came to the house. I thought because she loves you and she wants to see you happy she won't do anything to the baby. She had made both tea and soup. I drank both and ate her food. I then went to sleep. I woke up there was blood and I was in pain my phone was not next to me anymore. I had to go to it and call for help. I fell on the floor with my stomach hitting the floor. Maybe if I didn't fall the baby would have survived. That's what happened.

I looked at him. He wasn't looking at me. His hands were on his face. He was crying.

Thapelo: If I knew that you guys were pretending I wasn't going to call her. And I called her because your aunt was not available and Mandy was not in the apartment. So she was my last option. So this is all my fault.

Me: Hey look at me.

He didn't look at me. He just shook his head.

Me: Thapelo look at me please.

Thapelo: I can't look at you. I am sorry.

I removed his hands from his face and I made him look at me. His eyes kept on wondering around.

Me: This won't work if you're going to feel guilty of the things you did to me and it won't work if you don't want to look at me. I am trying here just meet me halfway please. I want to mourn my mom knowing that I have fixed this thing between us. And we must put it behind us for good. So please meet me halfway and look at me.

He swallowed hard and looked at me.

Me: Listen to me, I understood everything that was happening with you. Sbahle was just faking being sick of my problems that was her method to see if you still care about me.

Mpendulo didn't do that on purpose, we were trying to help you. I didn't want to leave you in the dark. I love you and I don't any harm to come to you as much as you don't want that for me. But your mom did all those things to you. It wasn't you. We're not just blaming her because we need someone to blame. She did it because she only cares about no one but herself. But me and you no one can ever separate us. Not even Cassandra. I know that you

slept with her. I saw that you were just lying. Your mom brought her to you and because you were angry at me you did what you did. But do not, not even for a second do not blame yourself. It's not your fault. You didn't know that we were pretending. I am your wife and Sbahle helped me understand what you were going through.

Thapelo: So you forgive me for everything that I have done to you? You forgive me for sleeping with Cassandra? You forgive for breaking our home and letting the devil in our lives?

Me: I forgive you my love. I forgive you. Love keeps no records of wrong. You said it too our kids will want to see us happy not fighting each other. So you will forgive yourself and we will put this behind us?

Thapelo: You will punish me for what I did?

Me: No I won't. I do not fight fire with fire. And if you deserve punishment that's God's work to judge and place judgement. And God gave us Jesus Christ, he throws our sins away and he forgives and forget them. Same will go for your mom. We won't punish her. We are Christians right?

Thapelo: Yes I will try to forgive myself. I don't deserve you but I thank God for your father who chased you out when you were pregnant and you came to Johannesburg. I love you and I will spend the rest of my days trying to make you happy. And we will get through losing our baby together, we will get through losing your mother together and I will make sure that my mom doesn't come anywhere near us. I will try and forgive her then let God deal with her but I don't want her to be part of our lives anymore.

Me: That's all I want.

I wiped his tears and we hugged each other. I cried, in my heart I was thanking God for bringing him back to me but my mom. I don't know how long will it take for me to move on. I wasn't ready to say goodbye

Kimberly Smith....

I drove the car back to the car hiring manager after I have got rid of the gun and the bloody clothes I was wearing. I paid the amount I had to pay. Then I fixed myself and headed to the airport. I had to put on make up to cover the bruises. I was supposed to be home by morning. My daughter was at her friend's house. I was glad that I was done with this Thandeka drama thing that meant I can focus on myself and my family. In the morning I was opening the front door to my house. I was really tired and my body was painful. I went upstairs to my bedroom. I turned the lights on. I almost fainted. I couldn't believe my eyes. Themba was sleeping on our bed. But how? How did he – what have I done? All my work was for nothing? He opened his eyes and looked at me. I smiled. He woke up and came up to me. He hugged me and I hugged him back. He was holding me too tight and it was painful. But I didn't groan or screamed I just endure it. He didn't ask much. He just kissed me. I kissed him back. He led me to our bed, I took off his clothes and he did the same to me. I pushed him off and I went on top of him.

Me: How are you here?

Themba: You didn't trust that I was going to pull it off with that project? You thought it was a waste of time and energy? Well Thandeka didn't think so. But that's for later now I want this.

I smiled and I kissed him. I had to make this sex count. It had to wash away everything. What did he mean when he said Thandeka didn't think so? I let that go and I focused on his body. I turned and I gave him my back. I did the reversed cow girl on him. My heart was beating fast. I should have waited much longer. I should had some trust in him. I thought it was small and I thought it was going to be a prison thing but it turned out to be big. We both came and he wanted more. I just let him have me. When he was in control I was hurting because I just had

a fight the previous night with a woman who fought like a professional. We finished and we lay on the bed on our backs. Trying to catch our breaths.

Themba: That was perfect. I have missed you.

Me: I have missed you too. So how did it happen?

Themba: Thandeka helped me make my project a huge thing. We were communicating through the phone and video calls. She called when Kiara was born. Our granddaughter and she told me how much she looks like Uyabongeka. She said she didn't want me to miss out on her life so we must do something to get me out of prison. I told her that I already had an idea. I emailed her everything. She then asked if we keep us working together a secret because she didn't want her husband asking questions because Samkelo wasn't going to understand. So I didn't even tell Uyathandwa that his mom was helping me out not even you. She's the one who helped me make it possible so that I can get to see my granddaughter grow. So that means we are moving back to Durban.

Me: What? Moving back to Durban so that you can be with your ex wife?

Themba: What? Of course not. Don't be stupid. Thandeka is married and what we had is gone. Yes I will always love her, she's the mother of my kids, the grandmother of my granddaughter but it ends there. Why are you so jealous? It's not pretty now. It's disgusting. Tsk!

He left me. I sat there on the bed thinking about how that bitch played me for a fool. She was talking about Themba leaving me for threatening her because she knew that Themba was already out of jail. She knew that she helped him in secret. This was more like having an affair with my husband. How could she? Tsk! Maybe putting her on a wheelchair was not enough. I should have killed her because I will not know peace and happiness until she's dead. Tsk! I went to shower and I went to bed. I didn't want to talk to Themba when he's mad. I just tried to sleep.

When I woke up I went downstairs and my daughter was having breakfast. I sat down.

Me: Hey baby.

Sisipho: Hey mom how are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Sisipho: I am good. Are you feeling okay? You don't look good.

Me: Yeah. Where's your dad?

Sisipho: I don't know. He said he wants a phone. He must call my brother. I am going to school now.

Me: Okay bye. Have a nice day.

Sisipho: Thanks you too.

She took her bag and she left. I made breakfast for myself and my husband. I finished up and I started eating. While eating I got a call from my college.

Me: Yes it's Kimberly Smith speaking.

Secretary: You're speaking to the secretary of your department. I am calling to let you know that the H.O.D needs to see you today at 11am.

Me: Alright. I will be there.

Secretary: Thank you.

I hung up the call and I continued eating. Themba walked inside the house and he went upstairs. He didn't say anything to me. Maybe he was still angry about last night. I stood up and I went to our room. I found him taking out my clothes out of the wardrobe. He was throwing them on the floor. He was crying. I have seen him crying since his daughter died.

Me: Themba what's going?

Themba: Where were you last night?

Me: I was in Johannesburg. You know that I had to make up for not going to that trip.

Themba: You're lying to me. You know what? I want you to take all your clothes and leave

my house.

Me: What? What have I done?

Themba: You killed the mother of my child Kimberly. You killed her in cold blood. Uyathandwa doesn't have a mother now because of you. Kiara doesn't have a grandmother because of you. Thandeka's kids all three of them and her grandson they have lost an important person in their lives because of you. Samkelo? That man didn't owe me anything but he treated my son like his own. He was there for him and you took away the love of his life. His soulmate how can you be so cruel Kimberly? You saw me almost everyday but that wasn't enough for you. You just had to kill for me. And you thought I was going to love you better? Well right now I hate you.

Me: I don't know what you are talking about.

Themba: For a college student you're stupid. You thought there's a serious workplace who doesn't have cameras? The cameras showed everything.

Me: After everything that we have been through. And everything that I have done for you. You just gonna throw me out like that? And my daughter what about her?

Themba: She's not really your daughter. You know that and what everything you're talking about? Cleaning, cooking, washing and having sex with me? Come on any woman can do that. I made you a wife, gave you a child to love, I fed you and took care of you. One could never say you were unemployed but this is the thank you I get? Killing the woman who gave me kids? Do you even know the shit she went through because of me? Being threatened by my father and everything else but she stuck by my side until I decided to let her go because I was angry, because that's what I do when feel you are no longer good enough I leave you. But that a biggest mistake I have ever made because no matter how rude she can be her love was true and pure. And you killed that person?

Me: I am sorry Themba. I am really sorry. I didn't mean to do it. I was defending myself.

Themba: Listen to me and listen to me carefully, I am giving you a chance to run with your clothes and your phone. Maybe that boy who was approaching you will help you but one advice from me is, run and run faster. Make sure that I don't catch you because if I catch you. You'll regret the day you pointed a gun to Thandeka. You'll regret the day you used my money to go to KZN to kill the mother of my kids. You bought that gun with my money. So baby run and never look back but know that even if you can go under water I will you and I will mince your body and cook spaghetti for the dogs to eat you. Maybe fry some parts. You won't even have a funeral. Tsk! Now pack and leave!

I cried and started packing my clothes. I was going to sell them all. Maybe I was going to use that money to skip the country and finish college abroad. Themba wasn't going to kill me. He was just making weak threats.....

Samkelo Ndunakazi.....

The Doctors came inside the room. I was holding my wife's body. Everyone was crying and the pain i was feeling inside me was something I have never felt before. Even loosing my father wasn't that painful. The Doctors asked me to move. I moved from her. They examined her, nobody wanted to leave. I had a little hope maybe she did not die.

Doctor: I am sorry Mr Ndunakazi but your wife has left us. I am sorry.

Alupheli: Daddy? Why?

I wish I could answer him. But I also needed someone who was going to answer me. I needed someone who was going to shook me awake and tell me to wake up. I have known Thandeka for 25 years and I have been married to her for 15 years. And she just left me? She was always a part of my life even when she was still dating and married to Themba she was a part of my life and finally she left me forever with kids and grandkids. How was I supposed to cope and manage without her. Who was going take care of me? Do everything that she did

for me. I could barely look after myself because she was doing everything for me. Even if I can leave clothes on the floor she would clean after me, feed me, love me, take care of my needs, support me, push me to do what has to be done, in the morning she was my morning alarm. When she wasn't home, I was always late for work and now? She's gone?

Doctor: Please leave the room. We're sorry for your loss. But we need to take the body out of this room.

Mom: Come kids let's go.

Mesuli: Can we just stay just for a few minutes maybe she'll wake up. I mean she's my mom. She has to wake up. She can't die.

Sphephile: I want my mom. Let's go.

Kiara: Let's go.

Uyathandwa: Mesuli she's gone Brah. There's nothing we can do about it. Let's go home.

Andile: Samkelo. Let's go.

I nodded and I left the room. They all followed me. Andile asked around for Alondwe and they said she left with a man. We then drove back home. We arrived at home. My daughter was on the lounge crying so painfully. Her husband was with her. We all sat down on the couches. Kiara was asleep. They went to put her in bed. The kids were all crying. Sphephile went to his mom and his stepfather. Thapelo put him on his lap.

Mom: We need to pray.

Me: What for mom?

Mom: Samkelo you need God now more than ever.

Me: If God was there my wife would still be alive.

Mom: Don't you dare say that! Do you understand? When I lost my husband. It's prayer that helped me survive. It will help us all survive. God will never forsaken you or anyone in this family.

Alupheli: He took my mom away. My only mom.

Mesuli: My sister just lost a baby and now our mother how is that fair?

Alondwe: He's still God Mesuli. And he never change. If I know that, then nobody here should doubt him and his love for us. Pain is the most powerful emotion and it runs deep.

Very deep that it can even kill you but for the fact that mom just died a few minutes ago and you are still alive that means God is here with us. He won't leave us. Dad he won't leave us. He will never leave us.

Me: But why take your mom now Alondwe? Shouldn't he have waited for a time where we are all well and happy? Where we didn't just lost a little important member of this family?

Maybe when we have made that peace that we will never get to see Bokang alive and growing? Shouldn't he take her then? I will be able to say at least she was happy. My love was happy. My soulmate was happy.

Alondwe: I can never answer you but I am just saying he's still God and there's no other God beside him. That's how you raised us. That he's the only God we pray to. The only Jesus who died for us. You're hearing it from me dad. The pain I have been through the past two months you don't want to know about it all. So just trust him. I do.

Mom prayed and the others joined in. I didn't say anything. I had nothing to say. I didn't know what to say and how to say it. I just wanted my Thandeka back and nothing more.

Days went by and we started planning her funeral. The relatives and friends came to pay their respects. My mom and stepmother with the other ladies from the family were sitting on the candles. On the lounge we removed the couches. Everyone was heartbroken and feeling pain.

I didn't talk much, I spoke when I needed to or when someone was asking questions. I was feeling empty and heavy. There was nothing like a man doesn't cry because I spent every night crying and feeling pain. I learnt that whether you are a man or woman, pain is pain and it crashes your soul. Muzi and his colleagues did the memorial service for Thandeka. We all

attended it. It was a day that I never thought I will see. The day I never imagined. I always thought that maybe I will die first because normally that's what happens but I thought wrong. She left me clueless, miserable and lonely. My sons were hurting and I wished that I could do something to take away their pain but there was nothing I could do. I was weak myself.

Alondwe was strong. She was more stronger than she has ever been. She reminded me of Thandeka. When her father died she was in pain it was all mixed with the fact that she didn't say goodbye and a few weeks later my father died. And Thandeka was there for me like she didn't just lost her father. Alondwe was there for her brothers, niece, son and cousins like she didn't just lost a child. She was supposed to be the one who was breaking the most but she was stronger. And I admired her for forgiving her husband and moving on from what he did to her. Seeing her made me proud because I knew that my wife and I raised her right. Themba was also with us. I didn't want to talk about his wife I was going to talk about it after the funeral. I just wanted to burry my wife in peace.

The funeral day came. There were lots of people on the venue. I didn't expect that. I thought a few people were going to come just family, colleagues, church mates and friends. The service began. There were speeches.

Thobelani: (on behalf of friends) Well I am the only friend that Thandeka had but just in case there is someone on the floor who also thought was her friend Samkelo did add an "s" for you. (people laughed) Okay where do I begin? I will sing a song by one direction. Just shortly. I can't sing but the lyrics matter. \*\*\*I have loved you since we were 18 way before we both thought the same things to be loved and to be in love. All I could do is say these arms are made for holding you. I wanna love like you made feel when we were 18\*\*\*\*\* this is the song that my friend sang for a whole month when her and Samkelo broke up. She would sing it and cry so bad. It was a hard time for her. Samkelo this is a hard time for you. But Thandeka loved you since you guys were 18. And she still loves you even in death. Thandeka was a great friend. A wonderful friend someone who was able to put her loved ones needs before hers. She was always there for me. And kids, grandkids and Andile, everyone else who was closed to her. I just want to say this is saying goodnight. Come morning we will say good morning to my friend. Lala uphumule my friend. We will see you on the next life.

He got off the stage and they started a worship song. The programme continued.

Muzi: (on behalf of colleagues) We are gathered here to say goodbye to a woman who was goal driven, hard working and loving. Thandeka was committed to her job and she loved it but she was very stubborn (people laughed. I laughed too) she didn't want to back down until her point was head and taken into consideration. She loved her family a lot. I remember one day she looked like a kid who lost her candy because the project that we were working on took too much of our time. And she wanted to be with her husband. Everyone in the office knew that you don't come between Thandeka and her plans to be with Samkelo. It got us wondering what Samkelo was giving to her. (people laughed. I looked at mom and smiled. She smiled too.) She loved her family and that is what we learned from her. The importance of family because as my partner she made us feel like family in that place that we work in. Rest in peace Mam' uNdunakazi. We will miss you. You'll always be in our hearts.

Andile: (siblings and family) I don't know what to say. I am hurt because they all left me. My mother's son was the first to die, then my mom, then my father. It was Thandeka and I left and now she's gone too. Just like that. Samkelo and the kids i don't have words. But my sister is at peace. She's in a better place now. Thandeka My mother's joy. Rest in peace you left us too soon but we will carry on. Your legacy lives on. We love you.

Andile sat down and it was other people's turn. They spoke about her and gave us comforting words. I really wished that those words were comforting. But they weren't because they were not going to bring her back to us.

Alondwe: (on behalf of the children) I shouldn't be standing here because I am trembling, I am scared to face life without an original version of me. I am my mom and she was me. Everything that I am today it's her and my dad. They raised us and loved us. Growing up people always said I look like my father. I was more closed to my father. But whenever my father starts to be a "FATHER" and he'll beat me I always ran to my mom. My mom would comfort me and tell me that my father is just a boy and he wants me to be a boy like him and Uyathandwa. (People laughed and I laughed too) then my mom gave him Mesuli. And Alupheli but they were more closer to mom. Mom was our friend, our defender whenever dad wants to beat us mom will defend us from him. She was everything to us and mostly everything to our father. The love they had was too strong and beautiful. Dad? Mom is gone but we're still here don't let this pain you're feeling right now drift you apart from us. Right now we need you more and you also need us more. We are here, you and mom Namukelisiwe (referring to her) Nesulwa izinyembezi nobuhlungu (referring to Mesuli) ngo Thando lweni olungapheli. (referring to Alupheli). Look at us and see your soulmate. See the love she had for you in us. My brothers, her niece and nephew and mom's grandkids mom is in a peaceful place she's not feeling any pain. Our of her memory will always be with us and we will make her proud. Nanesh sthandwa sika honey bear, rest in peace my queen, my original version of me, my mother, my first true love. I will always love you MaDinangwe Ndunakazi. She left the stage in tears. It was painful more than any pain i have ever felt. I swear even loosing my children wasn't that painful because Thandeka was there but now? My son in-law had a musical item. I didn't even know that he can sing.

Thapelo: I just want to say rest in peace to my mother in-law. And I will sing a song for the family and everyone. Just open your hearts and listen to it.

\*\*\*\*\* After all the rain, after all the floods, after all the storms, you still God oh yes you still God. After all the pain, after all the struggle, after all the agony you still God oh yes you still God.

You still God, you still God you never change. You still God, you still God and you never change. (The way he sang and the way worshipers backed him up spoke to my soul. It's like he was the first person to tell me everything will be alright and I believed it. I held my kids hands and they held each other. They were next to me. I closed my eyes and listened to him sing. He changed the tune.)

Friends walked away and I have cried all the way but there's a voice inside of me reminding me you're here and I'm not alone. You still God, you still God you never change -"

He stopped leading but worshipers didn't stop, I opened my eyes and looked at him. He was holding the altar crying. His pain must have also arose. His wife stood up and she went to him on the stage. Alondwe hugged him and he cried inside her embrace. Once he was calm they left the stage together. The worshipers prayed and the pastor took over giving us the word of God. After that the worshipers hummed softly the song that Thapelo sang and the slide that Alupheli created played on the projector. It was a timeline of Thandeka's life from her baby pictures to primary school, high school pictures and some high school pictures I was there, her brother and father, her university pictures, graduation, her with the kids and some few pics where she was pregnant and fat. Her first workplace, our family pictures, my pictures with her and lastly the video clip of our vows. The vows part only. It was a beautiful thing that Alupheli created. Then a voice note that she once sent to me when she was away from home. I looked at Alupheli wondering how he got it and he just shrugged his shoulders and smiled. Hearing her voice was like I was going to see her again. The last part killed me when she laughed loudly and said "oh! I love you Ndunakazi wami, nophiko. My honey bear i love you so much and I will see you soon goodnight" there was a kiss sound she made at the end and it was off. I closed my eyes and I mumbled "I love you too my love"

Soon after that the programme ended and we went to put her body on it's last place. Then it was over

Alondwe Moloi....

After my mom's funeral Thapelo had to go back to work. I stayed behind and spent a week at home. It was hard because my father wasn't talking to anyone. He ate just once or twice a day and not a full meal. I tried my best to help him but he just wanted to be left alone. He would speak when it's important for him to speak. Wednesday morning he came downstairs dressed up. Everyone looked at him. He just sat down. It was Alupheli, Mesuli and my two grandmothers. Sphephile wanted to go to his father so I let him go. Uyathandwa went to live with his father and Kiara on his new house.

Gogo: Samkelo are you going somewhere?

Dad: Good Morning mom. I am fine too.

Gogo: Samkelo man! I asked you a question.

Dad: I am going to work mom.

Stepgranny: But Samkelo you should at least go back to work next week. You are not alright. You break everything that you touch. How many dishes have you broke?

Dad: I can't stay here and do nothing. Thandeka is gone right? I should move one with my life.

Dad stood up, he gave Mesuli pocket money and he left without eating his breakfast.

Mesuli: I think he will go back to his old life when he was still a boy.

Alupheli: But we are here why would he do that?

Gogo: Loving your mother was what made him change and he became a better man but now that your mom is not here it's hard for him even to look after himself let alone you guys.

Me: You just have to be patient with him. I wish I can be here with you guys but I also have to go back to work next week Monday.

Alupheli: Can I come and live with you?

Me: You can't run away from him Alupheli. He needs you guys here not far from him okay?

Mesuli: This is not easy for any of us. Firstly to start with this breakfast. It's horrible. Mom didn't cook such horrible eggs. The toast is too dry and it burned. I need my mom's breakfast not this. Mxm.

Mesuli stood up. He took his bag and left. I sighed. My grandmother made the breakfast.

Alupheli went to his class too once his teacher was there. I cleaned up the house and I went to clean my mom's room. It was a mess. There were clothes everywhere on the floor and the bed wasn't made. Dad didn't even open the windows. The bathroom was the worst. I sighed and I started cleaning. My phone rang from my pocket. I took it out and answered my husband's call.

Me: Moloi?

Thapelo: Mme Moloi how are you doing?

Me: I am trying how are you?

Thapelo: I am trying to cope without you. How is everyone?

Me: They are broken. I am cleaning my dad's room and it's a mess. I am tired now.

Thapelo: Alondwe you know exactly that you shouldn't over work yourself.

Me: I know I will stop. So I wanted to talk to you about something.

Thapelo: I am listening.

Me: I want to hire a chef for my family. My brothers are complaining about the food. They want mom's food and since I will be gone I know my grandmother will be the one to do the cooking and she's old now Thapelo. So can you please allow me to hire a chef for them. I will pay because dad these days is just something else.

Thapelo: It's okay my love. Your brothers must eat good meals even when your mom is

gone. So please do hire the chef.

Me: Thanks Moloi. I love you.

Thapelo: I love you. Have a good day.

Me: You too have a good day. Thanks.

Thapelo: Thanks. I will come Saturday to fetch you, you'll be coming back home..

Me: Oh Uhm.... Alright.

We said our good-byes and we hung up. Just when I was thinking of asking for another week at work but I suppose I have to go back to my husband and work. I couldn't wait for my son to live with us. After I was done with cleaning. I did the chef search. It took a lot of my time but I finally found him. I was going to interview him the following day and taste his cooking. Friday morning we were having breakfast that I made. It was better because they didn't complain. My stepgranny had left. She went back to Cape Town.

Me: So guys I have hired a chef.

Mesuli and Alupheli: A what?

Me: A chef. I thought that since I will be leaving tomorrow –

Dad: You're leaving tomorrow?

Me: Yes.

Dad: Why so soon?

Me: I need to go back to work dad and my husband needs me. But I will come to visit more than I did before.

Dad: It's your husband who said you must come back home?

Me: No I was going back to work on Monday so I had to leave this weekend.

Dad: I think you should stay with us maybe until May ends. Then June you can go back home.

Gogo: Samkelo Alondwe is married, she has responsibilities to carry out. Her husband needs her and she has taken a long time out at work.

Dad: And we also need her here. She's my daughter after all. If I want her here and she must be here.

Gogo: I am afraid it won't go like that anymore because she's a married woman. She must report everything to her husband.

Dad didn't say anything. He continued eating his food. I felt bad about all that was happening. I wished I could stay but I couldn't.

Alupheli: So you were talking about the chef?

Me: Yes. He will be cooking for you guys since mom is not here anymore. And grandma is old to cook for you guys everyday. The chef will cook for you everyday.

Mesuli: It's a man?

Me: Yes and he cooks delicious food. I tasted them when I was interviewing him.

Dad: Who will pay for that?

Me: I will pay for his services. You don't mind having him around dad right?

Dad: As long as he will cook good food for my boys I don't mind and thank you for bringing him and paying. I really appreciate it.

Me: My pleasure. He will start tonight. In the morning he will make breakfast and lunch for you guys to eat when you come back from school. Then in the afternoon he will come back to make dinner for you guys.

Mesuli and Alupheli: Thank you Sisi.

Gogo: You've done a great job.

I smiled and said: So dad I created an account for groceries. He will be the one who will do the groceries. So when you get paid you will transfer money to the account and he will buy everything that is needed in the house. He will give you the slips so that you can see how he used your money. And the bank will report to your phone whenever there was a transaction

made. I gave him the list of the things that mom used to buy for groceries.

Dad: Okay that's good because I don't even know what to buy and what not to buy for groceries. You will give me the card. I will give it to him whenever he must buy something.

Me: Alright. I will give you the card tonight.

Dad: Okay. Thank you baby. (he stood up) Mesuli let's go. Alupheli have a good at school.

Alupheli: Thanks dad. You too.

Dad: Thanks. You too ladies have a good one.

Us: Thank you bye. (They left)

Gogo: He seems better to me.

Me: It's still early grandma.

Alupheli: You'll see it will get worse some days. When him and mom separated, we were living with him at the flat and he was a mess without mom. I am afraid and I don't want to see that. That's why I wanted to go with Alondwe.

Me: Don't worry you just have to be here and help him. Just do your best.

Alupheli: Hee, you don't know dad without mom Alondwe there's nothing you can do for him to help. We used to tell him we must go back home because mom will be home. She had just lost Uyabongeka. He didn't want to listen to us but he needed mom. How much more now that he will never see her?

I sighed and I didn't say anything.

Gogo: Don't worry baby we will do our best.

Me: Alright. How are you coping Alupheli?

Alupheli: I have arts to help me and God. Remember Thapelo said he never change. I believe that.

Me: That's nice. I love you bhuti okay?

Alupheli: I love you too Sisi.

He left when it was time for him to go. I cleaned up the kitchen. The cleaner came and I asked her to also do things for my dad. Like cleaning his room and washing his clothes and ironing them for him because mom was no longer there to do it for him. She agreed. I then went to pack my clothes.

Saturday afternoon we were leaving. Thapelo was there and it was hard to say goodbye.

Dad: I thought you will let her stay with us for a while longer than this.

Gogo: Samkelo don't do that.

Dad: Okay. My princess thanks for everything you have done. Please look after yourself. I love you.

Me: I love you too dad.

We hugged each other and I hugged my brothers and grandmother.

Mesuli: My big thank you goes to bringing us a chef. He cooks good food.

Alupheli: Yeah it's really good. Right dad?

Dad: Yeah his food is good.

I smiled and nodded. Mesuli was driving us to the airport. I did spend some time with Sphephile. He didn't want to come home. I didn't even know what was his problem because he didn't want to tell me. I left with a heavy heart. It's like I was turning my back on them. I just wanted to be with them a little longer but there was nothing I could do. I had to back to my house too.

May ended and I was trying by all means to adjust. Not being able to pick up my phone and call my mom whenever I wanted to was one of the hardest things. The problem began between me and Thapelo because I started being too clingy on him. I didn't want him out of my sight besides when we were at work. Even so I would call him now and then I couldn't help but think that I was going to lose him too. He pretended like he understood but I saw

that it wasn't doing any good to our relationship. I was living my life in fear of losing him and losing more people in my life..

Kimberly Smith.....

After Themba threw me out I had nowhere to go. I didn't know what was going to happen with my life. Without Themba I was lost and I couldn't go back home in KZN. Samkelo was going to find me faster there. I had to sell my clothes and think of my next move. That morning I walked around selling my clothes so that I can get money. I was regretting my actions so bad. I wished I had taken a better route. But that wasn't going to help me anyway. I had enough money to leave Cape Town and go somewhere else where I was going to start afresh without Themba in my life. I wanted to call Siya for help but I just couldn't bring myself to it. The money I had was enough but it wasn't going to last me forever. The meeting with my H.O.D was about me skipping classes. I tried to explain that I was going through some crisis at home and she lectured me about how I should take my education serious. I asked if I could study through email, I explained that I had a crisis and she was generous enough to agree. My lecturers were going to email me notes and I was going to email them all my assignments and tasks. I was only going to need to go to campus when I have a test or exam. The week passed and I was staying on a motel. I was still trying to sell the rest of my clothes. I was going to leave enough clothes for myself. I was all by myself and I was missing my daughter.

I had a plan to move to Mpumalanga. I went to buy a plane ticket because I didn't really like spending a lot of time on a bus. I gave the cashier everything that is needed when buying a plane ticket. She looked at the screen then she looked back at me.

Me: Is there something wrong?

Cashier: You're Kimberly Smith right?

Me: Yes. I am.

Cashier: Your ID here says you died in March.

Me: What? You must be joking.

Cashier: No. Mam I am not. You can take a look.

She showed me and it really did say "deceased"

Cashier: Should I call security or should I be worried mam? I don't understand.

She said trying to raise her hand to call security but I stopped her. I took my things and I left quickly. I just needed to get out of that place. I took a cab to the motel. I was hell confused. I arrived at the motel and I called Themba. He answered.

Themba: What do you want? Didn't I say leave?

Me: Yeah you did but you forgot to tell me that you have tempered with my ID and according to home affairs I am dead. How can you do that.

Themba just laughed. He laughed so loud that it made me very angry.

Themba: Woah! Muzi is dirty hey. Wow! I didn't understand when your college senior lecturer called me and sent her condolences. Wow so you're dead? You're really a walking dead? Now who's going to hire a dead person? Nobody. You can't go far because you're dead. Unless you use a taxi but then again you can't go overseas using a taxi isn't? This is good news to me. It will be very easy for me to find you and roast you. And there is a dog's home that needs some help in Cape Town. I will just donate your minced meat and spaghetti. Oh Thandeka had some nasty colleagues. Bye my granddaughter needs me.

He laughed and hung up the call. I just sat on the bed and cried. Maybe I just needed to kill myself or go back to my parents but then again I can't because they are in KZN. Samkelo will find me. I was so devastated. I sat alone and cried myself to sleep.

Another week went by and it was really true that I was dead. My college had a memorial for me. I just wondered what Themba said to my parents. I wanted to call them and tell them but

I didn't want to confuse them because I wasn't going home. I saw the pictures on the Facebook page of my memorial and Themba, my daughter and Uyathandwa were there. Some of my family members were there too. This was so hard and painful. I had to put a lot of make up so that I can cover my tracks. I didn't want anyone seeing me and recognising me. After a long day of selling last of my clothes. I went back to the motel there was an envelope on my bed. I took it and looked around. Someone must have been in my room. I searched everywhere and there was no one inside. I opened the envelope. It was divorce papers with a note. There was a drop of blood on the note. I read the note: "I was going to serve you before I mince you but then again you are dead. That makes me a widowed. How sad for me. Seeyou soon ghost " I quickly took everything that belonged to me. I wasn't safe in that place. I needed to move. I had my two suitcases ready. And my hand bag. I took the papers with me. No! Maybe I don't have to run. I should take these papers and give them to the police and send Themba right back to prison. I smiled and took my handbag with the papers. I headed to the door. I opened the door and my heart froze.

Themba: Going somewhere wifey?

I just felt my legs getting warm. I looked at myself and I just urinated. I guess I underestimated my husband. I thought he cared about me clearly I was wrong.....

Samkelo Ndunakazi.....

After the funeral reality sunk in that I was really alone. I had no one to share my life with anymore. To share my love and feelings. I was empty and lost without Thandeka. Mid week after the funeral. I wanted to go back to work and my kids had went back to school. Alondwe stayed with us for a week. She was very helpful but I didn't want her to go. Andile and his family left. The rest of the family left. I was with my mothers, Mesuli and Alupheli.

Uyathandwa was living with his father, his daughter, and his sister. Themba bought a house eMhlanga under Uyathandwa's name. I was trying to stay strong but I was slowly falling apart. Monday I was in my office I was looking at my computer. I didn't know what to do. I had to work but I didn't feel like working. I looked at the pictures on my desk. My wife was so beautiful. It was like she was going to enter my office and smile at me telling me she has brought me lunch. I took my phone and I listened to her voice notes that she used to send on whatsapp. She liked sending voice notes because she was lazy to type long texts. I laughed at some things that she was talking about. My wife was just crazy when she wanted to be. My assistant walked inside my office, I took off my earphones.

Tina: Mr Ndunakazi, the client is waiting for you. It's been thirty minutes now.

Me: What? What client?

Tina: You have a meeting remember? I left you here you were going to follow me.

Me: Oh. Oh. I am coming now.

Tina: I am not leaving you behind this time.

I nodded and I took my things. We left together. We headed to the boardroom. I didn't even know what was happening. I arrived there and I sat down.

Me: I am sorry I got held up on something. Please forgive me.

Client: It's alright. We can start.

Me: Start with what?

My assistant looked at me. I looked at the files that I had in my hands. I just went blank. I didn't even know why we were having a meeting, let alone what I was supposed to say to the client.

Client: You know what call me when he has sort out his issues. Whatever issues he has or else I am taking my business elsewhere. Tsk!

Me: I am really sorry mam.

She clicked her tongue and left. My assistant sighed. I buried my face on my hands.

Tina: I think you need more time off or else you'll lose your job. You need to go home and heal. The management understands and they didn't want you to come back so early.

Me: What must I do at home? Just sit in my room and think about my dead wife?

Tina: You're not helping here either. The company will lose clients if you continue like this. You're my boss so I can't watch you go down the drain.

I stood up and I went back to my office. I needed to pull myself together. I had to make this work. I had to do my job right. I looked at the things I had to do. I just didn't have the strength to do my job. My superiors walked inside my office with my assistant. They told me to go back home and take all the time I needed. If I come back my job was still going to be there waiting for me. I had no choice but to go.

Me: I don't think I can really cope at home.

MD: But Mr Ndunakazi, you're not coping in here either. You've been working here for more than 10 years and we know how much your wife meant to you. That's why we are giving you time.

Me: A man doesn't stay at home and mourn like a woman. We don't do that in our culture.

MD: You're breaking Mr Ndunakazi, so you really need to go home.

I sighed and I stood up. My assistant helped me with packing my personal belongings. I went to my car and I drove off.

I needed some time to think so I just kept on driving. Maybe I needed a new job on a different company. Maybe I needed a new house on a new environment. Maybe I needed to leave KZN and everything that reminded me of Thandeka. But then again how do I do it? Her memories were within me in my mind. I wished time could just fly. But it was going very slow. And it was very hard for me to cope. Or maybe I needed to start dating again? But what do I know about dating? I didn't even cheat on my wife. I didn't even hit on women. I was just blinded by my love for Thandeka, she was the only perfect woman in my life. I just laughed at my thoughts like really I didn't cheat? Not even once I didn't cheat on her like who does that? You cheat once or twice but I didn't? I only thought about it when I was angry at her but still I have never done it. Maybe I was going to find comfort in my sidechick if I had one but then again we shouldn't do that to women. We should love and protect them. I sighed. I just parked at North beach. I took off my shoes and my tie. I walked to a quiet area and I looked at the sea.

Me: God I can't do this, all the goodness in me is fading away. I am trying but it's hard. What should I do? How do I cope?

My phone rang while I was still talking to God. I sighed and I took it out of my pocket. I answered the call from my son-in-law.

Me: Thapelo is everything alright?

Thapelo: Not really? I think Alondwe is suffering from something that I don't even know.

Me: What do you mean? What's happening?

Thapelo: She's too clingy Baba and I don't know what to do to help her. It's like I am a child to her.

Me: Just bring her home.

Thapelo: What?

Me: There's nothing I can do to help you. I am a mess myself so just bring her home.

Thapelo: I can't do that I need her here with me.

Me: Where's her therapist?

Thapelo: She's out of the country. She's coming back next week and Alondwe doesn't want to speak to her. Even if Sbahle calls her she doesn't answer the phone. I don't know what to do.

Me: Just wait for Sbahle to come back. When she's back you'll then tell her to come to your apartment and she'll talk to her.

Thapelo: But Baba I don't want to force her into talking with her if she doesn't want to.

Me: Alondwe is like her mom, if she doesn't want to do something she really means she doesn't want to do it, but because you want what's best for her. You'll have to force it down on her then she will give up and give in. So once Sbahle is in the apartment she will have no choice but to talk to her.

Thapelo: Alright thanks Baba.

Me: It's Okay. Please take care of my daughter. I don't want to lose her. She's everything to me now, her brothers and Sphephile. They are my life.

Thapelo: I promise I will take care of her.

Me: That's good. Bye then.

Thapelo: Bye.

We hung up the call. I just wished Thapelo could support her and try understand what she is going through. Maybe she's just scared of what might happen to her husband. I didn't even know how to talk to Alondwe about her marriage. Thandeka did all that. Her and I were always talking about sports and other things that we love. I sighed and I decided to drive back home.

My sons were worried about me, they thought I have lost my job. Even Alondwe was worried. I assured them that I had a job. Staying at home wasn't life. I didn't even go to my company because I couldn't work. My mind was still not there. That week ended I was at home doing nothing. It was frustrating and painful because I would just stay in my room listen to my wife's voice notes, watch our videos until I sleep. I wasn't crying but the pain was eating at me. The emptiness in my heart and the void was there. I thought men are supposed to feel grieve differently but it was the same to what my mom said she was feeling when she lost her husband. I had to go out or else I was going to suffer from some psychological terms I don't even know. I took my keys and I went downstairs. My mom was reading a book. Being old must be boring tjo, Heeh look at me? I didn't even realise that my mom was bored. I suppose my life was really empty for me to see things I didn't even care about before. I wanted to go and eat at my wife's favourite restaurant.

Mom: Where are you going?

Me: I am going out.

Mom: I am coming with you.

Me: Mom it's Friday and I have some wild plans that I want to do alone.

Mom: I am here to make sure that you don't do those wild plans. Specially sleeping with women.

Me: Why not? I don't have a wife.

Mom: You can't do that you'll be disrespecting the memory of your wife. She died last month not last year my son.

I didn't say anything I just headed to the door. She followed me behind. We stepped inside the car and I drove off. She was talking and I was just agreeing to everything that she was saying. We arrived at our destination and we walked inside the restaurant.

Mom: You meant to come here or you –

Me: I was coming here.

Manager: Mr Ndunakazi, welcome. Let me take you to your table. Your wife will be joining you?

Me: No. She's dead I am here with my mom.

Manager: I am so sorry Sir. I didn't know. (I nodded and he led us to the usual cosy corner) Here are the menus. I will get you the waiter you can order anything. It's on the house. You and your wife were special and you were like part of us.

Us: Thanks.

He nodded and left. I looked at the menu, my mom looked at me. I pretended like I didn't see

that she was looking at me.

Me: What are you going to have?

Mom: What was Thandeka's favourite meal?

Me: She had a lot but she had a special one. You'll just tell the waiter that you want your daughter-in-law's favourite. He or she will know.

I said all that not looking at her.

Mom: It's Okay to hurt my son. You're a human being just because you have a penis doesn't mean you will feel pain less or differently to us.

Me: Mom can we just have a good time and leave that talk aside please. I just want to be here. In this table and eat this food and drink some wine.

She nodded and I thanked her. The waitress came. She said her condolences and took our order. Mom ordered Thandeka's favourite meal like she wanted to. I didn't even know why she was doing that. We had some drinks and after some time like more time the food was served. I couldn't stop laughing because my mom was complaining about the food.

Mom: How can a person possibly eat something so horrible? And the price is expensive for this?

I laughed, she was so horrified by the food. She called the waitress. The waitress came, mom complained and the waitress took the dish. I laughed until I started crying.

Me: Excuse me mom.

I went to the bathroom and I washed my face. I held on the sink and I laughed and cried at the same time. I also hated my wife's dish and she loved it. I shouldn't have come to the restaurant it was full of memories that I wanted to leave behind and start a new life but how do I do it? All I was thinking about were just bad things. Maybe I never changed. I sighed. I went back to the table and mom had a different quick dish. We ate and drank wine.

Woman: You're Samkelo Ndunakazi right?

I looked at her and said: Yes.

Woman: I am Nobuhle Zulu and that is my family over there. Your wife and I used to be friends.

Me: Oh. Okay I remember you. Wow you have a lots of kids hey 7? And they are all looking like there is a small age difference.

Nobuhle: Yeah. Actually they are eight. The last born twin sister didn't want to come with us. She's a year old and her twin brother is the younger one there.

She was pointing at their direction and I was looking.

Me: And the other young girl?

Nobuhle: Oh Sthembile she's 3 years old. I swear I didn't plan the last three they just happened and I loved them like the others old five.

Me: Wow you're strong hey.

Nobuhle: It's God not me. So how is Thandeka?

Me: She died last month and we buried her.

Mom looked at me like I said something bad.

Nobuhle: Oh I am really sorry. You know I have been there too. My husband died years ago.

Me: But you have a one year old twins and there's a man in that table. Are you saying that to make me feel better?

Nobuhle: No but the three lighter kids on that table are mine from my late husband, and the other two are my husband's kids from his late wife. I got married again after my first husband died. I have three kids now with the man on the table and that makes them eight in total.

Me: Oh. I am sorry to hear that you lost your husband. So you found love again?

Nobuhle: Yes but in a very strange way after a lot of pain but I was able to love again and I am happy with my big family. I love them. Maybe you may not want to love again but just celebrate your wife's memories and the love she gave you. And look at your kids and see that

you had something real and beautiful. All the love you had for her must go to them now. But then again it's still early things are going to get hard and painful and more harder. I won't lie to you but through it all just know that God is there.

Me: Thanks.

She smiled, nodded and she left. I looked at my mom. She smiled and held my hand.

Me: Thanks for being here mom.

Mom: You're my baby I will always be here for you.....

Alondwe Moloi....

I couldn't stop thinking about how I was going to get through the clingy behaviour I had. I didn't want to be clingy to my husband but I couldn't help but think that he was going to leave me too. I have lost so much I didn't want to lose more people. It was a Friday evening and Thapelo wasn't home. I was pacing up and down. He was supposed to be home. I didn't want to call him or think about the worst that might have happened to him. I just kept on pacing up and down clapping my hands slowly.

Me: No I am calling him.

I went to my phone quickly before I could dial his number. He opened the door and I put my phone down. I ran up to him and I hugged him. He hugged me back.

Thapelo: What's wrong?

Me: I was worried about you.

Thapelo: Okay. My love we need to talk.

I backed away from him. He closed the door. I looked at him. He took my hand and we went to sit down on the couch. He held my hands.

Thapelo: Baby I think you need to call Sbahle and talk to her. This is not healthy for us and not healthy for you specially. Please just talk to her or answer her phone calls because I don't know how to help you. I don't know serious.

Me: I don't want to talk to her. She left when I needed her the most and I think you will do that too. I rather have you then. Sbahle can go but not you.

Thapelo: It's her job Alondwe and please don't take her as your friend because you will get hurt when she'll have to choose between you and her job.

Me: So she's not a friend?

Thapelo: She's your therapist baby not your friend. And you know exactly that she's an all in one right?

I didn't say anything. I just looked at him.

Me: So I shouldn't be worried about you? You were supposed to be home by quarter pass five and now it's half pass six and I shouldn't be worried.

Thapelo: I needed Mpendulo for a shot drink. Alondwe I hardly see him these days because you don't want me going out.

Me: There's danger out there can't you see that?

Thapelo: Nothing will happen to me.

Me: Okay.

I stood up and I took my car keys and phone. I headed to the door.

Thapelo: Where are you going Alondwe?

Me: I am giving you space. Go have fun with your friends. I don't want you to suffocate because of me so just go. I don't want to be a nuisance.

Thapelo: I didn't say that. Alondwe come back here –

I closed the door behind me. The lift was far so I just used the stairs. I ran down the stairs crying until I made it to the parking lot. I stepped inside my car and I drove off. I was going to give him time to have fun because he wanted that obviously he didn't care about me. Who knows maybe I am just a burden to him. I come with a lot of trouble and pain. My phone kept

on ringing but I didn't answer it. I finally made it to Nkululeko's apartment. I knocked on the door and Peter opened the door. He was half naked.

Peter: Oh hey Alondwe it's you. How are you?

Me: I am sorry to interrupt I will go.

Nkulu: (shouting) Who is it baby?

Peter: It's Alondwe.

Nkulu: Oh God! What?

Me: Tell her I said I will see her some other time.

Peter: Come on stay.

I smiled and I shook my head. I then left.

I drove my car to my aunt's house. I pressed the gate buzzer.

Woman: Melokuhle's house keeper how can I help you?

Me: It's Alondwe. Is my aunt home?

Woman: No. She's on a vacation with her boyfriend. Do you have a message maybe?

Me: No. I will go.

I started the engine and I drove off. I had no where else to go but back home. But I didn't want to go home. I just wanted to stay away from home. Everyone was having a good time with their lovers but for me it was a different story. I called Jade. He answered the phone.

Jade: Twinkie?

Me: Hey Jade are you at your place?

Jade: Yes. I am at my place watching movies and eating. I had a long day at the hospital. What is going on? Are you alright?

Me: I need a friend, can I come over?

Jade: Yeah sure you can come over.

Me: Thanks.

I hung up the call and I drove straight to his apartment. I arrived and I buzzed his room. He let me through then I went to the lift. I knocked on the door once I was there. He opened the door. I smiled. Jade: Hey, look at you. Come here dear.

He opened his arms for me. He hugged me tightly and he brushed my back.

Jade: It will all pass. You'll be happy again Twinkie don't worry. Just trust in your Lord God. I nodded. Jade was a non-believer.

Me: I don't want to talk about pain tonight. I just want to watch some movies and eat with you then go to sleep and I will leave in the morning. Is that too much to ask?

Jade: No it's not. You're always welcome here.

I smiled and we went to sit down. He gave me a blanket and we watched a horror movie. We started eating and talking about what was happening. Whenever a horror scene was about to appear we would just hide under the blankets and laughed after it was over. For a second I forgot about everything and I was laughing not crying. I was actually having some real fun. Jade and I would coach characters when they are in danger. We would say things like "Oh No! Don't go that way fool!" Then we would laugh afterwards. Someone buzzed his apartment. He went to attend it. Our apartment was different to his. Us, we had a list of people who are our family and friends. They only allow those on the list through or call us for confirmation if they are not on the list.

Jade: It's your husband. I let him through.

Me: What? Why would you do that? Agh, I should have taken the taxi. Tsk!

Jade: Are you running away from him?

Me: No I am not I just wanted to have fun tonight and forget –

The door swung open and he walked in with Mpendulo. I just got bored.

Me: What are you doing here?

Thapelo: I am here to take you home.

Me: I drove myself here and I will drive myself back home. I am not a child.

Thapelo: You walked out on me while I was still talking to you. I didn't like that. That was not respect at all. It was not.

Me: You want space right because I am suffocating you. Then I am giving you space go and have fun.

Thapelo: Just like you are having fun here?

Me: Yes. Just like I am having fun here.

Mpendulo: Guys please do not fight in front of us. Just go home and fix this.

Me: He wants to go out, he must do that.

Mpendulo: Alondwe come on let's go.

Thapelo: I can't go out and leave you here.

Me: Why not? Just go.

Thapelo: You're here having fun with another man and I should be happy about it and clap hands for you and say oh my wife is doing great? Is that what you expect me to do?

Me: Yes. I see nothing wrong with that.

Thapelo: Too bad I ain't gonna do that shit. Let's go home now. I won't repeat myself.

Me: Too bad I am not going home and I am not repeating myself.

Thapelo: I figured you'll say that.

He took my phone and car keys. I stood up and he headed to the door. He opened it and looked at me. He pointed outside.

Thapelo: I said we are going home now get up from that couch before I make you. I don't mind carrying you if you start acting up.

I clicked my tongue and I looked at Jade.

Me: Thanks Jade.

Jade: Anytime Twinkie.

Thapelo: Don't say that anytime because there won't be a next time. Now let's go.

Me: Mxm. Such a friend you have Mpendulo.

Mpendulo laughed. We left the apartment. Mpendulo drove my husband's car and Thapelo drove my car with me inside.

Thapelo: There are plenty ways to have fun not sitting alone with a man I don't like.

Me: So it's about jealousy for you?

Thapelo: It's about the fact that you left while I was still talking to you and you ran to that man. Is that supposed to make me happy?

Me: I don't know you should be happy for me some men do like my company unlike you. I am a big nuisance to you. I am getting more men friends for fun. I need that in my life.

Maybe yellow bones will be fun because dark skinned men like you are just too serious.

He looked at me with his jaw tightened. I looked at the road.

Thapelo: You're trying to hurt me?

Me: Hurt you for what?

Thapelo: I don't know you tell me.

Me: Mxm.

I took my phone and I played games until we arrived at home. I just wanted to shower and sleep. There was absolutely nothing I can do besides that. Mpendulo was already in the apartment.

Thapelo: Are you hungry? I ordered some food.

Me: You saw that I was eating where I was. I don't know why you're asking me that stupid ass question.

Thapelo: Okay Mpendulo let's go. Alondwe go back to your man. I won't tolerate this.

Mpendulo: Okay let's go.

Me: Don't worry I am not going back to him. I will just call him to come here.

Thapelo: Don't you dare do that do you understand me? If you want your man go to him don't bring him in here. I won't be this nice when you start doing things that shows bitchy tendencies. Tsk!

He took his car keys and they left. He left his phone behind purposefully. I sat on the couch and I cried alone, I cried until I fell asleep.

In the morning I woke up and I went to take a shower. Thapelo was sleeping on the bed. He was sleeping with his shoes on. He must have came back drunk. I went to shower and I went back to my room to moisturised my body. I wore warm clothes and I went to prepare breakfast. Once I was done I ate my breakfast. Thapelo joined me, he was wearing his pyjamas and he looked clean. He must have taken a shower.

Thapelo: Good Morning.

I didn't say anything I just ate my food. He didn't say anything too. We ate in silence. I finished up and I washed the dishes. After that I cleaned the apartment. Thapelo left on his pyjamas maybe he was going to Mpendulo's place because he only leaves wearing pyjamas when he's going to him. When I was done cleaning I sat on the couch and watched the series under the Domme. There was a knock on the door. I went to open.

Sbahle: Hey I know you don't want me here but your father and your husband both sent me an email asking me to come back so I had to cut my trip short.

I didn't say anything I just went back to the couch. We sat down together.

Sbahle: How have you been?

Me: I have been like this.

She didn't say anything, she just looked at me. I just started crying and everything hurt all over again. She didn't hug me nor say anything until I spoke up and I told her everything that I have been going through. She listened to me and took notes, asked some small questions until it was time for her to talk and tell me what she thinks is going on with me.

Sbahle: You're going through anxious attachment, I don't think it's only kids who through attachment disorders but adults also go through them. There are attachment pathways described by Fox but that is not important. What is important is that you are going through anxious attachment, that's why you cling to Thapelo. This attachment is when you cling to a person because you are too fearful to risk separation. The main problem here is fear and anxiety. What we need to do is to overcome the fear so that you can have a secure attachment with your husband. We will overcome it until you feel like you can explore knowing that you have Thapelo to run back to. He's not going anywhere, he'll provide protection, comfort and love. Once you feel like that you will be over that anxious attachment. I want you guys to go back to that beautiful relationship you had, that intimate, **reciprocal** (give and take), and unique relationship. That's a secure attachment pathway. You understood right?

Me: Yes I did.

Sbahle: Okay. We will draw up a model together to overcome your fears.

I nodded and she took out a pencil and paper. My husband walked in with Mpendulo, they were laughing at God knows what.

Thapelo: Oh hi Sbahle.

Sbahle: Hello guys.

Mpendulo: Mama Ka Bokang.

He tickled me. I laughed and pushed him off.

Me: Unescefe go away. (He laughed)

Thapelo: Wow! She can talk.

I ignored him, he dragged Mpendulo to the bedroom. Sbahle and I continued working. The boys came back Thapelo was dressed up nicely. They left, he didn't even tell me where he was going.

Me: I have lost concentration can we stop?

Sbahle: No, just because Thapelo has left without telling you. You'll start getting worried because you think he'll be in danger. That's what we are trying to stop.

I nodded and I gave in. We worked together until it was time for her to go. I kept the papers and she left.

In the afternoon I was alone when Thapelo's parents came into the apartment looking for Thapelo. I told them I don't know where he was.

Mrs Moloi: He's your husband for goodness sake how come you don't know where he is? I didn't say anything I just didn't want to talk to her because I didn't know what were they doing in my house. I took my phone and I called Mpendulo.

Mpendulo: Yes baby Ka mngani wami.

Me: Yazi bakithi! You tell your friend to come back here. His parents are waiting for him. He must come back now.

Mpendulo: Don't worry bae wakhe. We're on our way home.

Me: Are you drunk?

Mpendulo: No I am not but he is, Agh I mean I am but he's not.

I just hung up my phone and I went to my bedroom. I wasn't going to stay with them and look at them. I didn't like them both not after everything that happened. Thapelo walked in our room.

Thapelo: Why did you let them in here and on top of that you leave them alone. You gave them our food.

Me: I don't think your father will do something to hurt you.

Thapelo: By now you should know better. He's still with her even after knowing what she did to us. So I don't trust any of them. You should do the same Tsk!.....(I didn't say anything) Please come here.

I stood up and I went to him. He looked at him all over my body.

Thapelo: Are you alright? Everything is fine with you?

Me: Yes I am fine.

He nodded and he pulled me closer then he hugged me tightly. Then he kissed my forehead. He then went to the lounge with me.

Thapelo: I would appreciate it if you can just leave please.

Mrs Moloi: Thapelo I am here to Apologize.

Thapelo: I have forgiven you. I don't hold grudges but I want nothing to do with you. Please stay away from my family and my life. You've proven that you're not a mother to me, you just want to control my life.

Mrs Moloi: I just wanted what's best for you.

Us: By killing my/his daughter?

Mrs Moloi: Thapelo she's not the one for you. Can't you see that?

Thapelo: Dad take your wife and go.

Mr Moloi: Son this is your mother.

Thapelo went to the door and he opened it.

Thapelo: She's dead to me. I don't need her.

Mrs Moloi looked at me and mumbled "I am not done with you" I didn't say anything. They both left. Thapelo closed the door and he came back to me. He hugged and kissed me.

Themba Smith....

Life after losing Thandeka was very hard specially on Uyathandwa and Kiara. I didn't know how to do the parenting alone and how to help them get through the pain because I was also hurting. I was keeping tabs on Kimberly. I had put a tracker on her phone and one of her favourite boots had one too. I was going to take some time to breathe then come for her. Muzi had already made sure that her life was miserable. He told me that nobody was going to hire

her and after that I was going to decide what to do. He didn't want to tell me his whole plan but when the college called me and said their condolences I figured out what Muzi did. He then told me what was going on. Kimberly's parents were very sad. The story was that she left home because she was tired of looking after my daughter while I was in prison. She was miserable and she was always going up and down. Sisipho said that her mom was always leaving. But she didn't know the whole thing. And we told them that Kimberly didn't know that I was coming back because I wanted to surprise her. Muzi told me that was the story and I had to stick to it. Before that went out they made it look like Kimberly withdrawn a large sum of money in my account because she was running away. They came to take my car and made it look like she had an accident while leaving Cape Town. Muzi had his own police working on that case. I don't even know how they created Kimberly's body because there was a body. It was very interesting to me I just wanted to be a part of this team after dealing with Kimberly. I had told Muzi about it and he was going to speak to me afterwards. I wanted something like that in my life. And the project that got me out of prison was changing my life for the better.

After attending the memorial service at the college. I had to pay Kimberly a little visit. Her funeral was going to be on the weekend that week. It was going to be at Cape Town. She was my wife so I suggested that we bury her where my parents were. Her parents agreed. We were in my old house. I haven't sold the house yet. Kimberly panicked when she saw me that she even peed on herself. I promised myself that I was going to leave my heart at home with my kids when dealing with her. I pushed her back inside the house.

Me: Were you going somewhere?

Kimberly: No I just wanted to burn these.

She showed me the divorce papers and the note I sent her. I took it and smiled.

Me: It's a shame. Don't worry we are going to stay here together. I even brought lunch. I think I miss you in my life.

Kimberly: Really? I knew you weren't going to kill me just like that. Oh thank you Themba. She kissed me and I kissed her back. I broke the kiss. I smiled. This woman was stupid? Like who was going to believe that line after I have promised to kill her? Or maybe she was desperate. Or she was just fooling me. We ate the food and I gave her a drink. Her favourite cranberry juice. It had something inside that was going to make her sleep so that I can move her from that motel. We ate, talked and laughed until she was dead sleeping. I packed everything that belonged to her and I went to put it in my car. I cleaned the room and disposed the takeaways. I then went to check out for her. She was already in the car sleeping. After checking out I drove straight to the abandoned building that my gang and I used to use when we were hiding our merchandise from the police. We used to move them from our warehouse to that building. It was in the forest. I took Kimberly inside once I was there. I chained her on the chair on the basement. I did all this with my heart ripped out of my chest. I was mad because of all the pain my son and granddaughter were feeling. Because of everything that was happening to Thandeka and her family. I took her things too then I put them on the basement with her. I waited for her to wake up.

Finally she woke up. She looked around it was dark. I lighted up the torch. She shook her head because she couldn't scream. I have taped her mouth.

Me: I cared for you a lot but you did me wrong. Why did you do that? (She shook her head) I will untape you. You can scream but nobody will hear you here.

I untapped her and demanded answers from her.

Kimberly: I was missing you Themba. You don't understand how hard it was to sleep every night without you next to me.

Me: You saw me almost everyday. I know it wasn't the same but it was better because I was alive. I wasn't dead. You had sex with me whenever you wanted to but to kill the mother of

my kids?

Kimberly: I didn't mean to kill her. I thought she was going to be paralysed. I didn't want her to die.

Me: Are you out of mind. You shot her twice on the stomach, her both legs and a shoulder. Obviously that person was going to bleed to death because she was alone there.

Kimberly: But I did call the ambulance. I am sorry Themba. I was just angry.

Me: I am not God and what I am doing to you right is not right but I can't think of another way. You have to suffer like everyone is suffering.

Kimberly: I have suffered the past few weeks. Looking over my shoulder everytime. Not knowing whether you will really come for me or not. And not being able to leave because I am dead. I have felt pain and I have learned that revenge doesn't solve anything. And as you're revenging Thandeka it won't bring her back.

Me: It will make me sleep better at night.

Kimberly: Please don't kill me. I regret all my actions. I am really sorry.

Me: I won't kill you.

Kimberly: Oh thank God. Thank you.

Me: I won't make my hands dirty. I want no blood in my hands anymore so I will leave you here and I will go back home and burry you with your parents. Help my son and my granddaughter heal. While doing that you'll be here thinking about everything you have done. Every pain you have caused to so many people. Maybe you'll find your redemption. If I come back after a month and you are not dead. I will let you go. But if you are dead. I will cook your body or burry it. See you next month. I hope you find peace. I am going to look for it too.

I tapped her again more than before. Then I left her crying. I sat in my car with a very painful heart wishing that I can trade her soul to bring

Alondwe Moloji.....

SIX MONTHS LATER...

The past six months have been hard but my husband was supportive and understanding. Sbahle together with me developed a model to help me deal with my attachment disorder. I was really coping and taking everything slow. My father was the one worrying me the most. My brothers were always complaining and he didn't want to talk. My grandmother told me that every Friday night and Saturday night. He was going out. It wasn't good because Alupheli started hating school. He threatened to leave school because of dad. And that's where dad started to be supportive. Mesuli was strong enough because all this energy and anger towards dad went to his school work but he told me that his relationship was slowly falling apart because of what was happening. Britney was supportive but Mesuli was pushing her away. He didn't want to end up like dad whenever something was to happen to Britney. Then there's my son who didn't want to visit them because "grandpa is horrible" he always said that. But when I went to visit them he did come to visit too. My marriage was great and my husband was supportive. We loved each other and we were growing together in love. His siblings visited us here and there. We were searching for a house because Sphephile was going to live with us the following year. Thapelo took me to our daughter's grave and after that I did find closure. Everything was going smoothly. But not so good for my father, when my father is not good that means I can't be good too. Hope came back when my brothers started writing exams. They told me that he was very supportive. Even Sphephile liked him like that. That was good news. December, my brother Alupheli passed his grade 7 and my son passed his grade 3. 15th of December was a Friday when I just got home. Sphephile and Thapelo were already eating. I was very tired. We had a long day at the hospital. And my results came back. I wanted to know if after loosing two kids and have used arbotion pills

was I going to have more kids. Not that I wanted a baby soon but I needed to know. The results said my chances were small if I did conceive I wasn't going to carry the baby full term. That was painful to me and I didn't know how I was going to tell Thapelo. He didn't even know that I took the test, but I had to talk to him about it.

Sphephile: Mom, good evening. Come join us. We are having supper. Very good supper. I cooked.

Me: Really? You did?

Sphephile: Yes. Dad was just taking my instructions.

I smiled and I went to them. I kissed my husband, and fist bumped my son. I sat down.

Thapelo: You look tired.

Me: You have no idea. I just want to sleep.

My phone rang interrupting me. I answered the phone. Uyathandwa was calling.

Me: Bhuti?

Uyathandwa: Eish Sisi. I think you need to come back home this weekend. Or maybe for a week.

Me: Why? What's wrong?

Uyathandwa: Dad is not good. He's worse now. Alupheli and Mesuli are living with me and my father. They said they don't want to see him like that anymore. So please just come home.

Me: Alright I will come home.

Uyathandwa: Okay. Sure.

He hung up call. I sighed.

Thapelo: What's wrong?

Me: It's dad. He's back to square one. I have to go home this weekend.

Thapelo: You must take Sbahle with you. I think that will be very helpful.

Me: Alright I will speak to her.

Sphephile: I am not going with you mom. I will stay behind. I don't want to go.

Me: Okay fine you won't go.

He nodded. During the day, he went to Mpendulo's apartment, Mlamuli had someone watching over him so Sphephile stayed there too until we come back from work.

Thapelo: So I will go look at the house alone?

Me: Yes. I don't mind because you know what we agreed on. Sphephile will go with you too.

Sphephile: Yes I will go.

I smiled and I started eating. Thapelo and I didn't want a big house. We wanted a mansion that was going to be enough for us. We counted in the kids we were going to have but then again who knows if those kids were going to be there? We finished up eating and they washed the dishes. I was tired so they were doing everything.

I went to shower and Thapelo massaged my body once Sphephile was asleep. He didn't sleep with us.

Me: Baby?

Thapelo: Yeah.

Me: I did a check up on my womb last week. My gynaecologist did it.

Thapelo: Why did you do it?

Me: I wanted to check if my womb didn't damaged after two miscarriages and using the pills specially on the last miscarriage it was an overdose.

Thapelo: Oh. So?

Me: The results came back today and they said that chances are small for me to get pregnant again. If I can conceive I won't carry the pregnancy full term.

He didn't say anything but he continued massaging me. He was on top of me I was laying on the bed on my stomach. I felt a tear drop on my back. He wiped it off immediately on my back.

Thapelo: Excuse me baby.

He went to the bathroom fast. I got off the bed and I went to the bathroom but the door was locked. I went back to my bed and I waited for him to come to me. He finally came back.

Thapelo: Why are you up? I wasn't done.

Me: Yes. I think you were. Come to mama.

He laughed and came to me. He sat next to me. I held his hand.

Me: You know that we can still have a baby even if I won't be the one carrying it?

Thapelo: What are you trying to say?

Me: We can have a surrogate mother.

Thapelo: How many months did the Doctor estimated for you to carry the baby?

Me: About five to seven months. The baby might be a premature or –

Thapelo: Don't say it. (I nodded) You want a baby now? That's why you were checking up?

Me: No. That's not the reason. It's the house that made me think about it because you had an idea of a big house.

Thapelo: But we ended up not taking that idea.

Me: I know but I just wanted to know.

Thapelo: Why didn't you tell me so that I was going to choose whether I want to go with you or not.

Me: It's not a big deal baby.

Thapelo: It's a big deal to me Alondwe. Stop doing things without consulting me first.

Me: It's Okay I am sorry.

Thapelo: And we are not having a surrogate mother. God will give us a child how ever long it takes but we will be parents again right now let's be parents to Sphephile and leave the rest to God.

Me: Alright thanks. I love you.

Thapelo: I love you too.

I kissed him and he kissed me back.....

Saturday morning I was was on the phone with sbahle begging her to go with me.

Sbahle: Alondwe I can't do that.

Me: Sbahle please. We're desperate here.

Sbahle: I know but your father has to want this for himself not you forcing him to it. It won't work like that. I can't do it.

Me: I know he'll want to talk to you.

Sbahle: He's a man and man don't just open up. Maybe find a male therapist for him.

Me: No. I want you nobody but you. Please Sbahle. Please. I am begging you. I need my father back.

Sbahle: Okay! But if he throws me out I won't stay and beg him to talk. I will just leave. Do you understand that?

Me: So you won't even stay for a minute?

Sbahle: No. Not even a second. I don't know your dad but from what you've told me about him. He can be a difficult man. I don't want to stay longer in Durban than I should. I have never even met him. I only met your mom.

Me: But you spoke to him?

Sbahle: Yes but that's not meeting. We were speaking about you not him.

Me: I trust you in this. Just try twice and he'll open up. I know he wants his kids back.

Sbahle: Okay I will try twice.

Me: Thank you so much. I will fetch you or?

Sbahle: I will come to you.

Me: Sure thing.

I hung up the call and I smiled. I was positive that Sbahle was going to help my father.....

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

SIX MONTHS LATER....

Themba had told me not to worry about Kimberly. He was going to deal with her. I just had to focus on my family but I couldn't do that. The past six months has been very hard on me. The will of my wife was read. When she was alive we agreed that both our money should be spilt amongst our kids and we will take only the assets of each other. So her money went to our kids savings accounts. Alondwe and Uyathandwa could manage their own money so we didn't decide what was going to happen with it. Her two cars and the bike belonged to me. I could hardly do everything right. July I went back to work and I tried to work. Working was the only thing I did good in my life. I couldn't even look after my sons. My mom was there for them but I wasn't. All I did was to go out more just to close the gap but it didn't help me. I continued anyway. I wasn't a drunkard but I did go to clubs for drinks. And by October I started sleeping with different women thinking that they will help me move on and forget. I wasn't sleeping with women who needed love but I was sleeping with those who knew that it will be a one time thing. I didn't want to break any hearts ever again in my life. I tried to change my ways when Alupheli didn't want school anymore. I became more involved in their lives and more supportive. Mesuli was like Alondwe because whenever he was angry or sad all his energy went to his school work but Alupheli was not like that. He was different. The absence of Thandeka in my life made me realise that I am no good without her. I am just a broken man. Who doesn't know what he wants and where he's heading. I had no life purpose anymore. Once my kids were done with school. I went back to my old ways. It was a Saturday night. I was meeting up with Kristen. She was a white woman with a ghetto style that I didn't even know where she got. It wasn't a first or second time meeting up with her. I actually liked her maybe. I wasn't so sure but for the fact that I went back to her for about three times meant something. Maybe I needed to date in order to move on. Kristen was already waiting for me outside the hotel. I tried to hug her but she didn't want to.

Kristen: We don't hug in public remember?

Me: Yeah. Yeah. Let's go.

We went to the room and we had sex. After sex we went to a club near by. We had some real short time fun. I didn't want it to end because I didn't want to go back home and be miserable and lonely again. We partied till late. My rule was to never get drunk. I didn't want my sons to see me drunk. After that I drove Kristen home. She was drunk. She stayed at a flat in point. I called her roommate using her phone and she came to get her and her things. I then drove back home. I decided to sleep on the couch. I didn't want to sleep on that bedroom. I did that everytime when I slept with someone. I didn't sleep in my wife's room till the following day where I would have taken a shower and I would sleep there.

In the morning I was woken up by Mesuli. I woke up and sat up straight. I rubbed my eyes.

Me: Morning boys.

Alupheli: We're leaving.

Me: Excuse me what?

Mesuli: We're going to live with our brother because you don't care about us. Ever since mom died you don't spend your time with us. You loved us because mom was there but now you have showed that you didn't really love us.

Me: That's not true. I love you guys and I don't want to loose you two.

Alupheli: No you don't love us. You were just pretending all the time and you were pretending to support us so that we can pass that way your money wasn't going to waist. It's mom who truly loved us but you don't.

Me: You're my sons of course I love you.

Uyathandwa walked inside the house.

Uyathandwa: Are you guys ready?

Me: Please don't take them.

Uyathandwa: It's their choice dad and I think this will help you get some help. Let's go guys. They took their bags and left. I took the decorating dish that was on the table and I threw it on the wall.

Mom: That won't bring them back just like everything that you are doing won't help you move on from your wife.

Me: Mom I need to be alone without any lectures.

Mom: Okay. I am going to Johannesburg next week.

Me: What why?

Mom: I am visiting your sister. You want to be alone right?

Me: Oh so you're leaving me too? Just like that?

Mom: You said I must leave.

Me: I didn't say leave. I am talking about now.

Mom: I will give you space.

Me: Okay fine, go mom.

I went upstairs to my room and I took a shower. After taking a shower. I went to sleep.

Me: I don't know why you left me alone Thandeka. You left me and now everyone is leaving.

I closed my eyes and I tried to sleep.

The week went by and I was alone. Mom left soon after I told her to leave. I told the chef to stop coming to work. Alondwe was going to pay him his salary for the month so he left.

During the day I was going to work and at night I was with Kristen. But not in my house. I wasn't going to bring a woman in my wife's house. It was a Saturday evening of a reconciliation day. I was alone eating meat and drinking wine. My sons didn't want to be with me that day. It was obvious to me that I was going to be alone on Christmas day. There was a car that pulled over. I sat still and waited for that person to enter the house. It was Alondwe, she was with a beautiful dark skinned woman. She was skinny and well dressed. She had reading glasses on. I looked at her and she looked at Alondwe. I looked at my daughter too. She was looking at me probably waiting for me to hug her. I stood up and I hugged her.

Alondwe: Hey daddy, you look ugly are you bathing?

Me: Are you trying to embarrass me in front of your friend Alondwe?

Alondwe: She's not my friend. She's my therapist.

Me: Oh. (We backed away from each other) Should I hug the lady or? The thing is my hands are dirty. I can't really shake your hand.

Alondwe: Dad calm down would you?

Me: I have finally met the person who saves you from drowning so I can't just relax.

Sbahle: I don't mind a hug Mr Ndunakazi.

Me: Please call me Samkelo.

She smiled and nodded. I hugged her or should I say she hugged me. I felt like breaking down inside her arms. Her hug was the kind of hug that made you realise that you have problems. We let go. I cleared my throat and pointed the seats. They sat down on the chairs.

Alondwe: You're really alone in here?

Me: Yes. Would you guys like some wine.

Sbahle: I don't drink alcoholic drinks.

Me: Really? Why?

Alondwe: Dad, that's not important. Don't worry I will get you some juice Sbahle.

Sbahle: Okay thanks.

Alondwe left and I was left with her therapist.

Me: So you're on vacation?

Sbahle: No I am not on vacation.

Alondwe came back when I was about to ask another question. I stopped asking questions.

Alondwe: So dad Sbahle will be your roommate for this week and if there's no progress it will be the following week until you are alright.

Sbahle: We agreed that I am not staying in the house. I will stay on the hotel.

Alondwe: The hotel is expensive.

Me: Wait, what are you talking about Alondwe?

Just then my mom entered the house too.

Mom: Oh my son has company. I shouldn't have come back.

Alondwe: Grandma.

She stood up and hugged her. Then she introduced her to Sbahle.

Alondwe: Sbahle is here to help dad move on.

Me: What? I don't need a woman to move on and besides I am seeing someone.

Mom and Alondwe: What?

Me: It's not serious yet. She's white and I like her. She's a nice person.

Alondwe: Well I didn't mean it like that. I meant Sbahle is your therapist now. She has closed for holidays so now she's here to help you.

Me: Now that's bullshit! You want me to talk to this Woman about my feelings?

Alondwe: Dad she's here.

Me: Don't tell me she's here. Of course I can see that she's here. And I don't care because I am going to do that shit!

Mom: If you want your family back you'll have to talk to her. Like it or not.

Me: What family? This family is dead without Thandeka. I know nothing about keeping it together

Alondwe: Then Sbahle is here to help you keep it together dad. You need help.

Sbahle: I told you this was a bad idea but you didn't want to listen to me.

Mom: Don't worry dear. Alondwe take her to the guest room. Tomorrow morning you're going to have a session with him baby. I am his mom and he'll do it when I say so.

Alondwe nodded and she left with Sbahle who didn't want to stay in the house. She wanted a hotel. I clicked my tongue and I stood up. Mom pinched my ear and made me sit down.

Mom: Hheyi Baba. I am not done with you. Tomorrow morning you're having a session with that girl no discussion no argument do you understand me Samkelo Matthew Ndunakazi?

Me: Yes I understand mom.

Mom: Good.

She left me and went upstairs. I took my meat and the wine. I went to my room. I was very angry.

In the morning after breakfast I was in my office with Sbahle. She had a pen and paper. She was waiting for me to talk.

Me: So you really think I am going to talk to you?

Sbahle: I don't know. I am not the one who's alone and miserable.

I laughed and said: I see no ring on your finger.

Sbahle: I see a ring on your finger but you're lonely and miserable.

That made me angry. I clicked my tongue.

Me: I see you have attitude.

Sbahle: I see you are rude.

Me: Look I can see you don't want to do this, my daughter forced you to do it. It's okay.

Let's pretend like we're doing the sessions and I will pretend like everything is right with me.

Alondwe is leaving tonight so mom won't see that we're pretending.

She stood up and said: We are done for today. We will continue tomorrow after you come

back from work. With this attitude you have I was going to stop all this but I am going to do

it for those little boys who need a father. I will be patient with you. I am used to people like you.

She then headed to the door.

Me: I think I am going to enjoy seeing you try and help me so that you can bring back my sons. They hate me so there's no use for this stupid therapy. They want their mom not me. And their mom is dead. She left me alone.

Sbahle: I see you enjoy feeling pity and sorry for yourself.

Me: It's reality that you think you can change. Who are you? You're superwoman?

She didn't say anything she just left. I knew she was weak.

Samkelo Ndunakazi...

I know everyone was trying to help me but it was useless. I didn't see the point. They all had their partners with them and mine was dead so how was that going to help me? It wasn't going to help not at all. The therapist gave up and she left. She was just weak. My mom came inside the office.

Mom: You're really thinking being a bad boy will work Samkelo?

Me: I am not a bad boy mom. I am just trying to move on with my life.

Mom: You're going about it a wrong way Samkelo. You're sleeping with women you don't even know. Every Friday in the club you find a new thirsty skirt and you sleep with her?

Me: Who told you that?

Mom: I heard you talking on the phone. Are you liking this one? What about Kristen you like her or you are fooling yourself.

Me: No mom it was just sex and it meant nothing. I like Kristen.

Mom: Do you want to die?

Me: I am protecting myself mom. I won't die.

Mom: This is a dangerous path you're taking. Look you're alone now. You have chased everyone out. Even your sons have left you. Mesuli will be leaving next year and you are not even spending time with him. You don't care about them.

Me: I supported their future mom. I supported them. And Alupheli passed. I am sure that Mesuli will pass very well. I just needed some time to myself. That's not too much to ask. I stood up and I left. I wanted to be alone. At night Alondwe was leaving. I thought her therapist was going to leave with her but she didn't come with the bags downstairs. Mom was the one who came downstairs with the bags.

Me: Where are you going again?

Mom: Going back to my daughter and I want to see my granddaughter's new house. Her husband and Sphephile found one yesterday.

Me: You're leaving me alone again?

Mom: Sbahle is here. Maybe you'll take this Serious. If you're alone.

Me: You said you'll be with me every step of the way now you're leaving me.

Mom: Yes. I am doing this for you. Let's go baby the cab is waiting.

Alondwe hugged me.

Alondwe: Bye daddy I love you.

Me: Bye. I love you too.

I kissed her forehead and she hugged Sbahle. They left after that.

Me: Stay out of my way I will stay out of yours.

Sbahle: I will be on your way big time. So just get comfortable because you're stuck here with me.

Me: I will leave and go live with my girlfriend.

Sbahle: Nc. Nc. Look at you acting like a high school boy while you have kids. Are you enjoying this?

Me: Like I said. Stay out of my way.

I left her standing downstairs. I had nothing to live right for. My sons hated me. Alondwe didn't really need me because she had her family. Mom had my sisters. I had no one but Kristen and Alondwe.

On the 20th we closed at work. Sbahle was still in the house trying to help me but I wasn't interested. The following Thursday I had a day planned with Kristen. We were meeting at the hotel. I wasn't bringing anyone to my wife's house. Not in a million years. She was already outside waiting for me. She tried to hug and kiss me but I stopped her nicely and politely. It was my turn to remind her.

Me: I don't like doing that in public. Remember?

Kristen: I suppose that's the reason why you're still wearing your wedding ring.

Me: Well one thing you should know about me, is that I do not talk about my marriage or my life. Or you're forgetting what we agreed on.

Kristen: No. I was just curious. And I thought you liked me.

Me: I won't like you if you do things I don't like.

Kristen: Okay I am sorry.

I smiled and nodded. We went inside the hotel. We booked a room and we went there. I was hungry so I asked for room service too. While waiting for food. Kristen and I went down to business. My phone rang while I was busy on top of her. I looked at it. Kristen: You're not going to answer that phone right?

Me: Of course I will. It's my daughter who's calling I got off her and I answered.

Me: Princess?

Alondwe: Hey dad how are you holding up?

Me: Great baby and you?

Alondwe: Good. So how are your sessions with Sbahle. She's good right?

Me: Yes. She knows what she's doing. She just helped me out big time. I have realised things that I didn't even know were happening. Thanks for bringing her baby. You're the best.

Alondwe: Okay. I am glad dad. We will talk some other time then take care.

Me: Yeah. You too take care baby. I love you.

Alondwe: I love you too dad.

She hung up the call. The excitement on her voice made me regret lying to her. Maybe I just have to do it for her because she still cares about me.

Kristen: Can you come back to me please.

I nodded and I finished off what I started. After that we had our food ready so we ate and went back to bed. I was just having a lot of fun. We both fell asleep after wards.

\*\*\*\*I was sleeping so peaceful when someone woke me up. I knew the voice clearly.

Voice: Samkelo wake up! Wake up!

I opened my eyes and it was Thandeka. I smiled. She was so beautiful but she didn't smile back at me. She had her worried look.

Me: Thandeka why did you leave me?

Thandeka: My honey bear wake up. This is not the life I have ever wanted for you.

Me: But Thandeka I am lost without you.

Thandeka: No you're not lost. Stop telling yourself that you're lost and stop crying inside your heart. I am at peace my love.

Me: Can you take me with you. I want to be at peace too. I want to be with you.

Thandeka: No. It's not your time. Now wake up! Wake up!\*\*\*\*

I woke up from my dream and Kristen was not next to me. I slowly get off the bed and I went to the other side of the room. She was busy on my wallet. She was talking to someone on the phone.

Kristen: Yeah.... Yeah... That bustard is sleeping I am changing the bank cards now.... Of

course I know the pin I was always there when he made payments.... Are you being lucky on that madala of yours.... Shame... I must say I will miss this guy's dick it was so good chomee...

She laughed. I held her hands. She didn't even feel me at her back. She screamed once. I dragged her off the couch, all the cards were on the floor.

Me: You're a scumbag.

Kristen: Yeah what did you think? Were you falling in love with me so hard that you didn't see that I was always taking your money on your wallet. I just wanted to know the pin and leave that's why I stayed around longer.

Me: And the dick made you stay.

Kristen: Yes it did but not love.

Within a blink of an eye, she kicked my balls and I was down. She looked at the cards and they were mixed up. She clicked her tongue and stabbed my hand.

Kristen: This is for ruining my plan.

She kissed my penis and said: Bye I will miss you.

She then left. I closed my eyes and breathed in and out. Balls were a very critical part to mess with. I pulled myself together and I requested help. They came to help me with a first aid kit. It was a man. I thanked him and I dressed up. He did pack my wallet for me. I thanked him and I gave him some cash. I then left the hotel. I drove straight home.

Sbahle was on the lounge working. She looked at me as I was walking inside the house. The reading glasses suited her. I sat down on the opposite couch. She continued working. She didn't ask what happened to my hand. If it was my wife she was going to ask.

Me: I saw Thandeka in my dreams today.

She looked at me and she sat up straight. I sighed.

Me: I fell asleep after having sex with Kristen at the hotel. Then she came to my dream telling me to wake up. When I woke up Kristen was stealing my bank cards. She was going to take my children's money. But Thandeka saved me. She told me that she's at peace.

Sbahle: How do you feel about that? Her being at peace?

Me: I don't know I am happy but I wanted to be with her at peace too but she refused to take me. She said it wasn't my time. I am suffering here and she's on the better place without me. She left me alone.

Sbahle: Are you jealous?

Me: No but I want to be with her. I will never find love again. I thought Kristen will like me but she liked my penis. No woman can love me. I am not that old. I am 44 years old and now I am alone.

Sbahle: You're not alone. You have your family. You just have to stop telling yourself that you're bad without Thandeka. You're a good person and it's not Thandeka that changed you.

Me: What do you mean? Of course it's her.

Sbahle: No. You made that choice yourself. You wanted to change because of the love you had for her not that she changed you. If we can say you changed because Thandeka loved you then we are lying. There are lot of women out there who love men truly and in amazing way but still those men are bad and they are mistreating them. Change comes from within the person. Yes Thandeka's love influenced you but loving her changed you. After you have changed then her love meeting your love made you a better man, it made you a good man. Together you grew each other. She didn't do it alone. And she was telling you she's at peace because she wants you to stop feeling sorry for yourself. It's time to get up and convince yourself that you won't let all those years of loving Thandeka go to waste by going back to that old life you were living as a boy. You're not a boy now. You're a man and you are a father and grandfather. Your family needs you. They left you so that you can realise that they need you and so that you can realise that you need help. They are still your family. Just

because your wife is no longer here it doesn't mean they are no longer a family. You don't want your sons to grow up without direction. You must be there for them and guide them. It's your duty as a father. Do you think you can do that?

Me: I will try my best but right now I need that hug you gave me when you first arrived here. She smiled and nodded. She stood up and I stood up too. She hugged me and this time I didn't just feel like crying. I really cried like a child. She didn't let go of me until I was calm. This woman was a woman of her word. She meant when she said she'll be patient with me. We let go and I wiped my tears.

Me: Thank you.

She smiled and She nodded. I smiled too. It was quite awkward that I cried in front of a stranger.

Voices: Dad?

I looked back at the main door where the voices came. It Mesuli and Alupheli. I smiled and I went to them. I hugged them.

Me: You're here.

Alupheli: Yeah. Sbahle invited us. (I looked at her)

Sbahle: I cooked dinner and I thought maybe I could use a different method to help you see that you need help but someone did that already. So I will leave you guys to have dinner together.

Me: You're not joining us?

Sbahle: No I am working.

Alupheli: Please have dinner with us.

Mesuli: Don't make us beg you.

She smiled and nodded. We went to the table and we asked to treat her like a guest. She agreed so we brought everything that she cooked to the table. We prayed and had dinner. The boys were talking to Sbahle more than talking to me. It didn't matter anyway I was just happy to see them.

Sbahle wasn't done with me yet, she left before Christmas and after Christmas she came back. My mom was back too but my sons were still living with Uyathandwa. There's nothing that Sbahle didn't make me talk about. She wasn't forcing me to talk I wanted to talk because talking to her was helping me a lot. I was feeling much better and the activities that she made me do really helped me. I was a different and a better man. January came she was going to go back to her life soon. She also had sessions with my sons. And after new year they came back to the house. It was the last week for her in the house. I wanted to talk to her about something. I knocked on the door of her room she didn't respond. I opened the door and she was sleeping on the bed with the laptop on the bed and a lot of papers next to her. Her reading glasses were still on her. I tried to remove everything so that I can help her sleep properly but she got a fright and woke up.

Me: I am sorry I didn't mean to wake you. I wanted to talk to you about something then I saw you sleeping like this I was just trying to help you.

She yawned and said: It's alright. What is wrong? Maybe I can help.

Me: Can I take you out for dinner tomorrow night?

Sbahle: Excuse me?

I just didn't know what to say. I didn't want her to reject my request.

Me: Can I take you out for dinner tomorrow night just to say thank you for helping me get my life back.

Sbahle: You don't have to thank me Mr Ndunakazi. You made everything happen by opening up. I was just guiding you in the road of healing.

Me: Okay not to just say thank you but a date maybe. I think I like you and I would like to know you better.

She just looked at me like she saw a ghost. I was fuckin nervous but I was crossing my fingers for a yes. I was praying for it.

Sbahle: I am sorry Mr Ndunakazi. I don't do dates with my clients.

Me: You won't be breaking any law and I will fight for you if they want to take your licence because of this but they won't because they won't find out. Please I just want to see if this liking will turn out to be something more.

She stood up and she went to the door. I just knew that it was a rejection. She opened the door.

Sbahle: I will be going back home in the morning. You're now doing good and my work here is done. Goodnight Mr Ndunakazi.

Me: You don't have to go because –

Sbahle: I want to pack my things sir.

I nodded and I left. I felt so stupid. Why did I even try to make a move on her that was stupid! I needed a patient woman like her in my life. Maybe she has a boyfriend that loves her and she loves him too. Mxm I was just stupid to think that she was single...

Alondwe Moloji...

The following morning, I woke up grumpy. I didn't understand what was happening with Thapelo. How can his penis just go otherwise? Like how? I looked at him and he was sleeping so peaceful. I didn't wake him up I just let him be. I went to take a shower and I finished up. He was still sleeping. I wanted him to be late. I wasn't going to wake him up. I went to wake Sphephile up.

Me: Good morning baby. Go and take a shower.

Sphephile: It's not Saturday?

Me: No my love it's not. It's Tuesday.

He rubbed his eyes and he woke up. I made his bed and I opened the window for him. I went to prepare breakfast for them. I finished up and I went to help Sphephile dress up.

Sphephile: Where is dad?

Me: He's sleeping.

Sphephile: Why? He's not going to work?

Me: He's going to work I just want him to be late.

Sphephile: No that's wrong. I will wake him up. Mmm mom you're cruel.

Me: Okay.

I finished dressing him up. He took his bag and he left. I went to my room to get dressed.

Alupheli was busy waking Thapelo up. He finally woke up.

Sphephile: Mom and I are ready to have breakfast. Wake up. Mom did not wake you.

Thapelo: Alondwe why didn't you wake me up?

Me: I am not your alarm. Huh?

Thapelo: I will go to the clinic today and try to fix it don't be grumpy and moody because of it.

Me: Heeh. If I was you. I was going to be on that shower by now and stop talking.

Sphephile shook his head and he left as Thapelo went to shower. I finished dressing up and I made the bed and opened the windows. I went to have breakfast. I looked at Sphephile and he was a mess.

Sphephile: I am sorry it was a mistake.

Me: Get off that chair and take off your uniform. Agh man!

He got off the chair and took off his uniform. I went to take a clean shirt and short. I took his towel and I wiped him.

Me: Go and eat like that.

Sphephile: But I am not dressed.

Me: You will get dressed up after breakfast. Every morning that's how it's going to be. I won't tolerate your morning clumsiness.

He pouted and he went to the table. We prayed and had breakfast. Thapelo joined us for breakfast.

Thapelo: And then?

Sphephile: Mom said I am clumsy.

Thapelo: Ouch! Sorry man. We're getting roasted these days. It's really tough.

Sphephile: Yeah. I wish she can just go on vacation for a month so that we can alone with aunty Betha.

Thapelo: Yeah she's more fun.

Me: I am still here.

They looked at each other and pretended like they didn't just talk about me. After breakfast I cleared the table. Sphephile dressed up and Thapelo helped him. He was the one driving him to work everyday.

Me: Okay. Have a good day my boys.

Them: Have a good day mom.

Thapelo: I ain't getting a kiss?

I looked at him up and down. He made a puppy face

Me: Once you have an erection tell me I will kiss you.

Sphephile: What's an erection dad?

Thapelo: Eish boy. It's tough. Life is rough let's go.

Sphephile looked at him in a wired way and they left. I sighed and I went to my car. I drove straight to work.

Before starting my day. I prayed in my office. Then I sat down and checked my phone. I had a reminder that it was Sbahle's birthday. I made a note to buy her a present. My day began. I was working till lunch hour. I didn't even get a chance to have a tea break. Lunch time I got my break. I sat on my chair closed my eyes and tried to breath. There was a knock on the door. I opened my eyes it was my husband.

Me: Do we have a lunch date?

Thapelo: No. But we are going to your gynecologist for a check up remember.

Me: Oh yeah. I am so tired I want to sleep.

Thapelo: You should go and sleep.

Me: I am not done. Let's go.

I gave him my bag and he took it. I locked my office and we left. He was driving. I was sleeping on the back seat. Thapelo woke me up once we were at the medical center.

Thapelo: How would you feel if I can leave you here sleeping like you did in the morning to me?

Me: You can't do that because the baby is inside my tummy not your tummy. Or your penis.

Thapelo: This thing of my penis is bothering you.

Me: It should bother me. How on earth will we give the baby some eyes and other body parts.

Thapelo: Come on you know that's a joke. The baby will grow without the penis.

Me: Oh God I won't grow then I can't survive.

Thapelo: Okay can you shut up now before you tell everyone that my dick just dropped.

Me: Mxm.

When it was our turn we went to the Doctor's office. She greeted us and we get down to business.

Doc: Your wife told you that she might not carry the baby full term Mr Moloi?

Thapelo: Yes mam. She told me.

Doc: Do you have some questions?

Thapelo: No I understood everything clear.

She nodded and started doing the ultra sound. Thapelo held my hand and we looked at the screen.

Doc: Doctor Ndunakazi is there any history of twins in your family?

Me: No. Why?

Doc: Mr Moloi?

Thapelo: Yes. My siblings are twins. They are fraternal twins.

Doc: Ah. You guys are having two babies. But I can't see the gander for now.

Me: No. How will this work twins?

Doc: I think you must stop working right away and take everything slowly. We can't risk anything. This might be our last shot. So we don't want anything to go wrong.

Thapelo: Don't worry Doctor she will stop working.

Me: Wow easy for him to say. It's easy for him. Jesus!

Doc: Calm down Doctor. I will write the report to explain your situation. You two will make this work. Then we will see as time goes on what we can do to safely deliver them both alive but you also know that your work is stressful. Sometimes patients die, families cry and you feel their pain so you don't need all that. Just six months and after that your hands will be full with two beautiful souls.

I didn't say anything. I was just angry not that I was ungrateful but I didn't want to stay at home and do nothing. Like do nothing. No it should not be like that! I cleaned myself and the Doctor wrote the report. She gave it to me. I thanked her and we left.

Thapelo: I want to see you giving them the report. I don't trust you. I know you're stubborn.

Me: Get off my case. Please.

Thapelo: It's not your case, it's my case too. Those are my kids maybe you have forgotten that.

Me: This is a nightmare, his dick is not working and now I will be a house wife. Oh wow! Perfect life Alondwe. Are we even still going to Brazil on the kids June holidays?

Thapelo: Of course not. Why will you ask that. We are not going. By then you'll be seven months and you know that pregnant women don't fly at seven months.

Me: Mxm.

Thapelo: Drop the attitude Alondwe. Drop the attitude.

I didn't say anything. I was just angry. At the hospital, he went to the HR department with me. We submitted my report and they were going to process it and give me feedback after two days. I took my bag from Thapelo and I went to my office. He left. I went to my office and I cried. I didn't want to stop working immediately. I wanted to work. I just wanted to work. Why was this happening to me. Mxm!

After work I went to buy the gift for Sbahle. My phone rang while I was still searching for the gift. I answered.

Me: What is it now?

Thapelo: Where are you? Are you coming back home or you're not coming back?

Me: I will come back home but for now I am going to Sbahle's house.

Thapelo: What? What are you going to do there?

Me: It's her birthday and I want to surprise her with gifts and food. I will come back home later.

Thapelo: Just stay where you're. We are coming to you.

He hung up the call. I didn't even know why he was coming to me. I didn't want him. I wanted to go alone. He requested the address of where I was. I sent it to him. After a few minutes they were where I was.

Sphephile: Hey mom.

Me: Hey how was your day at school?

Sphephile: My day was good yours?

Me: Mine was a mess.

Sphephile: Ah. I am sorry. Let me kiss you.

I smiled and I kissed him. Just a baby kiss. We waited for the food and once it was ready we left. Thapelo and Sphephile used a cab to come to me so we were going to drive together to Sbahle's house. She gave me her address when I asked for it. I gave it to Thapelo because he was driving. We finally made it to the house. Her house was a double storey, a white beautiful house.

Sphephile: Tjo! I want to live here.

Me: I think I want to live here too.

We both laughed. I buzzed the intercom. The maid's face appeared. I smiled.

Me: Hello. It's Alondwe. A friend of Sbahle's, I once met you at the mall with her. I don't know if you remember me. I think you do. So is she in?

Maid: Yes she's in. Maybe she's working but you can come through.

Me: Thank you.

She opened the gate for us and Thapelo drove through. We got off the car. They carried the food and I carried the gift. The maid opened the door and welcomed us. Her house was really beautiful. I thought I was going to see kids or people around but there was no one around.

Me: Where is the rest of her family?

Maid: They don't live here with her. She lives alone. I thought you know that.

Me: Uhm no. She never mentioned that to me. (I smiled) So where is she right now?

Maid: She's upstairs. In her office.

She told me the directions and I went upstairs to get her. I told the boys to wait for me. The door was slightly opened on her office and I could hear her crying inside. I opened the door and she looked up. I quickly went to her and I opened my arms for her. She stood up and hugged me.

Me: What's wrong?

She didn't say anything, she just cried. She was making me sad because I never thought she can have problems but then again she's also human. We let go after sometime. She wiped her tears. I looked at her. Her phone rang, I looked at it and the caller ID was "Samkelo Ndunakazi" wait that's my father. She took her phone but she didn't answer the call. She placed it on the table with the screen facing down. I went to sit on the opposite chair.

Me: Do you want to talk about it? I know that I am not a professional but talking helps. I will listen.

Sbahle: No. Don't worry yourself about me.

Me: No I should worry because you take care of other people's problems but who's taking care of yours.

Sbahle: I put it all in the hands of the lord.

Me: But you need to talk.

She cried and started talking: So I met this guy years ago. I was a clinical psychologist. It was my first year working as a psychologist. I was sharing a flat with some girl in town. I earned enough to look after myself and my family. Not that it was my first time working but I was working before as a child and youth care worker. I was studying and working. Then this guy came into my life and he was so perfect. He loved me so much, showed me love in different ways. I was in love with him. He didn't want to take me to his place, I didn't understand why then he finally told me that he was poor. He had dreams to further his studies but he doesn't have money. I told him I will support him. He refused but he finally agreed. He did a short course because I was also studying that time. Once he completed his short course I paid for his tuition fee to study engineering then second semester he was successful for NSFAS. We continued dating. Our relationship was great. We had arguments like every couple but we made up. He never took me to his place because he was ashamed. I accepted that because I

didn't want to bruise his ego as man. He would ask for anything and I would try and buy if for him because I loved him and I wanted to support him. Then on his graduation day he made excuses, he didn't want to go with me. I agreed and let him go with his parents. I thought maybe he didn't tell them that I helped him. Then I saw a Facebook post, his wife tagged him on the graduation day they were together with their two sons. I was confused as hell because all I knew was that he was living with his parents. I called him and he rubbed it all in my face telling me that actually he's an orphan, he met his wife in high school and they loved each other. They got married after matric, her wife was pregnant so she couldn't go to college and he had to work so that he can support them. When he met me he was looking for a job because the wife was pregnant again and I was stupid enough to believe his story and help him. Now he's a well known successful man and he left me hurt and broken. Yes I believe in love but after him I never loved again. And it's hard to fall in love for me because I don't know how I can over come the fear of being hurt again. After him I studied like a freak and I obtained all the qualifications I have today. I then went overseas where I studied sex therapy. I worked there and studied until I got my qualification. I didn't date any man nor even have a one night stand. I haven't had sex for over ten years. I came home and I opened my own practice. I developed my own methods using research and I am still studying now. I travel and helping people is my life. I live here alone and my parents are well cared for. I have everything that I want. I am going to expand next year and continue helping people. I am 39 years old and I have it all but I am scared to fall in love again.

I was just speechless. I didn't even know what to say.

Me: Sbahle I –

Sbahle: I know you don't know what to say. I feel better that I have spoken about it.

Me: You told me about law of attraction so why don't you apply it in your life. And find love again.

Sbahle: I don't know. Please let's not talk about me. I don't do this, tell my clients my life or even make examples out of my life. I don't do it. You're the first person I told about this because even my parents and family don't know about this. What I can say is fear is a powerful emotion just like love and pain are the powerful emotions.

Me: Don't let it rule your life.

Sbahle: I love my life. So why are you here?

Me: I wanted to say Happy Birthday. My boys are downstairs. We brought food and a gift.

Sbahle: You're such a darling. I don't like to celebrate my birthday but I won't turn you down.

I laughed and said: You're just like my dad.

She smiled awkwardly. Her phone rang again. She looked at it but she didn't answer. This made me suspicious why was she ignoring my father's calls? Did something happen between them? Or? Ayi maybe I am over thinking.

Sbahle: Let's go and eat please.

I smiled and nodded. She stood up, her phone rang again.

Me: Ain't you going to take it?

Sbahle: No they'll probably leave a voice message.

I nodded and we went downstairs. Thapelo and Sphephile were already eating.

Me: Like really guys?

Sphephile: We were hungry and dad said we should let you guys have your ladies talk.

Me: Unbelievable Thapelo.

Thapelo: Don't blame.

Sbahle laughed and we sat down. We ate together but I couldn't stop thinking about Sbahle and my father calling her, dad said they were done with the sessions but he's calling her.

Hhayi asazi.

Samkelo Ndunakazi.....

In the morning I called my son in-law, I was already at work. He answered the phone.

Thapelo: Good Morning Baba.

Me: Good morning Thapelo how are you?

Thapelo: I am good thanks and you?

Me: I am fine. I need you to do a favour for me.

Thapelo: I am listening.

Me: Yesterday was Sbahle's birthday, I want to get her a beautiful gift. Please do that for me and make sure that it's delivered to her by today before end of office hours.

Thapelo: What kind of gift should I buy?

Me: Just go to a jewelry shop and get a set of beautiful diamond earrings and a bracelet. Can you do that for me?

Thapelo: Yes. I will be on it.

Me: Once you're done you'll send the price of the gift I will then transfer the money to your account. I will send the text, telling you what to write on the card.

Thapelo: Alright.

Me: But please don't tell my daughter.

Thapelo: Relax I won't tell her.

Me: Okay. Thanks. Bye.

Thapelo: Bye.

I hung up the call and I sent the text. After that I continued working. As the day carried on Thapelo sent the slip to me and the picture of the gift he bought. It was beautiful just what I had in mind. I then transferred the money to his account.

I was packing my bag when my phone rang. I took it and Sbahle was calling. I smiled and sat down. I answered the phone call.

Me: Sbahle?

Sbahle: Hi, Samkelo how are you doing?

Me: I am good thanks and you?

Sbahle: I am fine... "Every beautiful woman deserves to own a diamond. This is to say happy belated birthday. -Samkelo Ndunakazi" I thought we don't celebrate birthdays.

Me: We were not celebrating, I bought a gift for you.

Sbahle: Who did you send to buy it? Alondwe?

Me: Of course not, I sent my son in-law. Do you like it? You should like it.

Sbahle: Who told you I don't own diamonds? And where did you get that line anyway?

Me: I know you might have diamonds but you don't have diamonds bought by Samkelo Ndunakazi. And it doesn't matter where you think I got that line.

Sbahle: I can't accept the gift it's expensive.

Me: I can see it's works for you hey.

Sbahle: What?

Me: Shutting people out. You're good at it.

Sbahle: I called to say thank you for the gift but I can see you have no sense of humour.

Me: Sorry, there was nothing that needed a sense of humour in everything that you said. Like seriously.

Sbahle: Well you're starting a debate Mr Ndunakazi and I am not interested. Maybe some other time.

Me: Will you be interested on a date with me? This weekend. I am no longer your client and besides I wasn't your client. You were just helping out my sons. Not that I was a client. I didn't even pay. So please say yes?

Sbahle: I will come to Durban Saturday, but you don't get to ask me about my previous relationship like you want to be in a serious relationship. And don't force me to speak about

my past because I don't like speaking about it.

Me: Okay. I will try. Thank you so much I promise I will be on my best behaviour. I am looking forward to Saturday night.

Sbahle: I hope I won't regret it.

Me: It will be the best of your life.

Sbahle: Jesu wami! Good bye Mr Ndunakazi.

Me: Goodbye Miss Zuke.

We hung up the call and I raised my hands up as the sign of victory. I took my bag and I left the office feeling epic. As I parked my car, my phone rang. Alondwe was calling. I answered.

Me: My beautiful princess.

Alondwe: Hello daddy how are you?

Me: I am good baby and you?

Alondwe: I am not really good. I am going to be a mother of twins and I must stop working to look after myself because I can be at risk if I continue working.

Me: Oh Nkosi Jesu! I am going to be a grandfather. That's wonderful news my baby.

Alondwe: I won't go to work.

Me: Yes because you must look after yourself. Don't worry you'll be just fine. Have you told your in-laws?

Alondwe: No we decided not to tell them until I give birth. I don't want them involved.

Me: Alright. Your husband must be happy hey?

Alondwe: Yes. He's happy, dad are you still talking to Sbahle?

Me: No. Why?

Alondwe: Nothing I was just asking. Anyway goodnight please send my love to Grandma and little brother.

Me: Alright I will, Goodnight.

We hung up the call. I just wondered why she was asking me about Sbahle what does she know that I don't? Eish. I went inside the house. Mom and Alupheli were having dinner. I greeted them.

Alupheli: Someone came back from work late than usual?

Me: Yes my wife I was very busy at the office.

Alupheli laughed and said: How was your day dad?

Me: It was good, good my son and yours?

Alupheli: It was nice. What happened? Something good happened.

Me: I need my groove back to plan a date.

Alupheli: Really? She agreed?

Me: Yes she agreed.

Mom: You're really doing this Samkelo?

Me: Mom please.

She didn't say anything. I had dinner with them and I went to my room to shower. Alupheli slept with me that night. We were talking about dinner ideas. I didn't know if I was supposed to take her out on a restaurant or plan something myself. I didn't know if Sbahle had any allergies or if she had food preferences. But I trusted my son to help me with everything.

Saturday night came, we were going to have dinner in my house outside. At the pool area. I asked my chef to prepare the special dinner. I asked Sbahle about her food preferences and she told me to surprise her. The table was beautifully decorated and the music was playing slowly just the instruments on the low volume. My son did that. We were video calling Mesuli showing him the table.

Mesuli: Woah! It's beautiful! The chef will be there serving you guys?

Alupheli: Yes. I am the chef dad show him my outfit.

I turned the phone and I showed Mesuli the outfit. He was wearing a black and white tuxedo

with black bowtie.

Mesuli: I wish I can be there right now.

Alupheli: Shush! There's someone on the gate. Bye I am welcoming her.

Mesuli: Bye. Where's grandma?

Me: I asked her to visit her friends and she agreed, I told her I am bringing friends over for a match.

Mesuli: Shame on her, okay have fun and remember don't talk about mom you will make her feel threatened and she'll feel like she'll be in competition with her should she agree to date you. Okay?

Me: Yeah. I will keep that in mind. It's about her tonight.

Mesuli: Good. Bye. And you don't give her sex ideas on the first date don't forget that too.

Me: Bye. I will keep that too in mind.

We hung up the call and I switched off my phone. I stood next to the table looking at the back door. Alupheli came holding her hand. She was so beautiful, she was wearing a long light peach dress, she had her hair tied up showing the earrings that I bought for her and on the wrist was the bracelet. I smiled and looked down. She didn't have her glasses on.

Alupheli: Mr Ndunakazi, here is the lady.

Me: Thank you Chef Ndunakazi.

Sbahle smiled, I took her hand and I directed her to her chair after kissing the back of her hand. I pulled the chair for her and she sat down.

Me: You look beautiful.

Sbahle: Thank you. I must say I thought Alupheli was my date.

I laughed and said: Well I am.

Sbahle: You look good for a old man.

Me: I see you have jokes.

Sbahle: Just a compliment.

Me: Thank you.

Alupheli came back with starters and we thanked him.

Alupheli: If you need me just press this button. I will be here soon to take care of your needs. (he bowed) My lady, and my master.

Me: Thanks Ndunakazi.

He nodded and left. Sbahle smiled and looked down.

Me: What?

Sbahle: I think I am falling for him.

Me: Yeah. He's a younger version of me. So you can always look up you know.

Sbahle: I must say I feel like a lady of some sort of kingdom.

Me: I am glad you feel that way.

She smiled and we continue having a conversation, Alupheli served us dinner. She told me the basics about herself. I didn't have to tell her anything because she knew some things about me though she didn't know it all in all but the night was about her. After dinner we had dessert.

Sbahle: Who cooked all this food?

Me: That is a secret mam.

Sbahle: Oh. You ordered the food?

Me: You see that I have the chef serving us so I know nothing about ordering food.

Sbahle: I am impressed.

I smiled and nodded. We finished up everything and we wiped out hands. I pressed the button and Alupheli knew what to do. The instruments began.

Me: Can I?

Sbahle: You're asking me for a dance?

Me: I don't really know how to do this but I will try.

Sbahle smiled and nodded.

Me: (singing) Follow my hands, I'll teach you how to play. I'll be patient with you. (She smiled and took my hand) someone was patient with me... There'll always be a chance that you could hit the wrong note, everybody could laugh make you think you won't grow, you don't have to give up it's not the end of the world.

She smiled and sang: "You live and you learn, even when you think that times get hard, it's temporary hard. All you gotta do is make that call I'll be there don't be scared, you don't got to lose it, Remember the music. Remember the music"

I smiled and said: You just made the shy. Holly God! You can sing and I just ruined the song.

Sbahle: You didn't ruin the song. It was beautiful you sang it in your version. I like the song. I love it.

Me: I like it too.

Sbahle: So you'll be there when I make that call?

Me: Yes I will be. You just got to take my hand and walk with me. I will be here and don't be scared.

She smiled and hugged me. That hug that! That's it.... I am winning here... Or am I what? Hee..

Alondwe Moloji....

The following morning Thapelo and I were dressing up for work. I was still thinking about Sbahle and my father.

Me: You know last night dad kept on calling Sbahle and she was ignoring the call.

Thapelo: What? Do you think something happened between them?

Me: Maybe. Dad told me he's no longer talking to her but he was busy calling her.

Thapelo: They spent weeks together maybe something happened. Sbahle could use a man in her life.

Me: But I don't think my dad is ready for love.

Thapelo: Oh come on he won't stay single forever.

Me: I know. But at least Sbahle is a nice person.

Thapelo nodded. I finished up, I took my bag and I went to join Sphephile. He was already having breakfast. Thapelo joined us. We had breakfast together.

Sphephile: Dad can you please train me I want to join athletics. On Friday please come and support me mom and dad. I want to win.

Thapelo: Okay. I will support you and we will start training today when I come from work.

Me: Maybe that will also help.

He ignored me and continued speaking to Sphephile.

Sphephile: I want to join hookey at school. I want to play.

Me: That's nice. I wish I can join you too.

Sphephile: Mom you like things Tjo.

Thapelo: Tell her please.

They laughed, seeing my husband laugh. Annoyed me. I stood up and took my bags. I headed to the door.

Sphephile: What did we do?

Thapelo: I don't know.

I went to my car and I drove off. I couldn't control the feeling I get sometimes when I see Thapelo's face or when he laughs. I wish I could just leave the room or throw him out. I arrived at work and I went to my office. I prayed and I sat down. I looked at my diary. My phone rang while I was looking at my diary. I answered it.

Me: Hello baby.

Thapelo: I am baby now, just a few minutes ago you just left without even saying goodbye.

Me: You don't understand.

Thapelo: I don't understand what? You're still angry because of my penis? I have an appointment today at the clinic.

Me: It's not the penis. I don't want to talk about it.

Thapelo: It's my smell? I smell bad?

Me: No. I love you.

Thapelo: Wow!

He hung up the call. I sighed, I didn't want to tell him because he was going to be sad and I didn't want him to be sad. I wanted him to be happy. My day began and I was working. I was hoping and praying that the hospital can reject my leave. I just needed to work. How was I supposed to stay at home and do nothing, then wait for a husband with a penis that is on a sleeping beauty. I was really sad shame. It was bothering me big time. But I guess I had to suck it up so that I can survive.

After two days the hospital agreed to let me take extended leave. I was really sad. That evening they made a small party for me just to say goodbye. After the party I drove my car back home. I arrived at home Thapelo was on the lounge alone. He wasn't watching TV. He was just sitting there. I looked at the watch and it was nine o'clock.

Me: Hey. I am back.

Thapelo: Where are you coming from? I have been calling you. I was worried sick about you.

Me: But I sent a voice note telling you that I will come back late. At work they were having a small Goodbye party for me.

I was lying. I didn't send the voice note.

Thapelo: There is no voice note that you sent here. You should have called me not send ghost voice notes. Tsk!

Me: Should I say sorry?

Thapelo: No. Don't say it because you will be lying if you say you're sorry. I know that you're not sorry. You were better when you were not pregnant. You make me angry man Tsk!

He stood up and he left. I sat on the couch and I took off my shoes. I took off my blazer. I took the cushion and I slept on the couch holding it. Thapelo came back to me. He stood beside the couch.

Thapelo: Are you coming to bed or you'll sleep here?

Me: I will come to bed.

Thapelo: I don't understand you. You did something wrong but you want me to feel bad about it. Why Alondwe? Why are you doing everything that you're doing? Ever since you told me you're pregnant you've changed. Why are you doing this? Huh? I am talking to you. I didn't say anything. I didn't know what to say. He clicked his tongue repeatedly then he left. I closed my eyes and I slowly drift off to sleep. In the morning I woke up on the couch. Thapelo and Sphephile were having breakfast. I greeted them and they greeted me back like they didn't want to. I went to the bedroom. The bed was made. I took off my clothes and I went back to sleep. When I woke up they were gone. I was left alone doing nothing.

The medication that Thapelo took instructed that he must not try to have sex for five days. My tummy was starting to show as it was Mid March. Sphephile didn't win the race but he did join the hookey team. The medication didn't work. I just made peace with the fact that I won't be getting any sex until I don't know when. It was a Friday morning. Thapelo and Sphephile had left. I was also leaving. I was always going to Nkululeko's boutique because I was bored at home. I was helping her behind the cash register while her and her assistant did some other things. Thapelo didn't know that I was doing that. It was fun there and there was never a dull moment. I was always laughing and having a good time.

Phumla: So Alondwe what can you do if your husband can enter the door, maybe he come here just to buy you a gift.

Me: Simple I was visiting my friend for lunch. I then decided to help her out.

Nkulu: Shame my friend at least you're getting two babies.

Me: Let's not talk about babies. That white hunk came back yesterday or he didn't?

Phumla: Hee! He came back and sadly you were gone.

Me: I always thought I was going to end up with a white guy.

They laughed at me and I laughed too.

Nkulu: You don't want black love now and a black dick?

Me: No. I want white love now. (we laughed)

Phumla: The hunk saw that you have a thing for him. And I think he heard you saying he looks yummy and cute.

Me: Yeah, I don't mind. He's my crush. I haven't had a crush since varsity.

Nkulu: Heeh! I remember that crush of yours. He was making you crazy hey!

Me: Yeah hey but too bad I had Thapelo.

Nkulu: But I thought when he asked you out you were going to agree to go with him and date him.

Me: I couldn't do that. Ay. That guy was fireworks. He was cute shame. I also thought I was going to cheat. I tell you phumla I could see myself cheating and I had a strategy how I was going to do it.

Phumla: So what happened?

Me: Hee, Thapelo had some sensors. Everytime when a guy was seriously asking me out and I had a little crush on the guy. He'll just send money on my account. Baby please come this weekend. Eh! Guys the anger.

Nkulu: It was very funny shame, specially that day you were all dressed up for the date just for fun then we met Thapelo on the door. (we laughed)

Phumla: Maybe he had a magic mirror where he was looking at you. You may never know.

Me: Maybe. Cheating was never an option. Awu now it's a no go zone and a no don't even think about it. (we laughed)

We finished up packing the dresses and we opened the shop. Customers started coming in. It was after the 15th so some people had money. Phumla pinched me.

Me: Ouch!

She giggled. I looked at the door and it was the white hunk. I composed myself. He looked around and he bought a scarf. He came to the cash register

Hunk: Good afternoon.

Me: Good afternoon Sir. How are you?

Hunk: I am good thanks and how are you?

My God, he had that England accent. The British kind of.

Me: I am fine thanks. You're buying that? (I took it) cash or credit card sir?

Hunk: Cash. What do you think about this colour? Will it look good on a woman with your skin tone?

Me: Yes. It will definitely look good. It's a beautiful scarf.

Hunk: For a beautiful lady.

Me: She must be very lucky.

Phumla: Yelele! Alondwe?

Me: Phumla you're disturbing me. So sir you want a plastic bag or a paper bag?

Hunk: I would like to see you on the scarf. Please try it on.

Me: What?

Phumla: Oh my God Alondwe!

Me: Phumla man!

Hunk: I bought the scarf for the beautiful lady that I am looking at right now.

Me: Oh really? Wow! Thank you. I mean I can't accept it.

Hunk: Please do take it. It will make me happy.

Me: Okay. You will smile if I wear it?

Hunk: Yes. Then I will go.

I smiled and removed the price tag.

Phumla: Alondwe!

Me: Ah Phumla please!

I wore the scarf and the white hunk smiled. Oh dear God. He was so cute like those white guys in movies.

Hunk: You look beautiful. Have yourself a good afternoon. Maybe we see each other again.

Me: That would be nice. Bye. And thanks.

He smiled, nodded and headed to the exit. I looked at him until he made it to the door. Oh dear God! TF! I turned and looked at Phumla.

Phumla: I tried to warn you but you didn't listen to me.

Thapelo: We're going home now.

Me: Thapelo I –

Thapelo: Now Alondwe.

Me: Please tell Nkululeko when she comes back that I will see her tomorrow.

Thapelo: Tell her when she wants her, she'll find her in the house.

Phumla: Okay. I will tell her that.

I took my bag and I left the cash register. We headed to the door. Outside the shop he looked at me.

Thapelo: Can the scarf go back to the shop?

Me: Why? it's mine. I am not sending it back.

I went to my car and I drove off. He followed after me. We arrived at home and I went to sit on the lounge. He followed me behind.

Thapelo: I drove from work with a purpose to give you lunch that I bought for you then I found out that you leave every morning after Sphephile and I.

Me: I was bored.

Thapelo: You were bored? So you put the babies lives in danger because you're bored. Do you hear yourself?

Me: That job has no danger or stress. It makes me happy and it excites me.

Thapelo: Flirting with men excites you?

I didn't say anything. I just shut up. I didn't want to argue with him. I looked down because that feeling was starting. I didn't want to look at his face.

Thapelo: I don't think it's the pregnancy now or the hormones. You're doing this on purpose because you know that I won't do anything. You're doing this to get to me. Tell you what go and work there, have fun. If you wish sleep with that man. Do whatever you like but at the end of the day I want my kids alive. Obviously our love was about sex to you. It was just a sex mission. I guess that is what I will tell our kids. How was your love with mom dad? Oh baby Our Love Was A Mission. I have set you free live your life as you wish.

He stood up, took his keys and left. I cried. I didn't know why I was crying but I cried. I went to bed and I cried myself to sleep. Maybe it was painful to hear him say that I love him for sex. It was painful because that was not true.

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

After our dinner date, we went inside the house. Alupheli was not around the lounge.

Sbahle: I had a great time tonight. Thanks.

Me: I had a wonderful time too. Thanks for coming.

Sbahle: I should drive to the hotel now.

Me: You drove from Johannesburg?

Sbahle: Yes I did not want to arrive early and right now I will go check in at the hotel. I will drive back in the morning.

Me: Don't be silly sleep here. Your guest room of course.

Sbahle: I –

Me: I am not taking no for an answer. Give me your keys I will take your bags.

She nodded and opened her purse. She gave me her keys. I went to take her bags while she was going upstairs. I opened her car and I took the bags. I locked the car and I went back inside the house. I knocked on the door.

Sbahle: Come in.

I opened the door and I went inside the room. She was taking off her heels. I put the bags on top of the bed.

Me: Good night then.

Sbahle: Thank you. Good night.

I nodded and I left her. I just wondered how it felt to share a bed with her and hold her.

Maybe her body was cold but then again no maybe she's not. I smiled and I went to my room. Alupheli was in my bed.

Me: Woah! What are you doing here?

Alupheli: No sex on the first date remember. I was trying to stop that. We don't want you to do this wrong.

Me: I wasn't going to have sex with her and stop talking about sex you're making things awkward.

Alupheli: Just because you didn't have this cool relationship with granddad it doesn't mean I should be scared to talk to you about these things. We are boys dad.

Me: Ey people grow hey,

I took off my shoes and I joined him in bed.

Me: I think she's starting to loosen up a little.

Alupheli: Yes! That's great!

Me: But know this, if we can date I won't be sharing my relationship business with you.

Alupheli: Yes. I know. I respect you dad and I won't want to know your relationship business. This was to get you back on track. Just helping you get your groove back, phela mom held you down very tight. You know.

Me: Yeah I know. And I thank her for giving me smart kids like you guys.

Alupheli smiled and he did the happy kick. I laughed and shook my head.

Me: Okay let's sleep now.

Alupheli: Yeah. Yeah let's sleep.

I took off the blazer, tie shirt and I slept with my vest on. My suit pants were still on. We switched off the lights and we slept. I couldn't sleep. I was thinking about how perfect the night was. And I was having a feeling that I was going to be happy again.

I woke up, Alupheli was dead sleeping. I wore my sleepers and I went to check up on Sbahle. I just wanted to look at her sleeping. I opened the door and it wasn't locked. The bedside lamp was still on. She was asleep holding a novel next to her chest. Her reading glasses were on. She must have fallen asleep while reading. I stood there with my hands on my pockets I looked at her. Her lips were slightly opened. I smiled. She looked peaceful. I turned back making my way to the door.

Sbahle: Were you thinking about adapting me on my sleep?

I laughed and turned back.

Me: I am sorry I woke you.

Sbahle: I live alone remember so it's always easier for me to feel someone in my room.

Me: I just wanted to make sure that you didn't run away.

Sbahle: Why would I do that? Do you eat people?

Me: Not really. Do you want some ice cream? I usually eat ice cream when I can't sleep. Like I used to see Thandeka doing it so I stole the idea and made it mine.

Sbahle: That's plagiarism you know.

I laughed and said: Come on you can't be serious.

Sbahle: What I am serious. (I laughed) But ice cream would be great.

Me: I will go get it just now.

I went downstairs and I took the tub, a plate and two tablespoons. I went back to the bedroom. She made space for me and I joined her inside the bed covers. I gave her the spoon. I put the tub on the plate and we started eating ice cream together in silence.

Sbahle: I think I had it all under control. Like I won't date forever because guys can be cruel sometimes.

Me: Someone did you bad?

Sbahle: Yeah and I made a permanent decision in a temporary condition. That pain I was feeling was just temporary. It's been over ten years and I didn't even try to date. Guys were there and they are still trying including you (I laughed) but I just told myself that I don't want them.

Me: How do you do it? Like stay alone for such a long time?

Sbahle: There's nothing you can't do once you convince your mind and tell it that this is what going to happen. And fear again pushes you. But then work again kept me from desiring a relationship. And I am always studying. Even now I am studying.

Me: What are you studying now?

Sbahle: I am studying Sociology. It's my second year now.

Me: You like everything that has people?

Sbahle: Yeah what about you?

Me: Ah I don't know. I don't see what I can study if I do want to study. The last thing I obtained was my Honours degree. And after that I stopped.

Sbahle: Don't you want to be a Doctor in accounting or a professor?

Me: For now all I want is you then I can go for high qualifications because studying and education doesn't end or stop.

Sbahle: If you don't get me?

Me: Well- No I will get you. You'll be mine. You're mine right now. I can feel it.

She laughed and layed her head on my shoulder. I smiled, that was her saying I am yours, to me.

Sbahle: He was married, we dated for four years. I didn't know he was married. He came to me as a man with love and care. Protection and support but he was poor. I helped him study, paid for his education until NSFAS took over then on graduation day he took his wife and sons. I just saw that on Facebook. It was a biggest surprise of my life. And I have been broken ever since. I need someone who'll be patient with me. I don't trust easily and I am afraid.

Me: I will be patient with you, someone was patient with me. I told you that and I need you to believe me. That guy took advantage of you. I won't do that. I need you and you need me.

We need each other.

She smiled and closed her eyes. After a few minutes she was asleep. I put the ice cream aside. She woke up.

Me: Sorry I didn't mean to wake you.

She nodded and she placed her head back on my shoulder. I held her softly and we fell asleep immediately.

I woke up in the morning and she was not next to me. I heard the shower running. I went to

my room to shower too. Alupheli was no longer in my bed. I finished up showering and I dressed up casually. I went downstairs. Alupheli was having breakfast. The chef worked everyday but not Saturday.

Alupheli: Good Morning

Me: Good Morning. Before you complain about –

Alupheli: I won't complain.

He smiled and I nodded. I didn't want him to start talking. He can talk. Sbahle came downstairs on a white simple dress and white sandals. She looked nice. She greeted us.

Alupheli: Morning I have made breakfast.

She sat down and asked: Are you really the one cooking?

Alupheli: Yes I am.

Just then the chef came in the dining table with butter and milk. Sbahle smiled.

Sbahle: You cook nice Alupheli.

Alupheli: I know.

We laughed and the chef laughed after us. He greeted Sbahle. Sbahle greeted him back. My mom walked inside the house with her bags. Alupheli and I looked at each other. Mom greeted us and sat down. We greeted her back.

Mom: She was the reason I had to sleep out Samkelo?

Me: Yes mom are you having a problem with that?

Mom: Woah! Woah! Girls of today! You have slept with him already on the first date?

Sbahle: No mam I didn't.

Mom: What are you doing here then having breakfast in my daughter in-law's house huh? Samkelo why did you bring her here or that's why you were telling me to go my friend you wanted to bring her in this house and sleep with her because you know that I wasn't going to let it happen?

Me: Mom we didn't have sex. I asked her to sleep here because I didn't want her to drive to the hotel at night.

Mom: You should have kept her at the hotel, have that dinner there not here. You're disrespecting Thandeka man! Agha! I won't sit here Tsk! I don't have time for nonsense.

Sbahle: No mam I will leave.

Sbahle stood up, I held her hand and her eyes had a glimpse of tears. I didn't like this, I thought mom agreed that she was a nice person.

Me: Don't go please. This is my house.

Mom: You bought it together with Thandeka. Her money is also here so if you want to take her you better buy another house where she will sleep whenever she wants and come when she wants but I won't allow that here. Soon you'll be having sex where? Thandeka's bed where you were making love to her? No! It will not happen while I am here.

Sbahle yanked her hand out of mine softly and she went upstairs. I looked at mom.

Alupheli: Wow! Grandma you know how to hurt a human being

Mom: Shut up! If your father treats you like a man and lets you speak to him however you want it doesn't mean I will allow that. You should be protecting your home from women your father will bring in here but you're pushing him to them.

Me: Mom why are you like this?

Mom: I am not against you dating. Date as much as you want but do not bring it here in this house. I can see you have taken off your wedding ring too. Hhayi ungehlule!

Sbahle came back with her bags. I stood up and I took them from her. Alupheli stood up and hugged her.

Alupheli: I will see you again right?

Sbahle: Yeah. We have a date on September.

Alupheli: Thank you. Have a safe trip.

Sbahle: Thank you. Take care of yourself. Bye mam.

Mom: Bye.

I walked her out. I packed her bags on the car. I then turn back to her because she was behind me.

Me: Please don't mind what mom said in there. Thandeka is gone and I want to be with you now.

Sbahle: I don't want to be compared to your wife. Not by you, your sons or your mom.

Me: I won't compare you to anyone. You're Sbahle and you're not Thandeka. I also don't want to be crucified for the sins of that man who hurt you.

Sbahle: I won't crucify you. No sleeping with random women.

Me: I have stopped long time ago.

Sbahle: Okay. I will go now. We will talk on the phone.

Me: Okay. Have a safe trip.

She smiled and hugged me. Yeah! Thank God! After the hug I didn't let go, I just surprised her with a kiss and surprisingly she kissed me back... Was I lying or what? I am winning!

### **The final chapter :**

Alondwe Moloi....

I woke up later in my Thapelo was next to me reading a book. I didn't even feel that it was late.

Me: Hi.

Thapelo: Hey.

Me: Uhm.... How was your day?

Thapelo: It was alright.

I didn't say anything further. I stood up and I went to the bathroom. I washed my face and I went to the kitchen to prepare dinner. I figured they have eaten because the lights were off. I switched them on and I took my phone. It was on top of the coffee table. I had a missed call from Grandma. I sat down and I called her back. She answered.

Gogo: I have been calling you and you're not answering.

Me: I am sorry grandma. I was sleeping. You know I am no longer working so all I do is sleep.

Gogo: Why don't you do something less stressful, maybe help your friend out at her shop.

Me: I was doing that but Thapelo doesn't approve. Well he didn't know. He found out today.

Gogo: Awu. You were supposed to ask him. Not do it behind his back. When you're used to working staying at home is not fun at all.

Me: Yeah. I suppose I will just get used to it.

Gogo: Ask him maybe he'll agree.

Me: I will try.

I didn't want to tell her that I was flirting with a man so he will never agree to it.

Gogo: I just wanted to tell you that your father is moving on with his life and he's dating your therapist.

Me: Wow! Really?

Gogo: Yes. Just like that and it looks like he likes her for real.

Me: I wonder why he's hiding that from me because I asked him if he's still talking to her and he said no. I didn't think he will move on just after his therapy.

Gogo: And he brought her to the house, soon she'll sleeping in your mom's bed.

Me: He brought her to the house? Really? I thought maybe they will take things slowly and I didn't even think that he'll date my therapist. That woman knows everything about me.

Gogo: I don't like her with my son. She's a nice person but I don't like her with my son.

Me: But there's nothing we can do. I guess I will have to stop seeing her as my therapist.

Gogo: Yeah. Just stop.

Me: I will call dad and ask him now. Goodnight.

Gogo: Okay baby. Goodnight.

I hung up the call and I called dad. He answered the phone.

Dad: Hey baby how are you?

Me: I am good and you?

Dad: I am fine baby.

Me: Why didn't you tell me that you're dating my therapist?

Dad: Your grandma told you?

Me: It doesn't matter, why didn't you tell me?

Dad: If I told you what were you going to do?

Me: Why would you date her dad? She's my therapist.

Dad: I love her.

Me: You love her? Not even like? How long have you known her. Just five minutes.

Dad: Hheyi Alondwe. I don't submit to you or report to you. You're my daughter and you have your life with your husband. Please let me have mine with Sbahle.

Me: So it doesn't matter if you date someone who knows everything about me and my marriage?

Dad: What? You think we will be that bored and we will end up talking about your marriage?

Me: I don't like it dad. And you're already bringing her to mom's house just like that?

Dad: Too bad you can't choose who I date. And this house is mine. Your mother is dead so let me have my peace. I won't have kids telling me how to live my life. Specially not you.

Tsk!

He hung up the call. I had no problem with dad dating but not Sbahle. She's my therapist. Yes she's a good and a nice person but I didn't like it. And dad was bringing her to mom's house. Like they are being lovey dovey where my mom lived. Sbahle will take my mom's place? Just like that?

Me: Why did you leave mom?

I got overwhelmed and I cried. I took the cushion, I slept on the couch and I cried. Someone touched my shoulder. I looked up and it was Thapelo. I looked back where I was looking at.

Thapelo: Why are you crying?

Me: It's nothing. I am just lazy to get up and eat.

Thapelo: I will prepare the food for you.

Me: Thanks.

He got up and he went to the kitchen. I called Uyathandwa.

Uyathandwa: Sisi wami.

Me: Dad is dating Sbahle now. He didn't even tell me.

Uyathandwa: What? Really?

Me: Yes. He's even bringing her to the house and she sleeps there.

Uyathandwa: As in like mom's house?

Me: Yes.

Uyathandwa: Now that's bullshilt. He doesn't even know this woman very well and yet he's dating her.

Me: Worse, he said he loves her.

Uyathandwa: Wow, mom just got replaced. Tsk! This is shit. I am sorry but no. Tsk!

He hung up the call and Thapelo gave me the food.

Thapelo: So you don't even tell me what's going on now, you just lie to my face and say you are lazy to get up?

Me: I was going to tell you.

Thapelo: It's funny how things change.

He stood up and he went back to the bedroom. I took the food and I ate the food. I didn't care because he was making me feel bad for what? I have been with him through everything now he says I was there for sex? Mxm screw him and his penis. Tsk! I finished up, I went to check on my son he was asleep I kissed him and I went to sleep. He was still reading a book. I joined him in bed.

Me: Thapelo I want to go and work with Nkululeko. Working there keeps me from being stressed because I am always alone. Please I want to go.

Thapelo: You went there without my permission from the first place so continue and do what pleases you.

Me: Is everything going to be like this? You will use emotional blackmail on me? For everything?

Thapelo: I am not using emotional blackmail.

Me: Yes. You're.

Thapelo: Okay. I am sorry if you feel that way.

Me: Thapelo I love you and right now you're telling me that I love you for sex. But you're always going down on me. Isn't that sex?

Thapelo: You know it's not enough for you.

Me: Yes I miss your penis alright? Because it's good and it's amazing. It takes me places but don't even think that it's the only thing that made me stay with you. If our relationship was about sex I was going to cheat in varsity because you were not always there but I didn't because I love you and you give me more than just sex. Sex is not the foundation of our love.

And I am sorry for disrespecting your manhood by flirting with that white guy. It meant nothing it was just a funny little crush. You're my chocolate and I love brown chocolate not white chocolate. Okay?

Thapelo: I love you too. Not being able to satisfy you in all ways makes me feel like I am less of a man. Like I have lost the most important function that describes me as a man. And I even went to Sbahle since she's a therapist. She said I must bring you so that it can work.

Me: Can we find another therapist?

Thapelo: Do you know any sex therapist here in South Africa whom we can consult and have a session with? Or it's those Doctors who writes books about sex and sex problems?

Me: We can find one but not Sbahle.

Thapelo: I have already consulted her and I made another appointment for us tomorrow. We won't stop going to her just because she's dating your dad now and you don't like it.

I didn't say anything at all. I just turned back and sleep.

Thapelo: You didn't shower.

Me: I am lazy. I want to sleep.

He didn't say anything. I fell asleep in peace.

The following day Thapelo came to fetch me and we went to Sbahle. I wasn't feeling it at all.

I just didn't know how I was going to look at her and think about her and my father. We arrived at her office and she greeted us. She was a good pretender shame, she pretended like she wasn't even dating my father, I sent her to my dad to help him but she saw a man in him.

The more I thought about it was the more I realise I was not cool with it. It was making me angry. What she was not ethical. I could even report her for that. It wasn't ethical.

Sbahle: So Alondwe did your husband tell you about our session yesterday?

Me: He didn't go to details because I told him I don't want to come here.

Sbahle: Why is that?

Me: You know exactly why. You're screwing with my dad and you gonna pretend like nothing happened?

Thapelo: Alondwe!

Me: No! Let me speak. I sent you to my dad to help him but you saw a man that you can fuck. It's been years since you haven't had a man and now you think my dad is perfect for you? You want replace my mom? You have the nerve to go to my mom's house and take her husband. Is that ethical? Dating your clients? There are so many men out there but you just went for my father. We about to make it to a year since mom died and you're already feeling like a queen in my mom's house.

Sbahle: I am sorry if you feel that way. I will end things with your father.

Me: Yeah please do us both a favour just end it before I report you and you'll lose your license. Don't underestimate me. I am telling you. Tsk! And I am not coming back here as your client. I can't stand this Thapelo I am leaving. I can go another year without your penis or maybe she can help you get it up. Maybe it's me who's a problem. You're no longer attracted to me. There she is then, try and fuck her. I am sure she's hungry for a dick in her life that's why she's going after a widowed man. Tsk!

I took my bag and I went to the car. I waited for Thapelo to come so that I can go home. He wasn't coming out. My phone rang. I answered it.

Me: Bhuti?

Uyathandwa: You know what I am reporting this woman. Dad is just crazy about him. Please give me all her details. After I have reported her. She'll never practice as a psychologist ever!

Tsk!

Me: I will send them to you.

Uyathandwa: Good. I don't know who she is to think she can disrespect our mom by taking her man in her house. Fuck!

He hung up the call. I sent the details to Uyathandwa. Sbahle came out of the building crying, she had her bags with her. Thapelo was trying to talk to her but she told him to leave her alone. Thapelo walked back to me. He looked at me.

Thapelo: You know how to hurt a human being just because she told you what she went through you think you have a right to tell her she's hungry for a dick?

Me: Isn't she?

Thapelo: At least some women can live without a penis and still behave like women. It's almost a month without my dick but you're behaving like a bitch. Tsk! See your way home I am going to work.

Samkelo Ndunakazi.....

My life was on track and I was happy. Though Sbahle was far from me but we were going to make things work. We spoke everyday on the phone. I forgot how nice dating was, you got to sent a good morning text and make those phonecalls. Late night calls and chatting. Those unexpected sweet text messages you get from your girlfriend. It was very nice. After so many months of pain and misery I was in love again. Yes I was in love with her. She was funny and smart. Beautiful inside and out. Well we haven't told each other the "L" word but I really loved her. I was in my office working, it was almost month end. March was ending soon and I was planning to tell Sbahle that I love her on the 1st of April so that she can think it's April fools that way I won't feel bad if she doesn't say it back to me. I didn't care about whatever my mom and my daughter were saying. I wasn't going to stop dating her on their account. Uyathandwa walked inside my office. He didn't even knock.

Uyathandwa: Hi, dad can we speak?

Me: Yeah sit down. (He sat down) I am fine too.

Uyathandwa: I don't like the fact that –

Me: That I am dating Sbahle?

Uyathandwa: No. The fact that you're bringing her to the house. Why would you do that. You're disrespecting mom's memory and it's not nice to some of us.

Me: So what should I do? I must always meet the woman I love in hotels like I am having an affair?

Uyathandwa: That won't be a bad idea.

Me: Well too bad because it's not going to happen.

Uyathandwa: Did you ever loved mom?

Me: No I didn't love her.

I felt like answering him like that because his question was fucked up and nobody had a right to question my love for Thandeka just because I was moving on after her death.

Uyathandwa: You don't mean that.

Me: If you know that I don't mean it why are you asking me. Thandeka is not coming back and she didn't want me to be miserable. Now I am happy. So please guys live your lives and don't even get involved in mine.

He stood up and left. I clicked my tongue. These kids were making me angry. Trying to tell me what to do like I was a child. Tsk! My phone rang while I was still angry. It was Sbahle calling. I answered her call.

Me: Hey –

Sbahle: Starting this thing with you was a mistake. I am ending it. Please don't call me ever again.

Me: Sbahle I love you. You can't do that to me.

Sbahle: I love you too Samkelo but I am doing it.

She hung up the call. She was crying. From there I just knew that Alondwe was behind her crying. I tried to call her but she didn't answer. I called my daughter. She answered.

Me: What did you say to Sbahle?

Alondwe: I told her what she needed to hear. Did she broke up with you already?

Me: Yeywena. Yeywena! I am warning you. Know your place do you hear me. Know your place.

Alondwe: I know my place dad.

Me: No you don't. Let me remind you. Your place is by your husband. Not by my life. Not by my love life. That has nothing to do with you. Ungangijwayeli kabi mina. I am not your friend. I repeat I am not Nkululeko. Tsk! You're bored in your marriage? If you're bored find some other hobbies. Don't go around and carry yourself like a match maker. Tsk!

I hung up the call. I was really angry at my kids. Tsk! I stood up and I packed my things. I was going to Johannesburg. It was Thursday so I didn't mind. I told my assistant I was leaving, I asked her to book the next available plane ticket for me online and I left her doing that. Sbahle just told me that she loves me. I couldn't just sit back and watch my kids ruin things for me. I arrived at home and I went to my room to pack. I wrote a note for Alupheli and I went to pin it on his bedroom mirror. I left cash for him and I headed downstairs. I have already called the cab.

Mom: Where are you going?

Me: Why are you asking? Do you want to go with me?

Mom: Look at you. You're disrespecting me like a teenage boy

Me: Sorry.

Mom: Where are you going Samkelo?

Me: I am going to Johannesburg.

Mom: Why is everything alright with Alondwe?

Me: Yes.

Mom: Oh you're going to see that woman. I heard Alondwe put her on her place today.

You're going there to do damage control?

I say anything. I pretended like I didn't hear a thing she was saying. After a few minutes the cab arrived. I left.

Sbahle had given me her address before. She told me whenever I want to come I can come. So in Johannesburg. I took a cab straight to her house. The cab dropped me off and her house was really beautiful. I couldn't believe she was living alone. Ayi! That man really hurt her. I pressed the intercom and I waited. Her face appeared.

Sbahle: What The Fuck?

Me: Yeah it's me please open.

Sbahle: What are you doing here. I said don't call me again.

Me: You didn't say I must not come to the house.

She didn't respond, she just opened the gate. I went inside. I knocked on the door and she opened. She was wearing a tiny silky white nightdress with a white silky gown on top. She was walking barefoot.

Sbahle: What are you doing here?

Me: You just told me you love me too. I can't really stay away from you. I need you in my life and you need me.

Sbahle: I don't need you and your daughter threatened me to report me for dating my client. I can lose my practice license.

Me: I wasn't your client, I am not there on your database and I didn't even make a payment. So there's no proof that I was client. You won't lose anything.

Sbahle: I don't want any drama in my life. Do you know what your daughter said to me? She said some hurtful things to me. I was crying even now.

Me: I can see that and I am sorry.

I went closer to her and I removed her glasses. I put my bag on the floor. She looked down and I kissed both her eyes. She looked up at me. I kissed her and she kissed me back. I held her tightly and she jumped up wrapping her legs around my waist. I closed the door using my foot. She was so light. It was easier for me to carry however I want. I walked with her to the dining table. My eyes weren't closed but hers were closed. I put her on top of the table. I stopped kissing and I looked at her.

Me: Do you trust me?

She nodded. I put her glasses aside and I kissed her. Next minute, we were both naked and I was grinding on her. It felt real and good....

In the morning I woke up she was getting dressed. We slept together on her bedroom.

Me: You're going to work already? I thought we will cuddle for a few minutes before you leave.

Sbahle: Yes. You'll be here when I come back?

Me: No because I am going with you.

Sbahle: What are you going to do in my office?

Me: I will be your assistant for the day and I will just sit there and look at you being serious behind your desk.

Sbahle: I have a receptionist and I do private sessions. We won't need you present Mr Ndunakazi.

Me: I will leave when a client comes in.

She walked up to me and I sat up straight. She held my head and she kissed me. I held her butts and I kissed her back.

Me: Last night was amazing.

Sbahle: Yeah it was. You're staying for the weekend right? I won't mind having you all weekend.

Me: I told my son that I will come back on Sunday so you'll have me wherever you want and this house is so big. We can even go to the jacuzzi.

She giggled and said: Alright. Mr Ndunakazi. Now go and shower. I will make breakfast for you.

I kissed her and nodded. I went to the shower feeling epic and on top things. Ngimnandi nje or kanjani? I was showering and whistling. It was a happy day. After showering I dressed up and I went downstairs. Sbahle was talking to someone. She wasn't really pleased with that person. I cleared my throat and greeted the lady she was talking to. She turned back and looked at me. She was just like Sbahle.

Her: Wow! Sisi you have a man in the house.

Sbahle: Please behave.

Her: Mom must know this so she'll stop thinking that you're lesbian.

Sbahle: What?

Her: Come on you have everything and no husband. Of course they are worried. And this one is cute. (she cleared her throat and got off the chair) Hey Bhuti. My name is Thandeka Zuke. I am her younger sister. I am the last born. I just arrived in the morning.

Sbahle: Unannounced don't forget that.

Thandeka: Okay. Yes Unannounced. I wanted to surprise my sister. Are you staying here?

Me: No I stay in Durban. I am Samkelo Ndunakazi.

Thandeka: Nice to meet you. You look cute.

Me: You look beautiful just like your sister.

Thandeka: I know. Some people say we're twins. Thanks. So you love my sister?

Sbahle: Thandeka please go to your room. I am pretty sure you didn't make the bed.

Thandeka: Come on I am on holidays.

Sbahle: Sorry, are you planning on staying here the whole week?

Thandeka: Yes I am going back on campus that week. But I can see you want some privacy with Mr Ndunakazi. I can leave tonight and come back Monday.

Sbahle: And where will you possibly go?

Thandeka: I have friends here, remember? And my other boyfriend.

Sbahle: I thought he was your ex.

Thandeka: He can be my boyfriend again just for the weekend. All I need is money and I will be gone. Bye Mr Ndunakazi.

Me: Bye.

She smiled and kissed my cheek unexpectedly then she ran upstairs. I looked at Sbahle.

Sbahle: She's the craziest sister.

Me: I can see. How many siblings do you have?

Sbahle: I have two brothers, then it's her and me.

Me: You're the first born?

Sbahle: Yes. Unfortunately.

Me: I am the first born too.

She smiled and sat down. We had breakfast together. After breakfast I drove with her to her office. We were just talking and laughing.

We arrived at her office and there were people there.

Receptionist: Here is Miss Zuke.

Sbahle: What's going on?

Man: No need for introduction you know us well Doctor Zuke. We've been told that you're dating a client so we're here to look at that case. And close the practice if needed.

Me: Can we go to my office.

The two men and a lady nodded. They followed Sbahle. I followed them too after greeting the receptionist who looked scared like she was about to lose her job. They sat down on the other side of the office with couches. I sat on the chair by the desk.

Sbahle: Firstly the man I am dating is that man.

Sbahle pointed me and they turned back and looked at me. I smiled.

Sbahle: Secondly, he's not my client. He wasn't my client. Yes he was having problems

before we dated and December holidays I went to his house to help him as a friend not as a psychologist, client relationship. You get that?

Lady: We need proof.

Me: Okay. Let's go to the receptionist and check if we will find him on the database. Please give them your ID baby.

I smiled because she called me baby. I stood up and I gave them my driver's license. They took it and they went to the reception area. Sbahle left with them. I stayed behind. Later Sbahle came back alone. She closed the door.

Me: And?

Sbahle: They found nothing so they can't take my license.

Me: Thank God. I need to pay Alondwe a visit.

Sbahle: No please don't. I don't want any fights. I won't come to your house. If I am in Durban we will meet in hotels or you and my ben10 can always visit me in my house because I also want to see him. Is that alright with you?

Me: I don't like the hotels idea. It will feel like you're just like those girls I slept with in hotels.

Sbahle: But I know that I am not. So I do not mind. I don't like to talk and fight special not about your wife's house.

Me: It's my house.

Sbahle: But still. So it's a deal?

Me: Yeah. But next year we're moving to Johannesburg. Alupheli and Mesuli wanted it.

Sbahle: Really?

Me: Yes.

Sbahle: That will be fun. Oh I am happy please kiss me. Please kiss me now.

I smiled and kissed her....

Alondwe Moloji....

I was saddened by the way my father spoke to me when I expressed my feelings towards him bringing a woman in my mother's house. But what was more painful is that my husband called me a bitch. I act like a bitch? That means I am a bitch to him. Things between him and I were just dull. I told myself that I will just mind my business which was my pregnancy and Sphephile. I wasn't going to say anything anymore about my father's relationship. Even though I was hurt by what Thapelo said to me, I did apologize to him because I didn't want us to have an awkward relationship. He wanted me to apologize to Sbahle and I wasn't going to do that not by any chance. I told her how I feel there was nothing wrong with that. I stopped having sessions with her and I just focused on being pregnant, being a mother and helping out my friend at her shop. The hunk asked to be my friend because he saw that I was married. I refused because Thapelo wasn't going to believe that it was just friendship. My dad gave me a big peace of his mind for trying to report Sbahle. I apologized and I didn't say anything about his relationship ever again. I was helping my son get ready for school on a Thursday morning.

Me: Baby your father called last night.

Sphephile: Mom! Why didn't you tell me?

Me: I am telling you now. You were asleep so I didn't want to wake you up.

Sphephile: Okay. What did he say? He'll buy new kicks for me?

Me: No. He didn't talk about kicks. Tomorrow I will take you to the airport. You're visiting him for Easter holidays since the schools are closing tomorrow. Then you'll ask for a birthday present because he wasn't here on your birthday.

Sphephile: Okay! Okay! I will go tomorrow. I will also visit Khulu, Mkhulu and Malume u-Alupheli.

Me: Okay. Take your bag then I am driving you to school.

He nodded and took his bag. He went to the bedroom to say goodbye to Thapelo. I went to my car. As soon as he was inside the car, I drove off.

Sphephile: Mom when are the babies coming? It's April now.

Me: They'll come in August or before August.

Sphephile: Okay. It's boys?

Me: I don't know yet baby.

Sphephile: Okay. I want to see them now. I can't wait.

Me: I can't wait too. Okay. We're here, have a good day my baby. I love you.

Sphephile: Bye mom. I love you too.

He stepped out of the car and he went inside the school premises. I drove back home. I wasn't going to the shop that day I just wanted to sleep the whole day. I arrived at home Thapelo was gone. I went to sleep after setting the alarm. I was going for a check with Thapelo.

I was ready, waiting for Thapelo to come and fetch me. He wasn't home yet and the time was half past twelve. I took my phone and I called him. He answered the call.

Thapelo: Hello.

Me: Where are you. I am waiting for you at home. We're supposed to go to the doctor.

Thapelo: Eish. I am sorry I forgot. I have an appointment with Sbahle. Can you please go alone. My appointment is also at 1.

Me: You should have told me Thapelo. Now I waited for you here like a fool Kanti you have other plans. What can be more important than our pregnancy check up?

Thapelo: I didn't say the pregnancy is not important. I said I forgot and I am sorry.

I hung up the call. I clicked my tongue, I took my bag and I left. I didn't even know why he was still bothering himself with his dysfunctional penis because clearly I was not attractive anymore. Why would it stop working once I told him that I am pregnant? I made it to my doctor. I was a few minutes late. She did a check up.

Doctor: Your husband couldn't make it?

Me: No. He couldn't.

Doctor: Alright. The babies are fine. Your BP is stable. There's no dangers that I see but we will do a c-section.

Me: Alright.

Doctor: If you keep your health like this you will give birth on your due date.

Me: I am praying for that.

She smiled and wrote the report. Gave me more pills and I drove back home. I arrived at home Thapelo and Sphephile were back. I went to Sphephile's room and Sphephile was packing Thapelo was helping him.

Me: Hello.

Them: Hey.

Me: You're packing already?

Sphephile: Yes. I won't go to school tomorrow.

Me: Why not?

Sphephile: Because I am leaving.

Me: Your plane ticket is for one o'clock. So you'll go to school. I will pick you up from school and drive you to the airport.

Sphephile: No dad here will drive me to the airport. You drive very slowly now.

Me: Oh.

I left them and I went to put my bags in my room. I then went to start cooking. I was tired I just needed more sleep in my life. Later we had dinner. I went to bed early because I was tired. I was slowly drifting off then Thapelo woke me up.

Me: Thapelo come on.

Thapelo: I want to know about your check up.

He said that taking off my pyjama top and he kissed my tummy twice.

Me: Everything is good. If I don't stress myself. I will give birth in due time. Now can I sleep?

Thapelo: No. I am not done. These babies are so special to me. I want them to be happy kids.

Me: They will be happy. Now can I sleep.

Thapelo: You can close your eyes but what I am doing. I will be doing while you're sleeping.

Me: Okay.

I closed my eyes and I felt everything in my body leaving me. I didn't say anything. He went in between my legs departing them softly and he kissed my tummy. The babies were moving and the way they were moving made me laugh. It was a nice feeling and by surprise I felt something hard rubbing on my vagina. I opened my eyes and looked at Thapelo. I couldn't see properly because of my tummy, he kissed me and I kissed him back. We made love after a long time. It felt really good and super fun. We finished up and I looked at him.

Thapelo: What?

Me: What happened?

Thapelo: You refused to go with me to my therapy sessions so I am not telling you how did she help me because you were not interested.

Me: But I told you what my doctor said to me but you're not telling me what yours said.

Thapelo: She found out that I was suffering from anxiety and stress mixed with excitement about the pregnancy. I was excited but too scared that something might go wrong, then we'll lose the babies and as a result my penis suffered.

Me: So what did she do to help you get it up?

Thapelo: She didn't do anything.

Me: Thapelo?

Thapelo: What? Next time you'll go with me and you'll do what you were supposed to do.

Do you even know how much I hated going through that process since you didn't want to do it with me?

Me: I am sorry. I was caught up in my anger. I didn't mean to leave you alone. For a moment I thought your mom was behind this but I didn't want to say it. Or even keep thinking about it.

Thapelo: Why would you think that?

Me: She told me she's not done with me so that is why I just thought the therapy won't help.

Thapelo: Why didn't you tell me she said that? What did I say Alondwe about not telling me things my mom say to you?

Me: I am sorry.

Thapelo: Tsk! You act as if you enjoy playing games with her.

Me: Of course I don't. And I am sorry. Nothing will happen to oThando bethu.

Thapelo: Baby we're not giving them Zulu names as their first name please.

Me: Hawu Thapelo but you named Bokang. Why can't I give them their first names?

Thapelo: Ayi. Stop complaining and enjoy the resurrection of little Moloi.

I laughed and said: Okay. But how did you resurrect him?

Thapelo: Seduction of the mind and what did she call this, Ah I don't remember but she made me sleep not dead sleeping. And she took control of my mind by making me imagine the things I told her I like on your body and the things I love when you do them to me during sex. But that gave me a weak erection so we needed you but you refused when I begged you. So I told her to take the drastic decision because I needed my erection back. I needed an intimate aggressive wake up call of my sexual energy. Then my penis was up.

Me: So how did she do that aggressive wake up call?

Thapelo: She didn't do it. She doesn't do to her clients don't get ideas because you'll end up

telling your father that she sleeps with her clients.

Me: Hawu Thapelo how can you say that?

Thapelo: What? You don't like her. That's no secret.

Me: I didn't say I don't like her. I just hated the idea of her being my therapist and dating my father and more Specially coming to my mom's house.

Thapelo: Whatever then. A professional did it not her.

Me: By professional you mean a stripper?

Thapelo: I don't know.

Me: You slept with someone else?

Thapelo: No. What do you take me for? I didn't sleep or touch someone else. But someone did your job for you. Don't feel bad about it because you were angry and emotional. And you were feeling things I don't know. Are you angry with me?

Me: You didn't sleep with anyone. I am not angry but I am sorry that I wasn't there. I should have been there.

Thapelo: It doesn't matter now. You want me to kiss you? Phela Moloi has risen from the dead.

I smiled and nodded. He kissed me....

\*\*\*\*

FOUR MONTHS LATER....

It's been a long four months. I was heavily pregnant and I was lazy even to wake up and shower. I did it because I had to, not because I wanted to. Like I always wished, my pregnancy was fun and I was enjoying it. But it wasn't always fun. I told Thapelo my problem with his face and he understood but he was sad when I started feeling like I don't want to see him. Sometimes I didn't even sleep with him in bed. We had our days but at the end of the day we were happy that our pregnancy was just fine. He made sure that I stay away from stress and I did the same. I apologized to Sbahle and she forgave me but she refused to be my therapist again. She referred me to someone else but I didn't want to start someone new so I just stopped. I trusted that I will just pray whenever I have a problem. Though talking also heals I suppose I was going to talk to Thapelo. My father was really happy with Sbahle and I accepted that. It was a Saturday morning, Thapelo, Sphephile and I were doing shopping for the babies. We were having a girl and a boy. Thapelo and Sphephile had decorated and made their room. On Tuesday I was going to the hospital because on Friday I was going to theatre. As we were shopping we saw Thapelo's parents.

Mrs Moloi: You're pregnant?

Mr Moloi: Thapelo why didn't you tell us?

Thapelo: We are fine too mom and dad. And yes we're having babies.

Mrs Moloi: Thapelo you have really cut us off your life?

Thapelo: If I didn't I wasn't going to see this day. And I think you know why mom.

Mrs Moloi: I wasn't going to do that again.

Thapelo: I thought you said you're not done with her.

Mrs Moloi: What? I didn't say that. You see she enjoys seeing us fight.

Thapelo: Sorry dad for not telling you but I was doing what's best for my babies.

Me: You'll find us on the cash register.

He nodded, Sphephile pushed the trolley and we went to the cash register. We payed for everything and we waited for Thapelo. He came to us and they carried the plastic bags.

Sphephile: Those were your parents dad?

Thapelo: Yes.

Sphephile: You guys don't get along?

Thapelo: Not really.

He didn't say anything. I had nothing to say too. I just didn't expect to see them. I thought

they only liked their side of the city not our side. Seeing them didn't give me peace.

At night I was woken up by Thapelo.

Me: What?

Thapelo: You're talking in your sleep.

Me: But I am not dreaming.

Thapelo: It's okay let me hold you.

I shifted close to him and he held me tight. I fell back asleep. In the morning I was the first to wake up. We were going to church. I rubbed my eyes and I opened them. I was having blurry visions. I lifted my hand and I looked at it. My sight was blurry. I stood up, maybe I needed to wash my face. I managed to get to the bathroom. I washed my face. I wiped and looked at myself in the mirror everything was just blurry. I tried to walk back to my room confused. I felt dizzy. I stood still holding my waist.

Me: Thapelo! Thapelo!

Thapelo: Yeah.

Me: Come now!

He immediately came to the bathroom. I held him. I could see him but not clearly.

Me: I need to go to the hospital now.

Thapelo: Are you feeling pain –

Just then my waters broke. I panicked.

Me: Thapelo!

Thapelo: Okay. Don't panic. We will get you to the hospital and I will call your doctor. For now let's go to the car.

I nodded holding him tightly.

Me: Don't let go of me. My sight is not clear.

Thapelo: Something is wrong with your eyes?

Me: I don't know please help me.

He took off my panties and he walked with me to my towel. He wiped my legs not my vagina. Then he went to the car with me. I got in and closed my eyes praying. I wasn't feeling any pain. I opened my eyes when the car started moving and as it moves the Labour pains started kicking in. It was hell on earth. The part I hated about pregnancy. The last part of it. My BP was rapidly going up in the hospital so as soon as my doctor arrived. I was taken to theatre. The pain had died down but my sight was getting weaker. My husband was with me holding my hand. By the time my babies were out I couldn't wait to see them. They were crying. One was given to Thapelo and one was given to me. When I tried to look at the baby everything was just dark. I couldn't see my baby. I cried.

Thapelo: Alondwe what's wrong now why are you crying?

Me: Please take the baby.

Thapelo: Why?

Me: Just take the baby!

Someone took the baby from me. I placed my hands on my face and I cried. Why was this happening? Thapelo was asked to leave because my heart rate was going higher. I didn't even know what they did to me. But I just died there.

When I woke up I could feel that I was in a different room but I couldn't see anything.

Me: Thapelo.

Thapelo: I am here. I am here. Are you ready to see the babies.

Me: Thapelo can I give them their first names.

Thapelo: But Alondwe we spoke about this.

Me: I can't see them.

Thapelo: What do you mean? I will give you them now. They are so beautiful. Just like us.

Take her, she arrived first.

Me: I can't see her. I have lost my sight.

Thapelo: You're joking right?

Me: No. I am not. I started having blurry visions in the morning then when they gave me the baby in theatre I couldn't see anything. I didn't see any of their faces. I only remember that one of them is light skinned.

There was no response from him.

Me: Thapelo?

Thapelo: I am here.

Me: Please let me hold her.

I opened my arms and I felt the baby in my arms.

Thapelo: Why is this happening?

Me: Is she beautiful?

Thapelo: Alondwe –

Me: Is she beautiful like me or you like you?

Thapelo: She's just like me. Even her skin colour but hers is lighter than mine. Her eyes are still tightly closed. Both of them. The boy is just like you, the lips, and everything else.

I smiled, and I felt tears falling off.

Me: Sisekelo Sothando. That's her name. I don't care if it's a first or last name. Can you give me the boy.

I felt his hands taking her away from me. My heart was hard against my chest like a stone.

The second baby landed on my arms.

Me: Sthelo Sothando. I thank God for giving us them. I know they are beautiful. And more Specially they are alive.

Thapelo: Yes. We have our girl Sisekelo Sothando Kamohelo Moloi. And Sthelo Sothando Kananelo Moloi. Thank you for giving me such beautiful gifts and making me a father.

I smiled and I felt his cold lips against my lips. I kissed him back, it all didn't matter, I have been in pain but finally I have given my husband kids. One day I will see them it may not be soon but one day....

Thapelo Moloi....

I was supposed to be happy and celebrate but how was I going to celebrate? My wife was blind. When Alondwe told me she's couldn't see our kids I didn't know what to say and I didn't know how to react but I was heartbroken. Monday morning before going to work I passed by the hospital to see her and the kids. She was awake. She showed no emotions towards her blindness and she didn't want to talk about it. I held her hand and she smiled.

Alondwe: How are you doing baby?

Me: How do you know it's me?

Alondwe: I know your smell so I just knew it.

Me: Did the Doctors say anything about your eyes.

Alondwe: I think we both know that it's not a medical problem. We don't have to crack our heads about it.

Me: Alondwe we can't possibly blame everything on my mom. Maybe it's stress.

Alondwe: I didn't say it's your mother but you're already thinking that it's her. What does that say about you?

Me: The Doctors found something?

Alondwe: There's nothing wrong with my eyes according to the Doctors.

Me: I will call your father today.

Alondwe: Please don't tell him that I can't see. He's happy now I don't want him to get worried about me.

Me: I can't lie to your father. I will have to tell him that the babies are here and he might

want to come to see them. Or even say we must come to him once it's alright for them to go out. How will you hide that you're blind now?

Alondwe: I will try but don't tell him. Sbahle is coming back next week from Canada and dad must spend time with her. He must not worry about me. Please can you do that?

Me: I am sorry but I can't because once he finds out he will blame me for everything.

Alondwe: Thapelo I say No!

Me: I am very hurt by this. I must be happy because I am a father but now I can't because my wife is blind is that fair?

Alondwe: I don't know ask your mom.

She had tears running down her cheeks. I just left her with too much pain crowding my heart. The only thing I could think about was to kill my mom. I didn't want so much evil in my heart but I wanted to kill her. It's the only thing I could think about. I drove my car straight to Mpendulo. He was on leave so I needed to speak to him. I arrived at his place. I knocked on the door but there was no response. I had a key to his apartment because I used to come every time to drop off Sphephile. Mpendulo gave me a key because I used to knock for hours the nanny wouldn't open. We didn't know if she had hearing problems or she didn't want Sphephile there. I opened the door and he was busy having sex with the music playing. He saw me and he stopped. I turned back. The volume went down.

Mpendulo: Sorry man. I didn't hear you knock.

Me: Is it safe to turn back?

Girl: Of course just turn back.

I turned back and they have wore gowns.

Me: Sbahle?? Ain't you supposed to be in Canada.

She laughed and said: Dude Sbahle is old. Are you doing okay upstairs? And how do you know her again?

Me: You're not Sbahle?

Girl: No I am Thandeka her younger sister. You know my sister?

Me: Of course I know her, she's dating my father in-law. And besides she's a therapist.

Thandeka: Oh Jesus! Please don't tell her I am here. She'll kill me. I am not supposed to be here. But he called me. And I couldn't resist it.

Me: Mpendulo Brah? Mandy?

Mpendulo: It's complicated. Thandeka came back to me months ago and you know I just-

Me: Wait is this the Thandeka who just left you without telling you what went wrong?

Thandeka: I didn't just leave. He wanted to introduce me to you and his parents. That scared me off. But I never forgot about him. When I visited my sister her boyfriend was there and Mpendulo was the first person I called.

Me: Unbelievable! So you just took her back.

Thandeka: I just saw him on the picture that he's too serious about life this one. Ah your friend.

Me: Excuse me. When you left him I was the one who was there for him. Why? Because you didn't want to meet us?

Thandeka: Brah! I was here for December holidays. I was visiting my sister and I met your friend. I just finished my matric and he was doing his second year. Boom? January he wants me to meet his parents? Was I supposed to be happy about that? After we dated two minutes? Come on. Who does that? I had to leave.

Me: You were supposed to tell him how you feel.

Thandeka: I was a kid okay? I was just a child. And he was studying in Durban and I was going to Cape Town. It was never going to work.

Me: Brah. You went back to her just like that?

Mpendulo: You don't understand Thapelo.

Me: Does she even love you?

Thandeka: You know what? I am leaving.

Mpendulo: Please don't go yet we haven't spoken about everything. Please Thandeka.

Thandeka: I can't stand this friend of yours. And by now I don't regret running away and not meeting you. Tsk!

She went to the bedroom. Mpendulo looked at me. I didn't say anything. Thandeka came back dressed up on a skimpy black skirt, a black crop top and black boots and she left without saying a word.

Mpendulo: Did you have to do that?

Me: You left Mandy for that girl who has no direction in life?

Mpendulo: You don't know her.

Me: She's here, fucking you clearly she has no direction isn't she supposed to be working or at school?

Mpendulo: She's still studying.

Me: Wow! By now she's supposed to be done.

Mpendulo: Like I said Thapelo you don't know her.

Me: And you do? You didn't tell me this because you knew that I wasn't going to support you.

Mpendulo: Yes! I knew that exactly. And right now she might never come back because of you.

Me: Mandy loves you!

Mpendulo: She cheated on me! Okay. She cheated on me and she left with a man who is richer than me. I didn't want to tell you because you were finally happy. I didn't want you to worry about me.

Me: What? Where's Mlamuli?

Mpendulo: I sent him to my mom. He's going to school that side for the rest of the year until I get my shit together. I know Thandeka is also a fucked up chick but I love her. Behind that bitchy girl that she's pretending to be there's a girl who's soft, smart, fun and has a lot of care.

Me: What happened to her. Why is she still studying?

Mpendulo: She was involved with a bad crowd and the course was too hard on her. She failed and she started doing drugs. When her sister saw the signs, she was already an addict, she sent her to rehab for two years. Then she came back better and she continued completing her law degree. It's her final year now.

Me: I can't believe Mandy did you like that.

Mpendulo: Yeah. Where are the little ones?

Me: They are still at the hospital. Their mother is blind now.

Mpendulo: You better be kidding me!

Me: I came here because I am thinking about killing my mom right now. I will never find peace while she's alive.

Mpendulo: No Brah. She's still your mother. And you'll go to prison leaving your kids with your wife while she's blind.

Me: Maybe they'll be happy.

Mpendulo: No they won't be happy without you. I know that Twinkie loves you and she won't leave you. Your mom wants her to leave you but she won't. She'll stay with you. You'll find a solution to this my friend.

Me: I need to tell her father. She doesn't want me to tell him but I have to tell him.

Mpendulo: Yes. You must tell him.

Me: I am not going to tell my parents about my kids. They don't deserve to know them or see them.

Mpendulo: Don't tell them.

I took my phone and I dialed his number. He answered.

Samkelo: Thapelo?

Me: Yebo Baba. Alondwe gave birth. It's a girl and a boy. They are healthy and beautiful.

Samkelo: Thank God! How is she? She must be happy. I am happy for you guys.

Me: Yes we are happy.

Samkelo: But you don't sound happy.

Me: Alondwe is blind.

Samkelo: What? Come again boy I didn't hear you.

Me: She can't see now.

Samkelo: Now that's bullshit.

He hung up the call. I sighed. I placed my hands on my face. I didn't know what he was going to do.

Me: I will see you later.

Mpendulo: Please don't do something stupid.

Me: I won't. Call your girl and apologies on my behalf.

He nodded and I left. I went to work. I started working to distract my mind. I was hurting but I was trying to be strong. I had to be strong for my family. I had to.

After two days Alondwe and the kids were at home. I took five days leave to be with them.

Alondwe didn't want to touch or even hold the kids. I didn't know what to do. Sphephile was also sad that his mom couldn't see. We tried to hide it from him but he saw it when his mom couldn't sign for his homework. He cried so bad that I couldn't hold my tears.

Me: Alondwe you need to bond with our kids.

Alondwe: Thapelo I want to sleep. Take me to bed please I don't want to stay on the couch and just stare at the dark.

Me: Alondwe I am trying here. All I could think about is killing my mom. If I do I will go to jail and leave you here. I can't do that. I can't leave you.

Alondwe: Maybe you should kill her. I am tired of suffering because of that witch. And I am still angry that you told my father. You weren't supposed to tell him.

I didn't say anything I was hurt and angry. I couldn't believe my mom's cruelty. I couldn't believe that a parent can hurt you so much that you can even think to kill her. It was evil of me to think like that but what was I supposed to do? There was a loud bang on the door. I went to open and it was my father-in-law and Uyathandwa. The maid must have opened the gate for them.

Samkelo: Where's my daughter?

Alondwe: Daddy?

My father-in-law went to Alondwe and he hugged her. My wife was smiling.

Samkelo: Baby I am taking you back home.

Me: No you can't do that.

Uyathandwa: Yes. He's doing it. We are doing it.

Me: She's my family you can't take her.

Samkelo: Boy. We are not taking "her" we are taking them. The kids all of them.

Me: You're also taking my kids?

Uyathandwa: Yes.

Alondwe: I don't want to go dad. I don't want to leave him. I can't go.

Me: Please don't take them. What about Sphephile?

Alondwe: I belong here.

Uyathandwa: You want to die here Alondwe?

Samkelo: I am not going to bury you. I buried your mom last year so this year I am not burying you Alondwe. Uyathandwa take the kids. And buckle them in the car. Their nanny

will pack their things and Alondwe's things. Sphephile will stay because of school. But November we're taking him too.

Alondwe cried and said: No daddy I don't want to leave my husband. Please. I don't want to leave.

Samkelo: I am not giving you an option.

He went out and came back with a lady. He instructed her to pack the children's clothes and everything that they needed and pack it in the car. I went to sit next to Alondwe. I held her hands. She was crying. I hugged her.

Alondwe: Thapelo I don't want to leave you. I don't want to go. Please tell him to stop this.

Me: I don't want you to go. Please don't take her.

Samkelo: Too late for that.

Uyathandwa came back with Sthelo on his arms. I stood up. I couldn't lose my kids too.

Maybe my wife needed to go but not my kids. I thought he was just saying that he's taking the kids too but he was serious. He was really taking them.

Me: Okay take her. Leave my children behind. They are mine you can't take everything away from me. Leave my children behind.

Samkelo: What do you know about looking after children? You know nothing.

Me: I will hire more people to help me. Don't take them. No you're not taking them.

I tried to take the baby away from Uyathandwa but my father in-law held me down. I was watching as they took everything, I won't lie, I cried when Uyathandwa took Alondwe, Sisekelo and left with them. She was crying calling my name. The lady came out my room with Alondwe's things. My father in-law let go of me.

Samkelo: Maybe your mom will be happy now and she'll marry you. I don't want you anywhere near my daughter.

He left the house after that. I stood up and I went outside the house, they drove off with my family. They took the most important part of my life. They took what described me, what kept me going, my happiness, so then why should I live because I have lost everything and I have lost the meaning of life.....

Samkelo Ndunakazi...

My life with Sbahle was perfect. You know how good the relationship is when it begins. She was a second blessing in my life. Months went by we were still in love and happy. We would have little arguments here and there but she always had a way to make things easier for both of us. What I learned about her was that she had moods, sometimes they were annoying but because I loved her I didn't mind. I just understood. Sometimes it was hard to tolerate her mood swings. Like planned, when she was in Durban we met at the hotels and in Johannesburg we met in her house. And both Durban and Johannesburg, we would go places together having real fun sometimes Alupheli was with us sometimes he was not with us. So we were in her house on Saturday, it was end of May. She was leaving on Monday. Alupheli and I were visiting her to say goodbye. We were having dinner.

Sbahle: So you guys are going to be sad for how long?

Alupheli: Until you come back sugar mama.

Sbahle: You can't do that right? Right cupcake?

Me: Yes I can do that my blackcherry.

Sbahle: Ah baby don't call me blackcherry.

Me: But you call me cupcake.

Sbahle: You're a cupcake.

Me: Then you're a blackcherry.

Alupheli: Blackcherry please go just one month.

Sbahle: Ben10 it's work. Please understand. When I come back I will be all yours. I promise.

So let's enjoy dinner.

We nodded and we ate. After eating we had desert. We watched a movie together then it was time for bed. Alupheli had his room in the house. Sbahle had it changed just for him. We were in bed after making love. She was in my chest.

Me: You'll be gone for three months.

Sbahle: Don't be sad. I will come back.

Me: But you'll be gone.

Sbahle: Ah don't complain like a child!

She snapped and she moved from me. She gave me her back.

Me: You're starting again. What's wrong with you?

Sbahle: Nothing.

Me: Do you have anger issues? (She didn't say anything) are you sad because you're leaving? (She didn't answer) Is it something I said?

She didn't say anything. I went closer to her and looked at her. She was sleeping, just like that? I shook her but she was just sleeping. I sighed. She no longer had that thing of easily feeling someone's presence on her sleep. I guess she was used to have me around her. I slept holding her.

In the morning, we were going back home. She was on a bubbly mood. We were driving back home. We were not using public transport for travelling. It was costly. Because we saw each other every weekend.

Me: You'll call me once you arrive?

Sbahle: Yes. Tonight, we will talk all night okay?

Me: Okay. Please take care of yourself. I love you so much.

Sbahle: I love you too. And please look after yourself too.

We hugged and kissed each other. Sbahle hugged Alupheli.

Sbahle: Look after him for me please.

Alupheli: Don't worry you can count on me.

She smiled and we stepped inside the car. I drove out of the premises. She waved goodbye. I drove off.

Alupheli: I must say I will miss her.

Me: Yeah. I will miss her too.

We had a conversation on the road, took breaks here and there until we made it home.

\*\*\*\*\*

THREE MONTHS LATER...

The past three months I have been very busy. Uyathandwa and I were working on fixing the business proposal that Alondwe and her friend Nkululeko created. It was a good business and Uyathandwa and Alondwe was going to invest on it. I was helping him start it together with Nkululeko. Alondwe was not that involved because of her pregnancy. That business planning was the right distraction that I needed while Sbahle was away. Little Kiara was growing into a beautiful little girl with Chicky but cute attitude. Her grandfather was teaching her Afrikaans. She was a fast learner because she could speak a few sentences. I was really proud of her and seeing her made me happy everytime she visited us. As August ended I was happy that Sbahle was coming back home. When Thapelo told me that my was blind I was very angry. I told my mom about it.

Me: I am going to take her.

Mom: Samkelo don't do that please.

Me: What should I do mom? If it was Melokuhle or Simthande in this situation were you going to let her stay knowing exactly that her life is in danger?

Mom: But –

Me: You're not answering my question mom. Alondwe is my only daughter. My first child. I

won't let her die because she loves that boy. I will feel pain if she can die. I can't just sit back and watch them toy with my daughter. No one has that right. Nobody has that right!

I told Uyathandwa what was happening and he wanted to come with me. I agreed. I called an agency and asked for a nanny. The following morning they sent me one. We passed by the mall, we bought baby carries. Two of them. We couldn't put the babies on a car seat because they were still young. In Johannesburg I didn't like doing what I did to Thapelo but I had no choice. I knew he loves my daughter but that was not enough to save her from his mother. I had to protect my own. I couldn't let my daughter die. I didn't like leaving Sphephile but only three months were left for him to pass grade 4. We couldn't move him. And I made sure that he understood that. He was sad but I made him understand that his mom was not alright and I was going to try and make her alright. He had to be strong for her. He agreed. And promised to be strong.

At home Alondwe didn't want to eat and she didn't want to hold or touch her kids.

Me: Alondwe you need energy.

Alondwe: I need my husband. I don't want energy.

Me: What about the kids? Do you realise that this is also affecting them?

Mom: Alondwe, we're trying to protect you.

Alondwe: By leaving my husband alone? He'll be vulnerable. Are you sure that he'll be able to look after Sphephile.

Me: I spoke to the maid and I told her to look after Sphephile. Please eat.

She just shook her head and cried. Now her pain was my cutting through my heart. I understood it was hard for her to be separated from her husband but his mom was evil. She wasn't going to stop until she kills my daughter and I couldn't let that happen. My phone rang it was next to my mom. She took it.

Mom: Your girlfriend is calling.

Me: Ey I don't want to talk to her. Let it ring.

Alondwe: Dad answer the phone.

Me: Alondwe I don't want to think about something else besides you right now. Sbahle can wait.

Alondwe: Just answer the phone.

I took it from my mom. She stopped calling. She called again. I stood up and I left the room. I answered the phone.

Me: Hello.

Sbahle: Hey cupcake I am back. How are you?

Me: I am fine and you?

Sbahle: Not so good. We need to talk, can I come to you tomorrow. I need to see you.

Me: Ey Sbahle. Whatever you want to talk about can wait. Right now I have bigger problems.

Sbahle: But Samkelo what I want to speak to you about is very important.

Me: Nothing can be more important than my daughter's life. She just gave birth and she's blind now. So whatever you want to talk about can wait.

Sbahle: I am sorry to hear that and I understand what you might be going through but I really need to speak to you.

Me: Which part of it can wait didn't you understand? Huh? I have my daughter to worry about and now you're busy trying to get me to see you. My daughter comes first okay? All my kids comes first before anyone. So I won't repeat myself whatever you want to meet me for can wait. And I think we need to take a break until I find a solution to my daughter's blindness. Otherwise I don't need any other stress from you. Do you understand?

Sbahle: I am sorry Samkelo. I won't bother you again.

She hung up before I could say anything. I clicked my tongue and I threw my phone on the

wall. I covered my face with my hands. Just when I thought we finally found peace then things just got worse! God intervene. I don't have the strength.....

Sbahle Zuke's Point Of View...

I was very happy with Samkelo. I never thought that after such a long time of living in fear to fall in love. I finally fell in love and it felt right. I knew that dating Samkelo wasn't going to be easy because he had kids and there was a wife before me but as long he loves me and I love him. That was enough for me. After I have left South Africa. I started getting sick but it didn't worry me because whenever I change the environment I usually get flu or fever so I told myself it was going to end soon. My trip was a success though I was sick but I did everything that I had to do in time. July I got better and I started gaining some weight. I liked my body slim so gaining weight was something that I didn't like. But I had no time to visit the gym in Canada. I kept on working, eating and gaining weight until the last month in Canada. Just the last week there I was dressing up for a conference. I was going to speak there. My stylist realised that there were lots of changes on my body.

Her: Are you pregnant Zuc. (That's how they called me)

Me: I am 39 I don't think I can have kids now.

Her: But you do have a man back home?

Me: Yes I do.

Her: You always practice safe sex?

Me: Well not always.

Her: Anything is possible so just go and check up after the conference.

I didn't say anything. The thought of having a child at 39 years old was frustrating me. I didn't even want to tell Samkelo that I thought I might be pregnant. If I was pregnant I was going to tell him when I get home. After we were done. We left.

The conference was a success that meant my work in Canada was over. I had to go back home. My stylist had made an appointment for me with the Doctor and she was going there with me. The Doctor did a check up.

Doctor: You're twenty weeks pregnant mam.

Me: Wait, that's like five months right?

Doctor: Yes. Meaning you're due in December.

I nodded. We finished up, I made the payment for her services and we left. My stylist was very happy for me but I wasn't so sure if I was happy or not.

Her: Once you give birth please send a lot and a lot of pictures. I just wish you can stay some more so that I can treat you and shower you with healthy food.

Me: Okay enough. Please hug me I will miss you.

She smiled and we hugged each other. She was just a wonderful woman. I was going to miss the place and everyone that we worked with. But I had to go back home and face reality.

My sister was the first person I told about my pregnancy and she was so happy for me. She even told my parents. When Samkelo broke up with me just like that I was heartbroken. I couldn't believe that I was going to be pregnant and alone. Understood that he was going through a hard time but just to give me a chance to talk to him wasn't going to hurt him more. I suppose I was never that important. I was just a rebound. My sister walked inside my house while I was still crying.

Thandeka: Bahlezi what's wrong now?

I stood up and I hugged her. I cried.

Me: He just broke up with me because his daughter is going through some hard times. He said he doesn't want any stress from me. I didn't even tell him that I am pregnant because he didn't care about what I had to say. He said his kids come first before anyone. Then he broke up with me. Just like that.

Thandeka: Oh Sisi wami! The man is a dog.

We sat down and she gave me a tissue. I wiped my tears. I couldn't believe I was hurt again.

Me: I will send him a text at least tell him that I am pregnant.

Thandeka: No! Don't do that. He'll think you're lying and you just want to trap him with the baby. I am so angry at him right now. How can he do this?

Me: So what should I do?

Thandeka: Just be pregnant. You see what they say about yellow bone men? They are good for taking pictures.

Me: Thandeka you're not helping right now.

Thandeka: Okay. I am sorry. I am just angry at this dog that was your boyfriend. Men are shit and they are full of crap. Most of them. I don't know how they think. Do you think they have brains?

Me: Thandeka?

Thandeka: Okay. I am sorry again. I will help you raise the baby. Yeah I will help you.

Me: But you're in Cape Town and you have your crazy life what do you know about raising a baby.

Thandeka: I will be moving to Johannesburg next year for my articles. I will come and help you. It's time for me to grow up now. I will start working soon. I thought Samkelo was a real man. With just one problem he lets go of everything else.

Me: Please don't tell mom and dad about this.

Thandeka: Well I left them at the mall buying baby clothes.

Me: What? Why did you bring them here?

Thandeka: Well mom is too happy because this will be their first grandchild but dad is angry because you're not married yet. He kind of wants to sort out your boyfriend.

Before I could say a thing my parents walked in with plastic bags from Ackermans and Jet. They were arguing about the baby and the father of the baby.

Mom: Oh my first princess. Look at you. You're beautiful.

I stood up and I hugged my mom.

Dad: You can't even see that she's been crying.

Mom: Oh Mbhekeni it's just hormones.

Thandeka: It's not hormones mom. That bastard dumped her.

Them: What?

Me: Thank you Thandeka.

Thandeka: They were going to find out anyway.

My parents sat down and they waited for me to talk. I told them everything that happened.

Dad: I don't care if his daughter is blind. He must do right by the child that you're carrying.

Thandeka: No dad. He must go to hell.

Mom: Thandi! Ayi Ayi!

Thandeka: He hurt my sister. Why would he say such hurtful things. His kids come first so my sister is a second choice? You're too smart Bahlezi you don't need him. And you have all the money to raise the baby.

Dad: What an excuse for a man! Tsk!

Me: He doesn't know that I am pregnant. Maybe he –

Dad: You think he'll treat you better once he knows? You didn't hear it clear huh? His kids come first, those are his wife's kids. Clearly he'll not care about this child as long his wife's daughter is blind. Don't hurt yourself Bahlezi, let him go. You'll only hurt yourself more if you force him. He has broken your heart now heal my daughter.

I just cried. I was so stupid, I should have known that I was never going to be of great value in Samkelo's life. I should have protected my heart from hurt but I failed.

Mom: Oh my baby. (she hugged me) It's Okay. We will look after the baby. We will support

you. You won't even feel that he's not around. Just be thankful that at your age God gave you a child. You will give her or him all the love she or he deserves. I will be here with you once you give birth.

Thandeka: Thanks mom. That's very good. So I don't have to be a nanny anymore. I promised her without thinking it through.

Our parents: Awu kodwa Thandeka Kazi konakalani kuwe!(we wonder what went wrong with you)

Dad: Your two brothers are chasing money, they don't want to start their own families. They are 30 years without kids and straight girlfriends or wives. Your sister was also chasing money and her dreams forgetting to start a family but you Thandeka you have your brains up side down.

Thandeka just layed her head on my shoulder ignoring our parents. I smiled a little, my little sister had her own world going on inside her head. As much as I was hurt. I was glad that I wasn't alone.... My family was with me....

Alondwe Moloji....

When my father took me from Thapelo. I knew he meant well and I understood. If I was on his shoes as a parent I would have done the same for my child. But it was not what I wanted. I wanted to be with Thapelo. I wanted to hear his voice everyday. Feel his touch, though I was broken and hurt being with him made everything better. It was hard for me to bond with my kids. I wanted to, but a big part of me was scared that maybe I am about to die because my sin was to love Thapelo. Obviously his mom didn't want me. She was going to kill me and I was going to leave my children. It was better for them not to bond with me. Not to know me and feel my love and warmth only for me to leave them in the end. I was trying not to hurt them but everyone was forcing me to hold them. I have been through so much pain just to bring them in the world, just to finally be a mom again, just to finally make my husband a father and all I wanted for my kids was for them to be happy. I have lost all hope for myself. The time I lost my sight I just knew that the devil had won again. She won the last time and clearly she'll win by killing me this time around. It didn't matter where I was because deep down I knew that she was going to get me but at least I wanted to die closer to my husband not far from him. My grandmother was trying to talk to me but she didn't know my feelings. She didn't know that deep down I have given up on life.

Gogo: Baby this is not the end of the world. You'll get your sight back and you'll see your beautiful babies.

Me: I want my husband.

Gogo: Alondwe, being away from him is good for you right now. You need to breath my child.

I heard the door bieng opened. The smell of that person wasn't someone from my family.

Gogo: Hi Sphephelo. How are you?

Sphephelo: I am fine Gogo and you?

Gogo: We're trying mfana. I will give you two some privacy.

Sphephelo: Thanks.

There was silence for a few minutes. I didn't know why he came to the house but I wanted to hear it.

Sphephelo: Hi, Alondwe.

Me: Hi, how are you?

Sphephelo: I am good and you?

Me: I am blind I think they have told you that. Why are you here? Please tell me.

Sphephelo: I think I am allowed to check up on you and be worried about you because you're the mother of my son.

Me: I am still breathing as you can see so you can go. Are you happy now?

Sphephelo: Being stubborn won't help you Alondwe. I am sorry for what happened to you but it's not the end of the road. You have so much to live for.

Me: Like being a mother to kids I can't see.

Sphephelo: Yes. It's not about seeing them only. It's about loving them and bonding with them. Everything will be alright. I just wanted you to know that. Please be well.

I didn't say anything I heard the door being closed. I turned and I tried to sleep. All I could think about was Thapelo.

When I woke up, I didn't even know if someone was in the room or what. Or whether it was at night or during the day.

Me: Is someone here?

Alupheli: Yes. I am here.

Me: Okay. Do you know where my phone is?

Alupheli: Dad took it. And he put it in his room.

Me: Can you please go and take it I want to call Thapelo.

Alupheli: Okay. I will come back now.

Me: Thank you.

I waited for him to come back, when he was coming back he wasn't alone our father was with him shouting at him for taking my phone.

Me: I asked him to take it for me.

Dad: Why? What do you want with it?

Me: I want to call my husband and speak to my son.

Dad: You're not bonding with your kids but you're busy after a man who can get you killed.

His mom is evil when are you going to see that?

Me: It's his mom dad not him.

Alupheli: Dad please let her speak to him maybe he'll tell her to eat and she'll listen.

He must have given Alupheli the phone because I felt him sitting next to me and there was a door bang.

Alupheli: I will put him on speaker.

Me: Okay.

The phone rang and it was answered by Thapelo.

Thapelo: Hello.

Me: Hey it's me.

Thapelo: Alondwe? Alondwe how are you doing my love? Are you alright? Have you eaten?

How are the kids? Are you coping there?

Me: Baby calm down please. I miss you.

Thapelo: I miss you too but tomorrow I am going to my mom. I want her to undo everything that she did to you.

Me: She doesn't care about me.

Thapelo: I can't lose you. If it wasn't for Sphephile I don't think I was going to have a reason to hold on.

Me: Don't think of doing something stupid. Please.

Thapelo: I won't. Sphephile is here.

Alupheli: Alondwe doesn't want to eat Thapelo.

There was total silence from Thapelo.

Sphephile: Dad doesn't want to eat too mom. Do you guys want to die.

None of us answered him. We just went silent.

Alupheli: What you're doing is wrong both of you. The kids are always crying and they don't want to sleep. They sleep for a short period of time. Gogo said they can sense that you are not alright. Please stop doing this to them. They are little and you're hurting them.

Sphephile: And you're hurting me too.

Us: We're sorry.

Thapelo: Alondwe please eat.

Me: You will eat?

Thapelo: Yes I will eat. We can't let our enemies win okay?

Me: Okay. I will eat. I love you Thapelo.

Thapelo: I love you too. Even in pain I love you.

Me: Sphephile my love be strong okay. I love you so much. Don't cry. Your mother will be alright.

Sphephile: I love you too mom. Please be better.

Me: I will be.

We said our goodbyes and Alupheli hung up the call.

Alupheli: You feel better now?

Me: Yes bhuti. Thank you. Please tell grandma to prepare food for me.

Alupheli: Okay. I am on it now.

I heard his footsteps walking away. I just closed my blind eyes and prayed for strength...

Samkelo Ndunakazi...

I wished I could do something to make Alondwe love and care for her children. I wish I could take away her pain but I couldn't. There was nothing I could do. September ended and it was getting a little better because she was eating regularly but she didn't want to hold her kids.

The babies were beautiful and healthy. But they were restless and always crying. Mom and the nanny tried by all means to take care of them. People from church came to pray and I was getting hope that maybe God will listen to our prayers and my daughter was going to be alright soon. It was almost the end of September I was with my mom and the twins. Mom was taking them to the clinic for check ups. I don't know what was that for.

Mom: So your girlfriend didn't even come to see your daughter but she loves you?

Me: We're on a break. I told her I need some space.

Mom: Even so, someone who loves you would come and see your child even if you told her you want space.

Me: Mom can we not talk about Sbahle.

Mom: We should because she should be supporting you as her boyfriend but she's not here.

Me: She's not here because I told her not to come.

Mom: And she did just that? Ayi shame. And you're sure that she loves you.

Me: Yes she loves me and I love her but right now I can't be happy with her while my daughter is not doing good.

She didn't say anything further. I didn't say anything too. Maybe I needed Sbahle with me. Maybe she was going to help me and Alondwe cope. Ah but then again there's nothing she could possibly do. We will be alright then I will go and fix things with her. Then everything will go back to normal. As soon as it our turn I helped mom carry the kids inside the room and I waited for her outside.

Later we were done with everything so we drove back home. I wasn't going back to work for the day. It was a Friday. I went to my room to change. My phone rang while I was busy. I took it, an unsaved number was calling.

Me: Ndunakazi speaking hello?

Mrs Moloi: Ndunakazi it's Thapelo's mom. How are you?

Me: How do you think I am?

Mrs Moloi: I don't know that's why I am asking.

Me: And if I tell you what are you going to do about it?

Mrs Moloi: There's no need to be rude about it.

Me: What do you want woman?

Mrs Moloi: I want my grandchildren back. They are Molois so they don't belong there with you. They belong with us.

Me: By us? You mean who? You?

Mrs Moloi: We don't want to lose our son because of this, he's blaming me for something I didn't do. So please bring the kids back and look after your daughter.

Me: You want the kids? You want to separate them from their mother and they'll be with you so that you can teach them witchcraft? You'll teach them to hate my daughter?

Mrs Moloi: I don't know any witchcraft you're talking about. Maybe your daughter has her own demons eating her up. Don't blame this on me. I just want the children back so that my son won't hate us like this.

Me: Then you'll have them kids in your dreams.

I hung up the call and I finished up changing my clothes. I took a shot nap. I just wanted to rest before I could go and see Alondwe in her room.

I woke up later there was some noise coming downstairs. I opened the door and I went downstairs. To my surprise there was a sangoma in my house.

Me: Woah! Woah! What's happening?

The sangoma stopped talking and he looked at me.

Mom: We're consulting.

Me: Consulting who exactly?

Mom: The Ancestors for help.

Me: What ancestors? You know exactly mom that I no longer believe in those things about dead people watching over us. Do you think if they are watching over us my father was going to let my daughter suffer this way?

Mom: Sometimes it's God who let things happen to us not them. And they can also let things happen to us because they're trying to show us something.

Me: Don't mix God with ancestors. You can only have one master but not two. I don't believe in this so please Baba leave my house now.

Alondwe: He said it's my mother in-law who did this to me.

Me: That's something we already know. Baby don't tell me you believe in all this now. This is not the way we raised you. And do you think if there are ancestors your mother was going to watch you suffer like this? Ay Ayi no. Your mom suffered too but it was never a day where I heard her say her mother's spirit helped her. Those people loved us and if they have powers to control our lives we wouldn't be suffering like this. There wouldn't be such a large number of poor people. Which parent can enjoy to see their children poor and having nothing to eat? And they yet they have control but they do nothing to help all they want is rituals where you spend the money that you don't have? Not in my house. Now go!

The sangoma took his things and he left.

Mom: Then why is God letting you suffer if he loves you?

Me: I don't know but all I know is you can never mix God with ancestors and you can never say they have control over my life they're not my creators. If you believe in them it's okay. But don't bring it here in my house. I want no witchy business. Alondwe will get her sight back when it's time. Don't be confused by what you believe in my daughter just because you are desperate and in pain. Do you think your mom and your grandfather are enjoying seeing you suffer?

Alondwe: No I don't think so.

Me: What would they do if they had power?

Alondwe: They would help me get my sight back so that I can be happy again.

Me: That's it. I don't think just because they are on the after life they are happy to see you like this.

Mom: When Thandeka came to you in a dream what do you think was happening?

Me: I was dreaming about my wife that what was happening. You see mom once these ancestors who you believe have control over our lives, once they start helping black families live a poverty free life and stop demanding rituals that need money that families don't have. I will then believe that they have control over our lives. How can more than million people who died watch their families suffer if they have control to help them? Ay sorry. I know witchcraft exist because it's nature but ancestors and control I stopped believing in that a long time ago because I saw that there's no such thing as them having control over our lives but then again mom. I am not say your beliefs are wrong. I am just saying my opinion. And just telling you that don't bring them in my house because the Bible says we suffer from our forefathers sins. They fall on us. So I am sorry but I am not a fan of amadlozi.

Mom didn't say anything. She just looked at me.

Mom: What is your opinion on what is happening to your daughter. Do you have a better solution?

Me: Yes. I say we wait on God. He'll deal with that mother in-law of hers. She called saying she wants the kids. I ain't gonna do that.

Alondwe: No she's not having my kids.

Mom: Do you know that the sangoma was about to tell us why she's doing this to Alondwe?

Me: Was that going to make her see again?

Alondwe: No. It wasn't. He said it's only her who can undo it.

Me: You see? Knowing wasn't going to help.

Mom: But we were going to know why she's doing this obviously it's something to do with her past.

Me: Come on mom a lot of women choose wives for their sons. Don't you remember how my grandmother hated you? For no reason. You ended up not marrying my father.

Mom: That's not the reason why I didn't marry your father.

Me: Okay but you know that if a woman is loved by her mother in-law we consider her lucky because they just want to control everything. My guess is this woman also had a wicked mother in-law. Or her childhood wasn't smooth. Maybe she was abused and she's taking it out on my innocent child or she just wants to control her son. Women are the most wicked creatures than men. They go beyond and they usually don't get along with each other so her day will come and my daughter will be fine. I have faith and I stand in my faith.

I stood up and I went upstairs to spend time with my grandchildren...

Alondwe Moloi....

I was trying to be strong everyday but not strong enough to bond with my kids. Alupheli was sleeping with me. So at night my phone rang. We were not asleep yet. We were just talking.

Alupheli: Alondwe, it's Sbahle! Can I put her on speaker?

Me: Yes please.

Sbahle: Hello Alondwe.

Us: Hello.

Sbahle: You're with Alupheli?

Me: Yes. He's kind of my bodyguard.

Sbahle: That's so nice of him.

Alupheli: Are you alright? You don't sound okay. You have flue maybe? Are you back? Please come and see us.

Sbahle: Slow down Ben10. Yes I have flue, I am doing okay. I am back but I don't think I can come to see you guys.

Us: Why not?

Sbahle: You should ask your father. I called to speak to Alondwe. I heard what happened and

your husband called last night. I just didn't have the strength to call because I don't know what to say.

Alupheli: Just say anything, maybe it will help. She doesn't want to bond with the babies please advise her on that.

Me: Alupheli you speak too much.

Sbahle: Thank you for letting me know Alupheli. I know she was going to hide it from me.

Me: I am trying to gain strength. I can't help but think that I will die soon.

Sbahle: No don't think like that. You don't need those negative thoughts. Right now you don't have your sight but remember we once spoke about meditation?

Me: Yes I remember.

Sbahle: You need to use it now to draw strength so that you can believe that you can be happy with your kids with or without your sight.

Me: It's not easy I won't even see them laugh.

Sbahle: But you will hear their baby sounds. Their little touch. Once that happens you will use your mind to create pictures in your mind. Right now you need to think like a blind person. Those people have their own pictures on their minds about how people in their lives might look like. Same applies to a person reading a book or novel. You imagine how everything looks like, and how people looks like. That is what you need to do before you even touch them. Imagine the happiness then you'll see you'll find peace and love.

Me: It's easy for you to say all that because you're not blind.

Sbahle: Alondwe don't punish your kids for their grandmother's evil doing. You're punishing them please don't do it. Just love them.

Me: I will try.

Sbahle: Alright. I was calling just check up on you.

Alupheli: Thanks for that. When are you coming sugar mama?

Sbahle: I don't know. Good bye guys. Take care.

Us: Bye. (she hung up)

Alupheli: What did dad do?

Me: Go and call him now.

Alupheli: Okay. I am on it.

I waited wondering what must have happened.

Dad: What's happening?

Me: Sbahle just called me. When we asked her why isn't she coming, she said we must ask you.

Dad: I don't know what she's talking about.

Alupheli: Dad don't do this to us. I like her.

Me: More specially don't do this to yourself.

Dad: I need to concentrate on you. Sbahle can wait. We just took a break.

Me: You took a break because I am blind?

Dad: I need to find a solution to this.

Me: Then when I get my sight back what will happen?

Dad: We will talk and fix things then it will be alright.

Me: It's funny how you men come in a woman's life, make her feel special, love her and she'll believe that she found love again then you just turn your back on her leaving her miserable, leaving her regretting giving you a chance. Then you'll go back to her asking for forgiveness because you know she'll forgive you. Stop doing these things to women. They are also human, they feel pain. What you're doing is wrong and don't make my situation an excuse. If you have a problem with her just tell her don't make this about me.

Dad: Don't tell me what to do.

There was a loud bang of the door.

Me: Did he just left?

Alupheli: Yes he left. Do you think Sbahle can still like me and act like my second mom even when dad has hurt her?

Me: I don't know, I can never say but I know that she's good person and she can never say no to a cute soul like yours.

He didn't say anything. I felt his head on my lap. I brushed it.

After my father chased away the sangoma and their debate with grandma had died down. I asked Alupheli to take me to my room. He held my hand and we went to my room.

Me: I want you to call Thapelo for me.

Alupheli: Alright. Mesuli called earlier he wanted to talk to you.

Me: Oh. When is he coming back?

Alupheli: He'll come back December time and Sphephile is coming back tomorrow. The school are closed for September holidays.

Me: When did you close?

Alupheli: We closed today.

Me: Okay.

That worried me because that meant Thapelo was going to be alone the whole week. I didn't want that for him. He was going to be frustrated. I was trying to use meditation so that I can be there for my kids. In my room Alupheli called Thapelo and he gave me privacy because I asked for it.

Thapelo: Hello.

Me: Would you please stop saying hello to my phone calls.

Thapelo: Ah baby I can't just say little pudding because Alupheli calls us too using your phone.

Me: Okay. How are you?

Thapelo: Hanging in there and you?

Me: I am trying Grandma had a sangoma in the house.

Thapelo: I thought you don't believe in those kind of things.

Me: Well grandma does. He told us your mom did this to me and she's the only one who can undo it.

Thapelo: She denied it to me and she even cried, saying she was very hurt when I hated her for killing my daughter. She wasn't going to do that again. For a moment I thought maybe she was telling the truth because it's hard to believe that my mom can do such a cruel thing to me. You know I even asked my dad if she's my biological mother and he said she is.

Me: I am sorry but Thapelo I think it's best that we stay apart. I have stuck around for too long hoping your mom will see one day that I love you for real but she doesn't see that.

Thapelo: No. Alondwe you can't do that.

Me: It's for the best. Maybe when she dies we can be together but for now it's better if we love each other separately.

Thapelo: I can't do that. I need you.

Me: Maybe she'll stop this and I will get my sight back. We'll just wait for her to die then we can be together.

Thapelo: You're breaking up with me?

Me: No I am trying to help us stay alive.

Thapelo: I can't do that. I can't live without you. You must come back. I was planning on coming there to talk to your father next week. Please Alondwe.

Me: No don't do that. I don't want to die now. And I love you but this is for the best.

Thapelo didn't say anything. I could hear him cry. I ended up crying. It was the best thing I could do to stay alive.

Thapelo: Take care of my children and look after yourself. Tell them I love them and I will

always do.

Me: Thapelo –

He hung up the call. I called Alupheli fast. I was panicking. His words scared me. Alupheli was taking forever to come. I shouted louder and he finally came.

Me: Where were you?

Alupheli: I am sorry I was talking to Sphephile. He's here. His father brought him now.

Me: What? No! Please call Thapelo again.

He took the phone from my hands and I heard the phone ringing with no answer.

Me: Search for Mpendulo and call him.

Alupheli: Okay.

He placed the phone on my ear. I held it with my hand. It rang.

Mpendulo: Alondwe?

Me: Mpendulo, thank God please drive to the house now. I think Thapelo is thinking of killing himself. Please just buy something to drug him and take him to your place. I will call the maid and tell her to check on him too.

Mpendulo: Shit! I will be on it now.

Me: Please hurry up. I don't want to lose him.

Mpendulo: Don't worry I will save him.

He hung up the call and I removed the phone from my ear.

Alupheli: Alondwe he can't do that.

Me: Call Mam' Betha now.

He took the phone from my hands and he placed it on my ear once it was ringing.

Betha: Alondwe Sisi how are you?

Me: Mama where are you now? Are you in the house?

Betha: No. I just left a few minutes ago. Thapelo gave me some time off. He told me to go home. I told him I can go tomorrow but he insisted and called a cab for me. He said he wants to be alone. I respected that.

Me: Oh dear God!

Betha: What's wrong Sisi?

Me: It's bad mama but Mpendulo will help. There's nothing you can do because you are on the road.

Betha: I can ask the driver to go back. I am not too far.

Me: Okay please. And keep him alive. He's trying to kill himself I can feel it. That something wrong is going on in his mind and he was talking strangely like he's saying goodbye.

Betha: Oh Thixo olungileyo! I will go back now.

Me: Thanks mama.

She hung up the call. Alupheli took the phone.

Alupheli: This is not good. No. This is not right.

I didn't say anything, I was holding my breath, praying that God can protect him. I couldn't lose him like that. I refuse....

Alondwe Moloji...

Waiting was killing me the most and not knowing what was going to happen was killing me.

Me: Please go and tell grandma to bring the kids to me. I need them.

Alupheli: Really?

Me: Yes.

He wasted no time, I heard his footsteps running. There was a knock on the door.

Me: Who is it?

Sphephile: It's your first baby.

Me: Hey baby come to me. Oh my god.

I opened my arms for him and I felt him hugging me. I hugged him back and kissed the top of his head.

Me: How are you doing?

Sphephile: I am fine. How are you?

Me: I am good. Your father fetched you in Johannesburg?

Sphephile: He asked dad to drive me to the airport after school. And he was there in Johannesburg.

Me: Okay. That's nice. How many days will you spend with him? I also want you here.

Sphephile: I will go home tomorrow and come back Wednesday. I will spend time with you.

Monday morning I will be going back to school.

Me: Okay. How's my husband?

Sphephile: He was sad when I left him but he was good when I was with him. We didn't have a hard time together.

Me: Okay. I am happy that you're here.

Sphephile: I am happy too. I have missed you.

Me: I have missed you too my love.

Gogo: Sphephile give the baby space so your mother can hold her now.

Sphephile: She'll hold both of them?

Gogo: Yes I will teach her. Lean by the head board Alondwe.

I shifted back. One of the babies was crying.

Me: Who's crying?

Gogo: Sisekelo. She's the one who's always crying.

I opened my arms and I felt her in my arms. I placed her in my chest and I brushed her back.

Me: Hey baby, it's your mom here please don't cry.

I kept on brushing her back, she eventually stopped crying.

Gogo: Oh thank God. Who changed your mind?

Alupheli: I told Sbahle and she spoke to her.

Dad: That's nice. What's going on Alondwe. Alupheli said something is not right?

Me: Alupheli and Sphephile please excuse us.

Alupheli: Okay. Let's go mshana.

Sphephile: Okay.

Gogo: Talk they are gone.

Me: I think Thapelo wants to kill himself. I told him we must love each other separately and he started crying and told me to look after myself and the kids. Then I must tell them that he will always love them.

Gogo: Oh Nkosi yami. Did you try to talk him out of it?

Me: No but I asked his friend to go to the house. Our helper also drove back home because Thapelo had told her to leave.

Dad: This is not good. I am calling Muzi for help. This woman can't win.

Gogo: Do that Samkelo, do that.

My phone rang.

Gogo: It's written Mpendulo.

Me: Answer it Gogo and put it on speaker.

Gogo: Okay.... Talk now.

Me: Mpendulo?

Mpendulo: Ey Alondwe –

Me: Don't tell me he's dead.

Mpendulo: No. He's not dead but when I arrived your maid was trying to talk to him. He had drove all your cars out of the yard and some boxes. I think they have important things. When I arrived he was pouring petrol around the house.

Me: Oh God. He was going to set it on fire?

Mpendulo: Well he did start the fire.

Me: What? Where's he?

Mpendulo: He's in my apartment resting. Your maid managed to stop the fire while I was fighting him. I just had to kick his balls so that he can be down.

Me: Oh Nkosi yami my husband. But he's alive?

Mpendulo: Yes and he's sleeping here. I will call you when he wakes up. So that you can talk to him. I think –

Me: What's going on?

Mpendulo: He's waking up wait?

Thapelo: "Where am I?"

Mpendulo: You're in my apartment.

Thapelo: "What? Why did you stop me!"

Me: Give him the phone please.

Mpendulo: Alondwe wants to speak to you. Take the phone.

I heard shuffling sounds.

Thapelo: I was going to end it all. Then Mpendulo stopped me.

Me: I told him to stop you.

Thapelo: My mom wasn't going to bother you once I was dead. She was never going to do it.

Me: She never stops.

Thapelo: I want to be with you.

Me: Come to my father's house and see us. You'll see our kids. I am with them here.

Thapelo: Really? They are in your arms?

Me: Yes I have Kamohelo with me. And Kananelo is with grandma. Don't you dare kill yourself. We will be alright.

Thapelo: Okay. I will come tomorrow and see you guys. I will come. I promise. I am sorry for trying to kill myself. I couldn't imagine my life without you.

Me: We're going nowhere baby. Don't worry now.

Thapelo: Okay. I love you Alondwe.

Me: I love you too. Get some rest.

Thapelo: Okay. Send my love to our love.

I laughed and said: I will do that.

He hung up the call. I sighed.

Gogo: Ayi. The woman is very evil.

Me: I want to go back home grandma.

Gogo: How are we going to make that happen? Your father is a dragon ready to release fire to everyone who comes near you. He won't let it happen.

Me: This is wrong. Dad is wrong.

Gogo: I know. Do you want to take him now and give me her.

Me: Okay. Take her. Is she sleeping?

Gogo: Yes she's sleeping. Don't move your feet then. Sthelo is next to them.

Me: Alright I won't.

Grandma took my baby girl from me and she started crying.

Gogo: Ohho! Take her back. She doesn't want to leave your chest. You see that she needed you?

Me: Yes I see that.

Gogo: Let me go and put Sthelo down. I will tell the boys to come keep you company.

Me: Okay.

I tried to feel her hands and I found it. I shook it.

Me: Daddy said I must send his love to you love. Do you hear that you're our love. You and

your little brother. You'll get to be a big sister on him. You'll see how fun it is to be a big sister, well Sphephile will be your big brother but Sthelo is your little brother. Everything will be alright my baby.

Alupheli and Sphephile stayed with us. They were talking alone and I was bonding with my daughter.

Later dad asked to speak to me. Alupheli and Sphephile left. Grandma took Sisekelo. She didn't cry. I figured she was dead sleeping.

Me: What is it dad?

Dad: I spoke to Muzi and he suggested that Thapelo must write a suicide letter and they will organise a safe place for him to go. Then he'll stay there until you are ready to go be with him. Then you and the kids will have to leave the country. That's the only option we have because I was against killing his mom. We can't do that. I don't want to go around killing people.

Me: What about the body? They'll want to see his body.

Dad: Muzi said he'll organise that.

Me: How?

Dad: There are people who die with no families to bury them. They'll find that body and baby they'll have to burn your house down. That's the only option we have.

Me: And the suicide letter? How will his parents get it. If you burn my house?

Dad: He'll leave the box outside the house with letters for everyone, his parents, you and the kids, his siblings and his friend. I don't mind even if you can leave the country my child as long as you're safe and happy. I will be alright. Do you think you can do that?

Me: Yes dad. Thapelo will come here I asked him to come. We will talk to him about it when he gets here.

Dad: That's better. I hope this will work.

Me: The police won't do a forensic on his body?

Dad: Don't worry about that. It will be taken care of.

Me: Is this what killed mom? This work she was doing?

Dad: Baby your mom was killed by Kimberly. Your brother's stepmother. She blamed your mom for her husband arrest. It turns out Muzi and the team were after Themba already and your mother was angry at him so she agreed to work on the project. She was working on different projects. Themba has joined them now. He's working with them.

Me: Where is that Kimberly?

Dad: I don't know what Themba did with her but what I know is that Muzi wiped her. She couldn't do anything because she was declared dead.

Me: And Thapelo? His parents will want to make death certificates.

Dad: You're the wife so you decide what happens with your husband not them. And if they want it we can always fake it.

Me: Okay. Let's do it dad. For my kids let's do it.

Dad: Okay baby.

I opened my arms and he hugged me. I hugged him back, I was glad that he wanted me to be happy with my family..

Sbahle Zuke...

The pregnancy have been hard for me and living alone was also adding up to my stress and mood swings that I didn't know how to control but God was amazing because whenever I was at work I didn't throw tantrums on my clients. The people who were kind of suffering from tantrums was my receptionist and my maid. But they understood my condition. I would feel really bad when I was alone. I don't like to make people sad. After my parents left I started working on the new programme that I was going to start for black disadvantaged kids.

I had to hire people to help me. That programme, work and studying helped me to shift my attention on missing Samkelo and on hurting because I needed him. That was my way of dealing with my heartbreak. As November ended I was eight months pregnant and I was tired already. I thought pregnancy was supposed to be cute and fun but it was a mini hell for me sometimes. Sometimes I was happy and enjoying it. I would bond with my baby girl and she'll kick and move that was like magic to me. It was the 30th of November. I was packing my bag going home after a long day. My phone rang. I took it. Thandeka was calling.

Me: Yes what you want?

Thandeka: That's what I get? No how are you Sisi omncane. Are you good. Are you happy?

Me: Thandeka I don't have time talk. I want to go and eat. I am hungry.

Thandeka: Okay please fetch me at the airport please. I don't have enough cash to pay for an uber.

Me: You're such a cockroach in my ear! Argh. I am coming.

Thandeka: Thank you! Thank you!

I hung up the call, I took my bag and I left. I always had a little hope that Samkelo was going to miss me maybe then he'll call me but he never did. That's when I told myself I need to move on with my life. At least I was going to have a mini me and I was going to be happy. I arrived at the airport and Thandeka was with a boy. His face looked familiar. They were arguing, more like the boy was shouting at her and she was just looking at him with a mean face. I shook my head and I walked up to them.

Me: I am here.

Guy: Oh Sbahle, hey.

Me: You know me?

Thandeka: Of course you're my sister he knows you because he fuckin wants to know everyone in my life.

Guy: There's nothing wrong with that... Eh Sbahle I am Mpendulo. Thapelo's friend.

Me: Oh, oh yeah yeah. I remember you. How are you.

Thandeka: Really? Bahlezi you're here to pick me up not to make friendly talks with him.

Me: Sorry, she's your girlfriend?

Thandeka: Yes I am and he wants me to meet his son. Can you believe it. Me? What do I know about kids?

Me: How do you survive with her as your girlfriend?

Mpendulo: I don't know but I love her.

Me: That's so cute. You're the one who was her ex?

Mpendulo: Yes.

Thandeka: Don't just talk like you're negotiating lobolo for me. I am here. Sisi please tell him to slow down. Please.

Me: Shame, my sister is scared Mpendulo. Don't tell me you're planning on marrying her already.

Mpendulo: Why not? I love her.

Thandeka: Woah! No shame. Please carry my bag.

She took my car keys from me and she headed to my car. I laughed, my sister was just something else and the poor boy was serious about her.

Mpendulo: Do you think she'll ever be serious about me? I have given her an option to leave me because she's not serious but she just refused. She even cried.

Me: Thandeka cried?

Mpendulo: Yes that was my first time seeing her cry.

Me: Oh my baby sister. That means she loves you but she's scared to let go of her crazy life style and to let go of control. She likes to control everything. She knows that if she can start to be serious with you all that will have to go and she's not so sure if she wants to let it all go.

Mpendulo: Eish I wish I can do something.

Me: Just be patient –

Thandeka: (on our backs) Can we go before he tells you my secrets. I don't know why people likes to open up to you. Let's go. Let's go.

I held in my laughter and I looked at Mpendulo. I just felt sorry for him. He was in love bandla. We get to my car.

Mpendulo: I will go to my car then.

Me: Hawu Thandeka why did you call me if Mpendulo was here with his car?

Thandeka: He started acting up so I called you. And people were looking at us so I knew you would rescue me.

I shook my head and said: Okay let's go.

Thandeka: I want to go with him.

Mpendulo: But you refused to spend the night with me tonight.

Thandeka: I am not refusing now isn't?

Me: Tomorrow you must come back though. You understand that right?

Thandeka: Yes sis I understand. Thank you.

She took her hand bag and she held Mpendulo's hand. They walked up to his car. I laughed and went inside my car. I just wished I can get inside her mind and see what's going on. The poor boy really loved her as crazy as she was. I drove back home and all I did was to eat, while watching horror movies. I didn't want to watch movies about love. I was having an us time with my daughter...

\*\*\*\*\*

Alondwe Ndunakazi....

Thapelo was coming to the house, I told my grandmother to dress me up nicely. I wanted him to see me looking beautiful. So that he can have hope that everything was going to be alright. I didn't want to look sad and miserable. I sat on the lounge with Sthelo on my arms. Sisekelo was sleeping on the sponge, grandma said she was next to my legs. Though I couldn't see them I loved them and I had a bond with them.

Sphephile: They are here! Yes!

Gogo: Stop shouting Sisekelo will wake up.

Thapelo greeted Sphephile, Alupheli and grandma. I could smell my husband's perfume. I smiled.

Thapelo: You're going to tell me that you can smell me?

Me: Yes I know it's you. Gogo please take the baby I want to hug him now.

Gogo: Okay baby.

The baby was taken from me. Thapelo's hands held my hands. I stood up and we hugged each other.

Me: I am so happy that you're here. I am happy.

Thapelo: I am happy to see you. And you look beautiful.

I giggled and said: Thank you.

I felt his cold lips on my forehead. I smiled. We sat down.

Thapelo: Can I hold him Gogo?

Gogo: Yes.

That was the moment I wished I could see. Just to see him holding our child. Just to see his face. Later my father and I were talking to him about the plan that we had.

Thapelo: It's a good plan. I am all in. Anything to have my family back. I will do anything.

Dad: I don't like letting my daughter go but I don't want her lose you too.

Thapelo: Thank you for helping us.

Dad: It's okay. We will go meet Muzi tomorrow. You'll sleep here in the guest bedroom.

Thapelo: Alright. Thanks.

Dad: Okay. Let me go and call Muzi.

Daddy left us and I asked him to hold me. I wanted to lay on his shoulder. He did and we had a conversation. I was happy that he was with us. I was really happy.

Dad, Muzi and Thapelo were busy planning this thing and Thapelo's behaviour at work had to change so that they'll know and see that he was stressed. It took them the whole month of October and November to get everything together. They didn't want anything to go wrong. Once they were done Thapelo was gone. Muzi had taken him. On the 30th of November, they were going to burn down the house. By midnight. We knew that the house wasn't going to burn down all down because it was easier to get help in suburbs so Muzi had it all covered not draw too much attention. I was in my room with Sphephile and Alupheli waiting for a call anytime that was going to tell me my husband was dead. My phone rang.

Me: Who is it?

Alupheli: It's Mpendulo.

Me: Okay. Answer it and place it on my ear. (he did)

Mpendulo: Alondwe how are you?

Me: I am good. Wait why are you whispering?

Mpendulo: My girlfriend is sleeping, I am in the bathroom.

Me: You have a new girlfriend?

Mpendulo: Yes. That's not important right. What's important is that, she's Sbahle's younger sister.

Me: Oh. Okay. So?

Mpendulo: I saw Sbahle today, your father said he was taking a break from her when I asked him to talk to her so that she can speak to Thapelo.

Me: Okay. So? What's wrong.

Mpendulo: Sbahle is heavily pregnant Brah. I thought maybe your father knows so I spoke to Thandeka saying her sister looks beautiful in pregnancy then she went on about how she was angry when the father of the baby dumped her because of the problem his daughter was having. So I figured that your father doesn't know about this pregnancy that's why I am telling you now.

Me: Oh my God. That's so sad. If you think how far is she?

Mpendulo: Thandeka said she's giving birth next month.

Me: Yoh! Thanks for letting me know Mpendulo. I will talk to my father right now. Thank you.

Mpendulo: Okay.

Me: Did you see Thapelo leaving?

Mpendulo: Yes I saw him. It was like I was saying goodbye for real. Like I will never see him again.

Me: Don't worry you'll see him again.

Mpendulo: Yeah hey. Look let me go before she wakes up.

Me: Okay bye.

Mpendulo: Bye.

I put my phone down and I sighed.

Me: Guys please go and call dad I need to speak to him now.

Them: Okay.

I couldn't imagine how Sbahle must have felt, being pregnant and alone? But she was supposed to tell dad no matter what! Mmm.... Yoh dad is having a baby... I am having a sister or a brother.. Ayi angsemdala...

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

Alupheli and Sphephile walked in my room. I was working on my laptop. I was catching up

on my work.

Me: What's wrong?

Alupheli: Alondwe said we should call you.

Me: Is everything alright?

Alupheli: We don't know.

Sphephile: Uncle Mpendulo called and after that she wanted to talk you. She said we must call you.

Me: Okay. Stay here then.

They nodded, I went to Alondwe's room. I sat on her bed.

Me: What's going on?

Alondwe: Did you call Sbahle after telling her you need a break?

Me: Ah. You're still there why can't you let that rest?

Alondwe: Dad please answer my question.

Me: No I didn't call her.

Alondwe: Jesus Christ! What kind of a break are you taking? I thought breaks means you make phone calls here and there.

Me: Why did you call me in here?

Alondwe: Sbahle is pregnant.

Me: Come again.

Alondwe: Sbahle is heavily pregnant.

Me: Wow! So that means she just moved on? Okay. If I told her I have problems why didn't she care enough to call me and ask how I am doing? Why should I be the one to call her?

And now she moved on and got pregnant by another man? Woah!

Alondwe: You didn't hear me well I said she's "HEAVILY PREGNANT" not just pregnant.

Me: What does that supposed to mean?

Alondwe: It's means she's been pregnant for a long time. That she's close to giving birth. Starting from tomorrow as it will be the first of December she can give birth anytime.

Me: Wait.

I counted months and I got it all figured out. She must have conceived in March that's when we started sleeping together. I stood up. That's what she wanted to talk to me about. That's why she had mood swings. Oh God!

Me: Alondwe she's having my child?

Alondwe: I guess you've done the math in your head. And it clicks so what are you going to do about it?

Me: I will call her. I will have to call her.

Alondwe: You need to go to her.

Me: Mesuli is coming back tomorrow. I must be here because I have to fetch him at the airport.

Alondwe: Shame it sucks to be Sbahle's child.

Me: What does that supposed to mean?

Alondwe: You missed out the whole pregnancy and you don't seem to care that much. Why dad?

Me: I didn't expect to have a child now. Not that I don't want it now but I am still processing.

Alondwe: If I had my sight first in the morning I was going to be on the first plane and see her.

Me: Don't make me feel bad.

Alondwe: You should feel bad. Please tell grandma to come and take the baby. I want to sleep now. I just wanted you to know that you're having a baby.

Me: Okay. I will call her.

I left her room feeling otherwise. I didn't know how to react and what to do. Okay I knew

what to do but I wanted to see my son. He's been gone for too long and I wanted to see him. I went to my mom's room. I didn't go inside.

Me: Mom Alondwe wants to sleep. Please take the baby.

Mom: Tell the nanny to take the baby. I am getting dressed.

Me: Okay.

I went to tell the nanny and she went to Alondwe's room. I went back to my room. I told the boys to leave. I wanted to be alone. I was having a little baby? It's been three months since I last spoke to Sbahle. And I was going to call because I have learned that she's pregnant. Eish maybe I shouldn't have asked for a break. I took my phone and I called her. Her phone rang without answer. I tried for a several times and it ended up sending me straight to voicemail. Maybe she didn't want me in her life anymore. What have I done?

\*\*\*\*\*

Alondwe Moloji...

I was trying to sleep and I was slowly drifting off then my dad woke me up. I sat up straight.

Me: Dad what's wrong?

Dad: Alondwe she's not taking my calls. I don't know what to do. I have called her more than five times. It sent me to voicemail after that.

Me: What did you expect dad? Listening to her wasn't going to hurt you. If she was mom were you going to ask for a break?

Dad: I was married to your mom. You can't compare her to Sbahle. Sbahle is my girlfriend.

Me: She's your girlfriend or she was?

Dad: Alondwe you're not helping! I need help. Please call her.

Me: You said her phone sent you to voicemail.

Dad: Maybe her phone is on. I won't say anything. You'll talk to her. Put the phone on speaker.

I had a heavy headache coming down on me but I tried to be strong so that I can make the phone call. It went away immediately. I heard the dialing sounds.

Sbahle: Alondwe?

Me: Mmm... Hey?

Sbahle: Are you alright what's wrong?

Me: Yes I am fine. I feel a little headache.

Sbahle: You can call me some other time.

Me: Ahhh!

Sbahle: Alondwe what's going on?

Me: Please hung up.

Sbahle: Okay. (she hung up)

Dad: Are you acting up or you're seriously feeling pain.

Me: Ahh!

I held my head. It was hell pounding, it was like it was on fire. I was crying. It was painful.

Dad: Alondwe? You're worrying me.

Me: It's painful dad.

I had blurry flashes, like I was seeing my room. But it was like it was spinning. I looked around it was dark again.

Gogo: Alondwe what's happening?

I just screamed because the pain was too much and I kept on having blurry flashes, seeing my dad, my granny, Alupheli and Sphephile.

Sphephile: Mom why are you crying?

Gogo: Alupheli take Sphephile and leave the room with him. We will help your sister.

I felt my grandmother's hands holding me tightly. I cried because my eyes were also hurting. My phone rang.

Dad: It's Mpendulo I will take it.

Gogo: What's happening talk to me.

Me: My head.... My eyes.... They hurt.

My grandmother left me when she came back, she put a wet towel on my head. I could see her but not clearly.

Me: I can see you a little.

Gogo: Really? Oh Jesu! Are you serious?

Me: Yes it's not clear but I can see you.

Gogo: Do you feel the pain now?

Me: No. I want to see my kids please take me to them. Please.

Gogo: Okay. Let's go.

I stood up and she held my hand. I felt a little dizzy. I held her tightly. We walked together. Dad was talking to the phone. I could see him. It was slowly getting clearer. We arrived in my granny's room. I went to their cots. They were both asleep. I held my mouth. They were so beautiful. They looked so peaceful.

Gogo: Oh baby don't cry.

Me: They are so beautiful. Wow... (I closed my eyes) I thank you Jesus. You're wonderful all the times, you gave me something so precious. I know I am not perfect but your mercy falls on the racious and on the sinners. Rich and poor. You're the same yesterday, today, tomorrow and forever. You're who he is. Thank you. Thank you. Amen.

Gogo: Amen.

I hugged my grandmother. I was so happy that I have seen my kids. I was grateful.

Dad: What's happening?

Gogo: She has her sight back.

Dad smiled and said: Really?

I nodded and I went to hug him. I was happy.

Dad: Wow! We thank God! That was Mpendulo he was telling us that he's at Thapelo's parents house. They got the news that he killed himself on the fire. In his house. Thapelo's father called him and he went there. He asked him to call to tell you that your husband is dead.

Me: Should I cry?

Gogo: Yes you must mourn your husband.

We all looked at each other and we laughed.

Dad: So the news came as a shock and your mother in-law got a stroke. Mpendulo said she's just a statue. I think she didn't think it will be her son who will die. She thought it was going to be you. But then you know.

Me: Dad this means we don't have to tell everyone else that Thapelo is dead. We can tell his father the truth and he can come back. We don't have to move.

Gogo: Yeah. It will take her forever to recover from stroke.

Dad: Okay. I will talk to Mpendulo. But what if this man tell his wife?

Gogo: Let's trust he will listen to us.

Dad: Okay. Just look at your kids and be happy okay?

I smiled and nodded. Sphephile and Alupheli came inside the house. I smiled and I went to hug them. I got my life back from the enemy!

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

Words fail me..... I don't know how to describe how happy I was that my daughter had her sight back. She was happy, the joy on her face meant everything to me. I asked to speak to Thapelo's father once Mpendulo answered his phone.

Mr Moloi: Ndunakazi?

Me: Baba, can I ask why you were still with your wife after everything she has done to your son?

Mr Moloji: We weren't really together anymore. We have some business commitments that requires us to be married in order to keep on taking control. And other small businesses. We agreed not to get divorced, we weren't sleeping on the same room anymore. I am not stupid. I didn't like what she did to my son but then again. I don't expect you to understand.

Me: What are you going to do with your wife now?

Mr Moloji: I will just send her to a facility for people like her. After my son had killed himself because of her I don't care if I lose that business control. I can't stay with her.

Me: Thapelo is not dead.

Mr Moloji: What do you mean?

Me: It was a set up that they planned with my daughter. They were going to leave the country because they have heard enough of your wife's wrath. They wanted her to feel the pain when she learns that Thapelo is dead and after reading the letter he wrote she'll know that her son killed himself because of her. That way she was going to live with that pain.

Mr Moloji: She'll feel the pain better now that she's suffering physically, and emotionally.

Me: So please don't spread the word that your son is dead. My daughter got her sight back. She wants Thapelo to come back. They'll continue living their lives without your wife.

Mr Moloji: Thank you so much. But the police?

Me: Don't worry everything was paid off. You won't even read about it on the papers.

Mr Moloji: Thank you so much for putting a stop to this. Mpendulo was the first person I called. We haven't told anyone. I won't even tell his mom. His siblings knew?

Me: Yes they knew.

Mr Moloji: Okay. Thanks Ndunakazi. I will get to meet my grandchildren.

Me: Yes. They are really beautiful. We will see each other soon hopefully.

Mr Moloji: Yes. Thanks.

I hung up the call and I went to tell Alondwe everything he said

Alondwe: I always wondered why he was still with her. It was just for money.

Gogo: Hhayi money makes the world go around.

Me: Awu mama. (we laughed) Okay. Let's pray.

We all held each others hands and we prayed. That night I slept peaceful.

In the morning I woke up and prayed. Sbahle was on my mind and the baby. Eish. I am going to have a baby. I sighed and took my phone. I called her house. It was answered.

Thandeka: Thandeka speaking hello.

Not the person I expected to answer. I didn't want to talk to her

Thandeka: Hello there are you speaking or you lost your voice?

Me: Hi Thandeka it's Samkelo Ndunakazi.

Thandeka: Oh you. What do you want?

Me: Can I speak to your sister?

Thandeka: She died last month. I am in charge now. What do you want?

Me: Thandeka I don't have time for games. My daughter was speaking to her last night.

Thandeka: Sbahle your ex boyfriend wants to speak to you.

Sbahle: Tell him what you see.

Thandeka: My sister is on the table eating and you don't want to come between her and food. It's early in the morning and I don't want to catch some tantrums. Do you have a message maybe? I will pass it to her.

Me: Please tell her to call me I need to speak to her it's important. Very important.

Thandeka: Your message is whack I won't tell her. I thought maybe you were going to say you're apologising with a Bentley. Then I was going to pass the message. Bye.

She hung up the call. I clicked my tongue. I have seen it all but that little bitch was savege. I

knew she was going to speak nonsense. I was going to see my son then I was going to fly to Johannesburg that was the only thing that was going to help me. I went to shower because I had to go fetch my son. He was going to be home any minute.

I didn't even had breakfast. I was with the boys waiting for him. They wanted to go with me. Uyathandwa: Your mom is happy boy did you see that?

Sphephile: Yes. She's happy. I am happy too.

Kiara: I love the babies. I love them. You will have them too dad? I want babies too in the house.

I looked at Uyathandwa and laughed.

Uyathandwa: Why don't you ask your grandfather to have a baby for you.

Kiara: Which grandfather?

Uyathandwa: Smith.

Kiara laughed loudly. We laughed after her. We didn't know what was funny.

Kiara: Oupa doesn't want more babies, he is getting old. Both of them. You must have a baby.

Alupheli: Don't worry I will give you a baby. I will get a bae soon. You'll see.

Me: Ngizokuphihliza ikhanda wena.

They laughed at him. I shook my head.

Sphephile: Here's uncle.

Uyathandwa picked up Kiara and we went to Mesuli. He looked so grown up. It was good to see him again.

Me: Mjita?

Mesuli: Dad?

We hugged each other and he hugged the boys and kissed Kiara. She giggled.

Kiara: You look old now and you have grown a beard.

Sphephile: Yeah. You look old. (we laughed)

Uyathandwa: Where's Monica I thought you were bringing her home with you. (We went to the car. I drove off)

Me: Who's Monica now?

Mesuli: Ey. Uyathandwa! You have no timing.

Uyathandwa: Come on I just wanted to know.

Alupheli: We see you have a thing for white girls.

Mesuli: Can you ask about my education?

Me: We know enough about your education. So where's she?

Mesuli: Where's Sbahle? I will answer if you tell me that.

Me: Well this is about you not me.

The boys laughed at me. Kiara laughed after us.

Sphephile: I saw Sisi Sbahle at school. She was there to talk to us. She's fat now and she has a big stomach. Like mom when she had babies inside. She's pregnant I tell you.

Alupheli: She's not pregnant.

Uyathandwa: Dad is she pregnant?

Me: I don't know. She hasn't told me anything. Maybe it was someone else Sphephile.

Sphephile: Okay maybe. People look alike.

Them: Yeah.

Alupheli: I told her they must not have a baby because I am the last born. No one must take my place.

They laughed at him. I shook my head. Deep down I was stressed out and I didn't know what was going to happen.

At night we were having dinner, The chef made special dinner for us. Everyone was there and I was happy to see them together. My mind was not fully there.

Alondwe: You're such a bore Mesuli. You should have brought Monica with you.  
Mesuli: I didn't know you had your sight back. I didn't want her to come to a painful situation.  
Mom: You did well Mesuli. You thought like a man.  
Alupheli: Weee usubuyile ke. Everything you do is right.  
Everyone laughed at him.  
Me: We have babies in the house right?  
Uyathandwa: Come on let us have some fun.  
Alondwe: You'll stay up when they are crying at night.  
Uyathandwa: Kiara will do that, don't worry. Right baby?  
Kiara: Yes daddy. Where is their father? (She smiled)  
Alondwe: He's somewhere working for them. You want to see him baby?  
Kiara: Yes. It's been a while you know.  
We laughed as she tried to roll her eyes she was so cute.  
Sphephile: He must come back.  
Alondwe: We are going back home when he comes back.  
Mom: Hawu Alondwe. You won't stay a little longer?  
Alondwe: We will be here for Christmas.  
Alupheli: I want to go with you. I want to visit my sugar mama.  
Mesuli: Yeah. Where is she dad?  
Me: I said don't ask me that.  
Mom: She's gone baby. She left your father because he was going through a hard time. She didn't even come to see him.  
Alondwe: Grandma that's not true. That's not what happened.  
Mom: That's what happened.  
Mesuli: But that's unlike her.  
Me: Okay, Enough! Can you stop talking about her. Please.  
Nobody said anything. I sighed.  
Alupheli: But we want her back. You must do something.  
Mom: She must stay where she is.  
Uyathandwa: Grandma I think he needs her. We judged her too soon. She's a good person. They went on with the debate. It was making me angry and they were making a hell lot of noise, talking all at the same time. I took my glass and I threw it on the wall. Everyone got a fright. I stood up and I went upstairs leaving them in the table. I lay on my bed. I took my phone and there were no messages or any missed calls from her. I closed my eyes. I sighed, I stood up and I started packing. I had to go to her.

Samkelo Ndunakazi...

By 5am I was on the road on my way to Johannesburg. I was driving, I needed to drive so that I can have more time to think. I didn't even know what I was going to say to her. Even if she doesn't take me back at least I was going to have a child with her maybe that was the connection that was going to keep us together until we get back together because to her I broke up with her. But no I needed them both, her and the child. I was really nervous. Alondwe was right, it was wrong of me to take a break because my daughter was blind. I shouldn't have done it. I should have met up with her and hear what she had to say. I missed out on the whole pregnancy because I didn't think before acting. By 11:39 I was outside her gate. I had a controller and the keys to her house. I opened the gate and it opened. I was hoping that she was home, it was Saturday she was supposed to be home. I didn't even knock I opened the door. She was walking slowly, talking on the phone. She didn't see me because she wasn't facing my direction.

Sbahle: Right now I am alone here, you just left Thandeka where are you now?.... I am feeling pains

Okay!... I don't even know what was I thinking having unprotected sex with a man who wasn't serious about me now I am feeling pain alone(that broke me).... What should I do?... I am scared Thandeka I have never been pregnant before..... Ehe... Yeah... Okay.

She removed the phone from her ear, she was about to climb the stairs without looking back.

Me: Hi.

She stopped walking and she looked back at me. She had tears on her face and mucus running down her nose. She was emotionless. She was cute in pregnancy, she wasn't that fat but compared to her normal body she was fat.

Me: I know I am the last person you want to see. But I am here now and I want to talk to you.

She didn't say anything. I expected her to shout or throw things at me but she didn't. She continued crying and climbing the stairs. I walked slowly behind her, I was scared she might fall because to me she didn't seem fine.

Sbahle: Stop following me, go back home where you belong. I don't want you here.

Me: Sbahle I am so sorry. I know you're angry at me and you –

Sbahle: I said leave Samkelo I don't want to hear a single word coming from your mouth.

Me: But you're carrying my child.

Sbahle: Relax once I gave birth I will send you pictures and I will let you follow me on Instagram where you'll watch your daughter grow. But for now go.

Me: You're making a joke.

She screamed softly holding her tummy. I went to her trying to help her but she didn't want me to touch her.

Me: Let me drive you to the hospital.

Sbahle: Thandeka is coming I don't need you.

She went inside her room. She was screaming because of pain I tried to open the door but it was locked I felt so helpless.

Me: Sbahle open the door please.

Sbahle: Leave me the fuck alone.

Just then Thandeka walked in with a woman, by just one look I knew that it was their mother. She looked just like them.

Mrs Zuke: Who's this man Thandeka?

Thandeka: It's the father of the baby.

Mrs Zuke: What is he doing here?

Thandeka: I don't know mom.

Thandeka knocked on the door, Sbahle came to open. Their mother was looking at me.

Sbahle: What took you so long?

Thandeka: I went to fetch mom. Let's go.

Mrs Zuke: What are you doing in my daughter's house?

Me: I need to speak to her.

Mrs Zuke: Why? Because you broke up with her?

Me: I didn't break up with her. I asked for a break.

Mrs Zuke: A break? What's that?

Sbahle and Thandeka came out of the room.

Thandeka: We're going to the hospital mom are you coming?

Mrs Zuke: Go I am still talking to him.

Sbahle: Talking to him will change nothing please let's go.

Their mother nodded and she followed them. I followed them too, they drove off and I followed them in my car until they made it to the hospital. I walked inside the hospital with them. The three of us waited while she was being checked up.

Thandeka: I don't get why you're here. Because you dumped my sister.

Me: I didn't dump her. I asked for a break.

Mrs Zuke: What is a break in a relationship?

Thandeka: It's a guy's polite way of breaking with a girl.

Me: That is not true.

Thandeka: Yes mom it's true. If a guy meant to ask for a break, he's supposed to call here and there just check up his girlfriend to remind her that I am not gone. I am still in your life I will make a come back. But if a guy asked for a break and doesn't make a phonecall in months then it's a break up.

Mrs Zuke: Thank you for explaining baby. You broke my daughter's heart boy and I know I won't choose for her. She might take you back but my wish is that she doesn't take you back.

Thandeka: I doubt she'll take him back.

Me: I love her.

Mrs Zuke: We don't care about that. You have a funny way of showing love.

The nurse came and told us she was ready to give birth one of us can come be with her.

Thandeka: Who should go?

Mrs Zuke: Let the father go.

Thandeka: But mom-

Mrs Zuke: My baby, she'll be throwing tantrums in there, biting and holding your hands tighter than you've ever been held. Let him go, he knows how this goes he has kids. I am sure his wife had done it to him before.

Thandeka: Okay, the father of the baby will go.

Nurse: Okay. Let's go sir.

I nodded and I stood up. I followed the nurse, Sbahle was already on the bed, she was in pain. I sat next to her. She looked at me.

Sbahle: Why did they bring you?

Me: Because I am the father of the baby. And I have done this before so I am here now.

She clicked her tongue and she looked aside. The nurse told her to start pushing. I held her hand and I encouraged her to push. She was holding me tighter but I suck it in. After a long time of the struggle with her swearing at me and pushing. The baby was out of her womb.

Nurse: It's a baby girl.

The nurse gave Sbahle the baby, she smiled and kissed her. I smiled too. She was pretty.

Sbahle: Why did you choose to look like a man though?

Me: She knows her father is beautiful like he's a girl.

Sbahle: I don't see any beauty here.

Me: But you know that I am handsome.

Sbahle: Mxm. I must say you have good genes, sperm donor.

Me: Sbahle don't be like this please. You were supposed to tell me that you were pregnant.

Sbahle: I don't want to talk about this in here.

Me: So are you going to give her a name? I would like to give her a name please.

Sbahle: I will give her a name when you're gone. Not now. You don't deserve to know her name, not even to see her I don't know why you're here.

Nurse: We're done, can we take her?

Sbahle nodded. I was asked to leave the room, they were going to move them. I left and I went to her mom and sister.

Thandeka: What happened?

Me: She has given birth to a baby girl.

Mrs Zuke: Oh thank God. Did she name her or did you give the baby a name?

Thandeka: Do you think she'll allow him to give her a name.

Mrs Zuke: Of course she must.

Thandeka: I see you like him.

Her mother didn't say anything. She just looked at me, I excused myself. I called my daughter.

Alondwe: Daddy?

Me: Hey baby Sbahle has given birth, you have a little sister.

Alondwe: Oh my God that's wonderful, have you guys given her a name?

Me: Her mother is angry at me I don't think she'll allow me to give her a name and she didn't want to tell me what name will she give her.

Alondwe: Ah Shame, Should I tell everyone?

Me: Don't tell them yet, I should be the one to tell Alupheli.

Alondwe: Okay. Talk to her, maybe she'll forgive you.

Me: Eish it's not promising, let me go.

Alondwe: Okay.

I hung up the call. I just wished things were easier.

After her mom and sister had left. I went to Sbahle and the baby. She was holding her.

Me: Can I hold her? Please.

She looked at me and she gave me the baby. I took her and I sat down with her. She was so beautiful, I just fell in love.

Me: Please don't grow up, just stay beautiful like this. Please give her a name.

Sbahle: Syaphiwa that's her first name.

Me: Okay. Syaphiwa Okuhle that's her second name.

Sbahle: I like it. It's beautiful.

Me: I am sorry for everything that happened.

Sbahle: Don't be sorry you made it clear that your wife's kids come first so there's no sin in that.

Me: I didn't know that you were pregnant, don't make it sound like Syaphiwa will be less important to me because you're not my wife.

Sbahle: If one of your sons can be in an accident now what will you do? Right now.

Me: Sbahle –

Sbahle: No answer my question.

Me: Syaphiwa is still young –

Sbahle: Stop right there, don't even continue. Please bring her back to me.

Me: I am still holding her.

Sbahle: Samkelo bring back my child. Please.

I sighed and I gave the baby back to her.

Sbahle: If you want to be part of her life, you'll be part of her life but if you're planning on coming and going. Dropping her off whenever you feel like I suggest you walk away now. I don't mind I can be both to her, a mother and a father.

Me: I promise I will do right by her.

Sbahle: Yeah. You're good at making promises.

Me: So what about us?

Sbahle: There's no us here.

Me: But I didn't break up with you. And Sbahle I love you.

Sbahle: Okay. If you didn't break up with me. I am breaking up with you now. Whatever we had or what I thought we had I don't want it anymore. I am no longer your girlfriend and you're no longer my boyfriend. For now you're just a sperm donor. You'll get the title of being a father of my child once I see you being a father to her. So now you being here means nothing to me. And you're nothing to me. Don't even try to have hope that you'll ever have me back in your life.

Me: Sbahle I am sorry okay? I love you and I mean it. I don't want to lose you in my life. I want to be with you and I want us to be a family.

Sbahle: Syaphiwa is my family, I want no family with you.

Me: My kids love you please don't break their hearts.

Sbahle: I didn't break their hearts you did. Don't make me feel bad using your kids. In the first place you were thinking of them when you wanted a "break" I am also thinking of her as I am breaking up with you. I don't want her to be attached to someone who drops us any minute just because I am not the wife. I am just a rebound.

Me: You were never that and you know that. You know that I love you. Why would you doubt my love for you?

Sbahle: Samkelo please go. Go to your family, like you said Syaphiwa is still young so I am pretty sure that you don't see the importance of being here. You're here because your kids like me and they've probably pushed you to come here and you came. So I am saying go. I don't need you here.

Me: You want me to leave you crying?

Sbahle: Yes leave.

Me: I am not going anywhere.

She turned and gave me her back, the baby started crying. She sat up straight again and tried to make her stop crying but she didn't stop crying.

Me: Give her to me.

She gave her to me, I put her in my chest and a few minutes later she stopped crying. From there I just knew that she was going to be my best buddy... My little champion..

Samkelo Ndunakazi.....

Once Okuhle was asleep I put her next to her mother.

Me: I would like to speak to your father.

Sbahle: Why?

Me: Please give me his number.

Sbahle: I am not doing that unless you tell me why do you want to speak to my father.

Me: We are not married and I made you pregnant. I have to pay for making you pregnant out of wedlock.

Sbahle: You want to do that so that my child can take your last name and you'll claim her however.

Me: The child is ours Sbahle because we made her together not you alone. I get that you don't want me back yet but let me do what's right. I have to because if I can say marry me you'll refuse.

Sbahle: You'll say I must marry you because we have a child together? I won't do that.

Me: I would say marry me because I love you.

Sbahle: That will never happen.

Me: Okay. Give me your father's number.

She took out her phone and she gave me her father's number. I saved it on my phone.

Me: I will come back later to check up on you guys.

She didn't say anything. I left regretting everything I did, pushing her away. I didn't think it straight I suppose I thought it was going to be easy for us to pick up where we left off because we loved each other but I ruined all that. I could see it in her eyes that she still love me but she doesn't trust me anymore. I broke that trust. I drove to the nearest hotel, the one close to her. I was going to stay for a few days because I was going to go to work when I have to make a year end financial reports and audit the books of a company who had hired me as an external auditor. Once I was in my hotel room. I called Sbahle's father. I was nervous but I had to do it. The phone rang and it was answered.

Zuke: Zuke speaking hello?

Me: Yebo Baba. You're speaking to Samkelo Ndunakazi. I don't know if you know me.

Zuke: Ngizoze ngikwazi nje udume ngani?

Me: I am the father of your grandchild.

Zuke: Oh. You're the one who made my daughter pregnant without marrying her and broke my daughter's heart on top that?

Me: I am really sorry Baba. It wasn't my intention to do that.

Zuke: But you did it anyway, so tell me what do you want?

Me: I need to do right by the child and pay for making your daughter pregnant out of wedlock.

Zuke: When are you planning to marry her?

Me: She doesn't want to marry me. She doesn't want me back.

Zuke: I don't blame her. After what you did to her. I don't blame her. We will set a date. You and your people will have to come eMpumalanga. Then you will pay for the child.

Me: Thanks Baba. I will stay in touch.

Zuke: Okay ndoda.

I hung up the call and I had that out of my way. I was going to ask my brother and Phumlani to go with me.

Later at night I drove to the hospital, when I arrived there Sbahle was dressed up and the baby was well covered. She was busy on her phone.

Me: They are discharging you already?

Sbahle: Yes everything is alright. So we're going home. I was about to call my sister.

Me: I will drive you guys home.

Sbahle: Okay. Thanks.

I took the baby and her bag. Sbahle took her bag and we headed to the door.

Sbahle: Dad called me.

Me: Oh.

Sbahle: He told me you said I don't want to marry you.

Me: Do you want to marry me?

Sbahle: No.

I didn't say anything. I didn't even know why she was telling me that or she just wanted to hurt me. Well I was hurt so her mission was accomplished. Once she was in my car I gave her the baby and I took the driver seat. I drove off. There was silence in the car until we made it to her house. Her mother stood up and she took the baby from me.

Thandeka: Okuhle is home. I love her name. Who gave it to her?

Sbahle: Her father.

Thandeka: Oh. Unlike him. I will take the bags sir.

She faked a smile and took the bags. Sbahle sat down next to her mother. I sat down too.

They looked at the baby. Having Okuhle was a blessing in disguise. She was a part of my life that I never knew I needed. It was only been hours since she arrived and she was making me feel blessed.

Mrs Zuke: Yoh? Hhayi ntombi. Ufuze indoda pho. (I laughed) even the nose. What do you have that says you're Sbahle?

Sbahle: Mama Kwahle hawu.

I smiled and said: I think I am gonna go now. I will come back in the morning to spend time with her.

Mrs Zuke: Where are you going? You're not sleeping here?

Me: No.

Mrs Zuke: The house have many rooms.

Sbahle: No mom let him go.

Mrs Zuke: Ayi Okay.

I said my goodbyes and I left. Even if it doesn't work out between me and Sbahle but I will forever be grateful for the baby that she gave me. At the hotel I ordered food, took a shower and I called my kids. Mesuli answered.

Mesuli: Dad?

Me: Hey guys are you sleeping already?

Mesuli: No we're watching a movie.

Me: Which movie?

Kiara: Uthanda izindaba Mkhulu. (they laughed)

Alupheli: Are you coming back?

Me: No. I will come back on Tuesday.

Alupheli: Why?

Me: I will tell you when I get home. I just wanted to say goodnight.

Them: Goodnight dad.

Me: Thanks.

I hung up the call, I tried to sleep. I slept peaceful.

After midnight I was woken up by the phone ringing. I didn't want to wake up and take it.

But I forced myself. Sbahle was calling.

Me: What's wrong?

Sbahle: The baby is crying. She's been crying since you left but mom managed to get her to sleep. Now she doesn't stop. I don't know what to do now.

Me: Are you crying too?

Sbahle: Samkelo don't make fun of me. I have never had a child before. I don't know what is wrong with her.

Me: Okay. I am coming.

I hung up the call, I changed my pyjamas and I took my car keys. Once I was in my car I drove straight to her house. When I arrived in the house they were all awake. The three of them. The little sister looked annoyed and she was yawning, her mother looked worried while Sbahle herself was crying holding the baby. I went to her.

Me: Give her to me.

She gave me the baby. Thandeka stood up and left.

Me: Did you give her warm water with a little salt and sugar?

Mrs Zuke: No.

Me: Please do it Sbahle.

She nodded and she left. I went to sit down with her. I put her on my lap. I removed the other blanket and I rocked her. I used to see Thandeka doing it to Mesuli and Alupheli. Sometimes I would help her.

Me: Don't cry now baby. I am here. I won't leave you.

Sbahle came back with the water on her bottle I gave it to her. She stopped crying.

Mrs Zuke: For a man I impressed. You had a wife how do you know so much about kids?

Me: I was closely watching everything, though I didn't always help her but I knew how to do things and she taught me some other things because when I took my daughter she could crawl so there wasn't too much work to do.

Mrs Zuke: You raised your daughter?

Me: She had a nanny but I raised her with my stepmother's help. And the boys I raised them with my wife.

Sbahle: Too bad you won't always be here for her.

Mrs Zuke: Sbahle stop being negative.

Sbahle: It's reality mom okay? I was alone and miserable for months. I tried to survive but it was hard. I missed him everyday hoping that he'll call me but he never did not even once. I loved him with everything inside me and I still love him even after he has hurt me. He left us just because I wasn't the wife. Then the baby is just attached to him more than she is to me. Where will he be on the next two months? He'll be with his important kids right? So just because he's here now I am supposed to be happy?

Mrs Zuke: We're not saying be happy Sbahle but accept that he's here. He'll help you.

Sbahle: He'll be here for how long? Two days? I don't think I can do this. It's not for me.

She stood up and she left. I swallowed her words hard. I didn't mean to hurt her, I promised to love and protect her but I did the same thing her previous boyfriend did. I left her for my family after she has loved me when no woman would have, when she has been patient with me when everyone had lost hope. Just like that man took advantage of her kindness and love then he left her for his family. I didn't realise how wrong I was and it wasn't good to see her

hurting.

Mrs Zuke: Don't worry, she'll come around. It's just post stress.

I didn't say anything. I had no other words to say. I just had to act and stop talking too much. Once the baby was asleep Sbahle's mom showed me to her room. She left me. The room was beautiful. I should have been there to help decorate it and paint it. But I guess it didn't matter anymore. I went to the double bed with her. I layed back and put her on my chest.

Me: Your mother will be alright, right now she's stressed but as time goes on she will be fine and you two will be happy bonding together. I will be available for you baby. I am moving next year that way I will be close to you. I love you and you mean everything to me. I don't want you to grow up thinking you're less important compared to your siblings. I love you all the same. There's no difference between you and them. You're my blood and God trusted me with you so I will raise you with love and care. And I promise I will protect you. Princess Ndunakazi the second.

I kissed her forehead. I closed my eyes and I brushed her back.

Sbahle: She's asleep? (I opened my eyes)

Me: Yes.

Sbahle: Okay. I will leave you two.

Me: You can sleep with us. She'll be in the middle.

She nodded and I made space for her. We put the baby in between. We prayed and we turned off the lights leaving the bedside lamp on.

The following day, Okuhle didn't stop crying. We had done everything but she couldn't stop crying. Sbahle was stressed and she couldn't stop crying because the baby was crying. I called my stepmother and I told her that the baby didn't stop crying and she told me what to do.

Me: My stepmother says she must go back home.

Mrs Zuke: Home where?

Me: In my house. My little sister had the same problem. When my stepmother had her kids, she would go to her mom so that she'll help her raise the baby. But with my little sister it wasn't like that because she was always crying so they figured she wanted to be on her father's house. She was alright there.

Sbahle: The last time I was in that house I almost lost my license so I don't think I can go back.

Mrs Zuke: Sbahle there's no other option we have. Are you going to stay here and watch your child cry like this?

Thandeka: Sisi please go. At least you'll stay in the backroom. If they have one. I am sure there's a kitchen bathroom and bedroom.

Mrs Zuke: You have it Samkelo?

Samkelo: Yes it's a four rooms. Well the other one is used by my younger son for his paintings but the other rooms are fine. I will ask them to clean the house.

Mrs Zuke: Sbahle you're going with him?

Sbahle: What other options do I have?

Mrs Zuke: My child it's enough now. Let the anger go. So that you two can raise this child.

Sbahle: I will go pack my things and Okuhle's things.

Sbahle stood up and she went upstairs.

Mrs Zuke: Don't worry she'll be fine.

Thandeka: I don't blame her shame. Let me go and sleep. I didn't sleep last night. You can have a conversation with your son in-law mom. I can see you love him.

Mrs Zuke: Hhayi.

Thandeka went upstairs. I was left with their mother and Okuhle she was trying to sleep.....

As soon as her mother was ready. We said our goodbyes. We passed by the hotel to take my things.... I asked Alondwe to clean the house.... We then drove back home in total silence..

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

We arrived at home, I stepped out of the car and I took the baby from Sbahle.

Sbahle: I am not going inside the main house?

Me: Why not?

Sbahle: You haven't told Alupheli about the baby. Bring her to me. I will go at the back with her.

Me: You really meant that you wanted to stay in back house?

Sbahle: Yes what do you think? You think I want to sleep in your house? No. I don't want to. I didn't say anything further. I went to the back house with her. The door wasn't locked. It was clean and they have changed the bed covers. I put Okuhle on the bed. Her mother walked in with her suitcase.

Sbahle: Please get the other suitcase and the bag.

I nodded and I went to get the bag and the suitcase. I then left her unpacking then I went to the house. The kids were on the lounge watching cartoons. Alondwe was in the kitchen speaking to someone on the phone with the baby on her arms. I greeted the kids and I asked them to pay attention because I wanted to speak to them. I told Sphephile to go and get grandma. They came back.

Mom: What's going on?

Me: Guys. I want to tell you that I came back with Sbahle.

They clapped hands, I tried to stop them but they were too excited. After some time they went silent.

Me: Well Sbahle and I have a baby.

Them: WHAT??

Alupheli stood up and he left us. I sighed.

Mesuli: How old is the baby?

Me: She was born yesterday morning. She's here.

Mom: You travelled with the baby that was born yesterday morning?

Me: There was nothing we could do mom. She couldn't stop crying then my stepmother told me she wants to be in my house, close to her family. My sister did that too so I had to come back with her.

Alondwe: Where is she?

Me: She's with her mom in the back house.

Alondwe: Oh that's why I was cleaning it. Why are they staying there dad?

Me: Sbahle doesn't want to stay in the house.

Alondwe: Oh.

Kiara: Mkhulu I thought you're old.

Me: Well I am not that old.

Kiara: Okay. I am going to see the baby. What's her name Mkhulu?

Me: Her name is Syaphiwa Okuhle.

Kiara smiled and she left. Sphephile and Mesuli followed her.

Alondwe: Let me go and meet my little sister. (they left)

Me: Mom please don't make her life difficult, she already had enough pain, being pregnant and alone.

Mom: If she told you that she's pregnant. She wasn't going to be alone. But don't worry I won't even mix myself with her.

Me: And your granddaughter?

She didn't say anything, I figured she won't like her, well I didn't care anyway. I went

upstairs to Alupheli's room. He was on his bed looking at his photo album. I sat down on the bed.

Me: Why is the baby making you scared?

Alupheli: You will no longer support my dreams because you'll have the baby to worry about. Maybe she'll be a good child than I am then you'll love her more than me. If I want paint and my art tools you'll tell me you don't have money because you have to buy diapers and formula. I know you will no longer pay for my art mentor because you'll have to hire a nanny for the baby. You will love her and her mom more than me. You're left here with me. Alondwe and Mesuli are old now. I am still in high school.

I sighed and said: You will never be a burden to me and I will never fail to look after you. And I will always support your dreams even if you want to draw pictures and paint for a living I will support you because you'll be doing something you love. And all four of you are the same to me. Did I ever treat you guys differently or have favourites? (He shook his head) then I won't start doing it now. Yes the baby will want more attention because she's young but I have done it before two times, you can ask your sister she knows better, there was Mesuli after her, then there was you but I have never treat you guys differently. I love you the same. And I am still going to love you even if your mother is not here with us. So don't worry about anything. You will forever be our last born to me and Thandeka. Then Okuhle is a last born to me and Sbahle okay? Do you understand that?

Alupheli: Yes dad I understand. I love you.

Me: I love you too son. (we hugged each other)

Alupheli: Okay let me go and see baby sister.

I nodded and he left. I then took my phone from my pocket and called Sbahle's mom. She answered.

Mrs Zuke: Ndunakazi.

Me: Yebo mama I wanted to let you know that we arrived safe I don't know if Sbahle has called you.

Mrs Zuke: Yes she has called me mfana wami. Did you guys try to fix things on the road?

Me: No. No one was talking. I don't think she'll ever forgive me. She's angry and I understand her anger.

Mrs Zuke: Just keep on trying, everything will be alright.

Me: Okay. Thanks. Bye.

Mrs Zuke: Bye.

I hung up the call, I just wished it was easier like her mom said. I stood up and I went to them at the back. The baby was on Alupheli's arms.

Alupheli: She looks like me.

Kiara: You're lying she looks like grandpa not you.

Alupheli: But I look like him too.

Mesuli: You're lying you look like our grandfather.

They laughed at him, the baby started crying.

Me: Okay guys, she's still young let's give her space now.

Alondwe: Awu daddy come on.

Me: Yes. Let's go. Sisekelo is crying in the house.

Sbahle: What's the name of the one you're carrying in your arms Alondwe?

Alondwe: He's Sthelo Sothando Kananelo and his sister is Sisekelo Sothando Kamohelo.

Sbahle: They have beautiful names.

Alondwe: Thanks. Let me go. I will see you later.

Sbahle nodded and she left, everyone else followed her. I sat on the bed.

Me: What do you want to eat?

Sbahle: I made a list of the things I want.

Me: You won't eat with us?

Sbahle: No.

Me: You really want nothing to do with me?

She didn't say anything, she just gave me the list. I took it and I went to the house to get my keys.

Me: Kiara let's go buy some groceries.

Kiara: Okay. Mkhulu.

They all stood up without my permission or without me asking them to. I let them be, we left. They helped me buy the groceries, they wanted something in return, I bought it for them and we drove back home.

After Christmas, my brother Njabulo and Phumlani went to Mpumalanga with me. That's where we payed damages for the child. Apparently Sbahle's parents liked me that made me wish it was her who can like me like that. She was still in my house. They were going to leave after three months. That meant Alupheli was going to stay with his sister and Thapelo because I was also going to Johannesburg when it was time for Sbahle to go. January they all left, mom left with them because there was nothing for her to do. I didn't even know why she hated Sbahle that much. She saw the child once and she went to see her because she wanted to make sure that she was mine. I have resigned at work and I was going to start a new job in April in Johannesburg. We found a beautiful house for our family and I was going to sell the one in Durban. By February the house was empty because I moved all the furniture. I only had my bed and the kitchen. The rest of the stuff was gone. Okuhle was growing beautiful by the day and she was an active baby but at least she didn't do what babies normally do.

Sleeping during the day and staying awake at night. She was awake during the day and sleeping at night. I was praying and hoping that she doesn't want to go back to the house because that was going to be a problem. Sbahle was starting to loosen up and that was promising. I was doing everything I can to show her that I love her. I didn't talk much I just did. We raised our daughter together. We helped each other with everything concerning her. Sometimes we would debate about what to do and we would end up using Google. Then we would laugh at our parenting skills. I was falling in love with her everyday and I was afraid that she would never take me back. It was 30th of March, we were leaving the following day. We were going to our new home. Well Sbahle was going to her house. I was in my room chatting to Mesuli on whatsapp. He was telling me something about his girlfriend. A message from Sbahle popped up.

{Sbahle}: You're suppose to be sleeping. I don't want you to sleep on the road, then you'll cause an accident.

{Me}: I have super natural powers. I will never do that. You and princess are in good hands.

{Sbahle}: ....Who are you chatting to anyway because you don't have a girlfriend. Or you have found one.

{Me}: I am typing to her right now just that she doesn't want to admit that she needs me.



{Sbahle}: 5:03 \_\_\_\_\_\*\*that was a voice note she sent\*\*

I listened to it she was singing:\*\*\*\*... I never wanted to need someone. Yeah I wanted to play tough, thought I could do all this on my own. But even superwoman sometimes needs a superman's soul. Help me out of this hell. Your love lifts me up like hellium. Your love lifts me up when I'm down, down, down. When I've hit the ground you all I need\*\*\* I love you Samkelo and you all I need. Your love is everything I need. Please love me forever don't ever leave me again. I love you. I want to trust you again.

I didn't even reply, I got off my bed and I rushed out of the house. I knocked on the door. She

opened the door.

Me: Are you saying you'll marry me? That's the way to love you forever.

She laughed, I smiled and I held closer to me. I kissed her and she kissed me back...

Alondwe Moloji...

We spent the whole December holidays at home. My grandmother was helping me with the kids. Thapelo was currently living with his father and his siblings while they were fixing our house. The lounge and the kitchen furniture burned but the rest of the house was just fine. We wanted to go back to the house by January. Thapelo was taking care of everything while I was home looking after our kids. Everyone was happy and healthy. I can't say much for my father. But hey that's not my story to tell. I was just happy that I had a beautiful baby sister. I can't say much for Alupheli but then again that's not my story to tell. My kids were growing up beautiful by the day. It was kind of funny that my daughter was like her father and my son was like me. I loved them so much and Sphephile was very fond of them. Kiara was always with us because she wanted to be with the babies. My mother-in-law was sent to a facility. She couldn't even talk. I went to see her once and I didn't even know what to say to her. It was really sad to see her like after all those years of her being high end mighty. After new year's Eve my children and I went back home. My father had also bought a house on a different neighbourhood but not that far from us. He sold the house in Durban. My family, Dad's family, Uyathandwa, Kiara and Uncle Andile's family we were living on the same province. We were just one big happy family.

THREE YEARS LATER...

It's been three good years, after four months I went back to work and Thapelo started a new job. He didn't want to go to his old job. On the same neighbourhood, we bought a new house and let go of the old house because it was too small for our children. They were very naughty. Sphephile and them didn't get along that well because they were always messing up his room and drawing his school books. He always forgot to lock his room and every chance the kids get they would mess up his room to piss him off. And to think he loved them when they were young but they were just naughty they didn't care about being liked. Our room was always locked because I didn't have time for their games. They were going to a daycare. Thapelo and I were happy with our family. God was really great to us. We had normal couples fights not those big challenges his mom put us through. I was really grateful that our love had survived it all. I knew that there was nothing that was going to tear us apart.

It was a Saturday morning, July. I was dressing up the twins. I was supposed to be happy because it was my big day. My happy day but I was angry. I have been angry for the past six months and the anger didn't want to go away.

Me: If you're busy running around, I will leave you here. I won't play games with you.

Sthelo: Ha ke batle ho tsamaea. (I don't want to go)

Sisekelo: Le 'na (Me too)

Me: THAPELO!!

He opened the door after a few minutes.

Thapelo: These two ain't dressed up yet?

Me: You can see. Dress them up.

Thapelo: I am busy right now.

Me: So what should I do? I should run around with a big stomach running after two naughty children?

Thapelo: They are your kids including that one in your stomach so dress them up.

Me: I told you to –

Thapelo: You told me to withdraw because the problem you had was no more and you weren't on birth control but I lied and said I did withdraw while I didn't. Yes! You've been

telling me that for the past six months. Don't you get tired?

Me: So you're happy now?

Thapelo: Yes. I wanted another child and I wasn't going to ask you because you were going to refuse.

Me: Mxm I am going to fetch my car alone.

Sthelo: Sothando we're going to fetch mom's car. Let's get dressed now.

Sisekelo: You're lying. Sothando.

They called each other "Sothando" that was their common name.

Thapelo: Eish guys please dress up. We are going to fetch mom's car. If you don't want to go we will leave you. Please get dressed.

Them: Really?

Thapelo: Yes.

Sisekelo: I want to see you leaving us.

Me: Mxm!

I threw their clothes on the floor and I went to my bedroom. I called an uber. These kids were driving me nuts. I wasn't supposed to be pregnant. It was a mistake, okay to me it was a mistake. Maybe to God it wasn't. I was very angry when I found out. I told Thapelo that the twins were our last babies and he agreed. So like in total I have six kids just like my mom. Two dead kids and four alive just like my mom. It was frustrating how my life was but I suppose one thing that was different was I never got divorced. I was praying that my daughter doesn't resemble her father again or even worse my mother-in-law. Oh God I can faint.

Thapelo: So you going to leave them behind?

Me: I am leaving all of you. You don't want to dress them up right? Soon it will be ten o'clock. So I am leaving.

Thapelo: You can't go without us and you'll be angry at me until when?

Me: Until I give birth. And this one better not look like you.

I took my bag and I left. Sphephile was in his room. I was really leaving all of them.

Sphephile was 13years doing grade 8 and the twins were 3 years old. I was seven months pregnant with a baby girl.

The cab dropped me off at the Mercedes Benz dealership. I closed my eyes and smiled. I couldn't really believe that I was taking my dream car, I was actually buying it, from my first year in varsity I had the picture of the maroon AMG g63. Everytime when things get tough I would look at it and say to myself one day I will drive you and you'll be mine not borrowed, not bought by someone else but you'll be all mine. And I would continue studying. When the salesman took me to my car, I had my tears of joy running down my cheeks.

Salesman: It's beautiful hey?

Me: You know I can't believe it's actually mine.

Salesman: You better believe it mam. I have the papers you need to sign with me.

I heard a tiny voice: Yoh! Papa these cars are beautiful.

I looked back and it was my family. I smiled, shaking my head and I signed the papers.

Sisekelo: I can't believe you left us behind.

Me: Seo ha o batla hore ke etse?

Sthelo: Run around with us until you catch us and dress us up. Then we go together.

Sphephile: Yeah leaving us behind was not cool at all. Not sure about running around though.

Thapelo: Animtshele. (tell her)

Siseko: Somtshela namuhla, uzophinda futhi, ayi akezwa lo muntu lo. Ayi. (we will tell her today and she'll do the same thing. She doesn't listen)

Me: Okay. Sorry. What do you think about my car?

They all clapped hands. I smiled. I was so happy.

Sthelo: Dad you're no longer taking us to school. (we laughed)

Thapelo: You know I will drive the car too.

Sphephile: I will drive it too.

Me: Sphephile! No baby. That won't happen.

Sisekelo: Sorry Sphephile.

Me: Okay. Let's take a ride. You didn't come with your car?

Thapelo: No we took a cab.

Me: Okay let's go.

They gave me the keys and I opened the car for them. The kids were very excited more than I was. I turned back to my husband.

Thapelo: So what do you say now?

Me: I have finally made it in life.

Thapelo: Yes. I am proud of you my love.

Me: You've been with me since day one, that high school annoying boyfriend.

Thapelo: (laughing) You were also annoying.

We laughed and hugged each other. He kissed me and I kissed him back.

Twins: We want to go please.

Me: They are too forward are you sure they are our kids?

Thapelo: No. I think they are adopted.

Me: Lebogang won't be like them right?

Thapelo: No. She'll be good and quiet like daddy.

Me: No she should be like me.

Thapelo: Then she'll be like them.

Me: Awu Thapelo.

I hit him and he laughed. The kids laughed too because he was pretending to cry like a woman. I stopped, he smiled and kissed me.

Me: I love you. And I will always love you.

Thapelo: I love you now and I will love you in the next life.

I hugged him and he hugged me back. Our love had survived and thrive against all odds. And it will continue to shine.

From ALONDWE SAMKELISWA OWAMI NDUNAKAZI MOLOI....

Themba Smith....

It's been a long journey, life has been amazing, rocky, painful, tiring and mostly everything that has happened in my life I am grateful for it. I remember one day Thandeka was teaching Uyathandwa to learn from good and bad things. No matter how bad something can be there's always a lesson. That is what happened with me. All the bad things I have done and bad things that have happened I have a lesson in the end to let God handle it all because evil consumes me fast when I am angry.

I left Kimberly to die and I never went back to check her body. I asked someone to clean it up for me. Working with Muzi made me believe I can be good again and it made me proud of myself. I found love again, Cikizwa and I fell in love. I didn't look far for love. It was just near me. I married her and I had a complete family again. My daughter Sisipho, my last born son Lubanzi Sean Smith from Cikizwa. Uyathandwa relocated with Kiara because of work. I was happy again and for real this time. Thandeka showed me I am capable of love. I can love and I believed that the first time.

There's a lesson in everything. You just have to open your mind and be willing to learn.

With love from Themba Ethan Smith....

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*Uyathandwa Smith....

After loosing my mother I thought everything was going to fall apart. It looked like

everything was going to fall apart. It looked like her family was going to fall apart but God had other plans for us. He gave us Thandeka the second. She pulled everyone over and brought them together. My mom's family was one again. I was happy that my biological father found love again and I had a baby brother. I was growing in the business world and I was positive that I was going places. I had my first company and there were many more to come. I had a house in Johannesburg I was living with my daughter and the maid. Her mother never came through and she always wanted to know who her mother was. I was trusting God that one day I will be able to explain it to her. Kiara was my everything, my joy and my only true love. I didn't want to date or get married. Love is costly, it was enough for me to love my family. I wanted to focus on being a better man for my daughter. Love is not only marriage and dating. Love is everything and there's love in everything, love everywhere.

With love from: Uyathandwa Ethan Junior Smith...

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*Mesuli Ndunakazi.....

When my mom died, I didn't just lose her I also lost my relationship with Britney. It was out of fear that my relationship with her failed. And I told myself that I will not love anytime soon but I learnt never to say never! I found love again. Monica was my love and everything else. My life in another country was great and as much as I thought it was going to be hard without my family, Monica became my family. She helped me follow my dreams and never to give up on them. After obtaining my qualifications I married her and I decided to start a family in London. I wanted to be close to my family but the Bible says a man will leave his mother and father to build a house of his own.

I learnt from the best never give up on your dreams. Push hard. Whatever you might be going through it will be alright, it's not the end of the world.

With love from Mesuli Scelokuhle Ndunakazi...

\*\*\*\*\*

Alupheli Ndunakazi.....

God gave me a second mother, I thought everything was going to go down the drain when my father was in pain. My mom's death was painful to everyone but mostly to my father. But God always has something in stored for everyone of us. My father supported my dreams and I finally made my dreams come true to be a well known artist. Not just in South Africa. Well I didn't have stable relationships because I was always on the road. No woman wanted a man who's never home. But my sugar mama always said "God will give you someone similar to you" And in Australia I found someone who wanted to see the world with me. I only had a house in Johannesburg which I spent a few months in. There was more out there, more life, more happiness, more hope, more dreams and more love. Everywhere I go my Lilly was there with me. And my partner in everything Sphephile. Settling down and having kids was a last thing on our minds.

There's more to life than just what you see and what you think. One day you'll get to see it all....

With Love from Alupheli uThando Lwethu Ndunakazi...

\*\*\*\*\*

Sphephile Khumalo.....

I asked my mother to give me my father's surname. She then allowed him to pay damages for me and I was given my father's surname. After obtaining my degree in Language practice. I joined my uncle Alupheli. We travelled the world and I could speak more than ten country languages. My mom was sad when I left her but my father and stepfather convinced her to let me go. She let me go so that I can be my own person. I was living the life I never thought I will live. And it was great with my partner in everything. My uncle.

Spread your wings and fly...  
With love from Sphephile Samkelo Khumalo....

\*\*\*\*\*

Kiara Smith...

I am living with my father, still in school. I am happy with him. He treats me like a princess but my wish is to see my mother. I just want to understand why she left me and I never saw her not even once. I didn't even know her name because dad didn't want to talk about her. Nobody wanted to talk about her. I wish one day she can realise that I am worth her love... A father's love is the greatest same as the mother's love. But we do need both....

With Love from Kimberly Uyabongeka Smith....

\*\*\*\*\*

Samkelo Ndunakazi....

It's been years and everything has been rocky and good. God is great all the times. I had a great life with my family. Everyone has grown up and doing their own thing.

Sbahle: For a man in 60 years you look handsome.

Me: I have a good bone, I have a ten year old son.

Sbahle: No that means I have the good bone. I carried him.

Me: At least him and his sister they're still going to be around.

Sbahle: Yeah everyone else has left. But we're seeing them today. It's a big day for us all.

Me: Yes. By now I must have about ten grandchildren and maybe two great grandchildren but I only have seven grandchildren and they all live with their parents.

Sbahle: Being old sucks hey?

Me: Yes but with a wife like you I feel young everyday. Like yesterday that bloomy orchid you said we should try. I didn't feel like I have turned 60 years.

Sbahle: That's the most exciting sex position we ever did.

Me: Yeah. It's exciting.

There was a knock on the door. It was my last born Sgcino.

Sgcino: Mom and dad everyone is here. Please come.

Sbahle: We're coming baby.

Sgcino: Okay.

Sbahle: You're good now. Let me fix myself.

Me: Okay. Kiss me first.

I smiled and she kissed me. She went to the mirror to fix herself. I wore my shoes. We finished and we went downstairs. The house was full. And there was a lot of noise.

Me: Okay! Okay! Slow down!

Them: DAD!

They all stood up, I didn't even know who to hug first. I had a big family.

Me: Okay. Can we go in order. I will start with my first child. Alondwe and her family.

Alupheli: Come on Alondwe lives in Cape Town, just around the corner.

Alondwe: Musa ukuphapha wena nkawu. I haven't seen my dad in months.

They laughed and I hugged Alondwe first, handshake, and shoulder hugged her husband, hugged the twins and Lebogang their last born.

Sbahle: I think once you've got our hug you should go outside and start sitting on the table.

Them: Yeah.

Alondwe and her family left. We were having a family gathering. It was Christmas Eve. I went to Mesuli.

Me: Look at my scientist and your family.

Mesuli: Dad it's been a long time.

Me: Yes. You should come back home now.

He laughed and we hugged each other. I went to his wife.

Me: My daughter in-law, thank you for taking care of him. You have done well.

Monica: Thank you. Baba.

Me: I see you're learning the language.

Monica: Yebo.

I smiled and I hugged her. I hugged Mesuli's sons.

Me: How old are you now guys?

Matt and Marcus: We're seven years old grandpa.

They were not twins but they were born on the same year. Matt in January and Marcus in December.

Me: I am happy to see you.

Them: We're happy to see you too grandpa.

Mesuli and his family left. I went to Alupheli, Lilly and Sphephile.

Me: So Sphephile is your son now?

Alupheli: You know dad he's been my son since day one. We're inseparably.

Me: Lilly when are guys having children?

Lilly: We just got married last year I think we are still going to travel some more.

Me: Alupheli?

Alupheli: Don't worry dad, we will come back home if I want to have kids. Right now we're not ready. And we have our son here.

Me: The son who is old enough. He should be starting his own family by now.

Sphephile: Grandpa please. I am still enjoying to be the only child. Let me be please.

We laughed and I hugged them. Uyathandwa and Kiara were in Durban with Themba.

Me: Thandeka and Mpendulo should I hug you?

Thandeka: I don't want your hug Samkelo. But I will hug my sister of course.

Me: Some people will never change.

She rolled her eyes and went to her sister. I shoulder hugged Mpendulo.

Me: We thank God that you have finally managed to make her pregnant.

Mpendulo: I suffer everyday for it.

We laughed and I hugged his son Mlamuli. They all went outside.

Syaphiwa: We are not getting hugs because we stay here. That's unfair.

Sgcino: Don't be jealous. You hug dad everyday.

Sbahle: Leave your sister alone Sgcino. She can never get enough of her daddy's hug.

Syaphiwa: Please tell him mom.

Me: Okay. My princess let me hug you.

She smiled and I hugged her. I hugged her brother too. They went outside.

Sbahle: We have a big family hey?

Me: Yeah. I can't believe they have grown. They have their own families now.

Sbahle: Thandeka must be proud wherever she is.

I smiled, nodded and I hugged my wife. We went to join the kids. Andile and his family were in Nigeria visiting his wife's family. His son and daughter also had their own families. My mom was living with my sister Simthande after my sister lost her husband. She was really old. She ended up accepting my relationship with Sbahle when I married her.

We prayed for the food and we started eating. Everyone seemed happy and I was grateful for everything that God has done for me over the years.

Alupheli: Did the kids pass? Syaphiwa?

Syaphiwa: I don't have a failing gene shame.

Everyone laughed, Syaphiwa and Alupheli always had a quarel, they didn't really get along.

Syaphiwa was always troubling Alupheli when she was young.

Me: You're a Ndunakazi baby and we don't give up nor fail. Remind him.

Others: Yes!

Lebogang: I am a Moloi and I thrive against all odds!

Thapelo: Yes baby.

Alondwe: That's my daughter everyone. (we laughed)

Me: She looks just like her grandmother.

Alondwe: Dad please don't start.

Some of us laughed because Alondwe hated that her daughter looked a little like Thapelo's mom. Just that Lebogang was beautiful and lovable. There were those little things that looked alike to her grandmother.

Me: We're really happy that you're all here and that you have grown so much. You're all living your lives uniquely.

Alupheli: Yes. (we laughed)

Me: But what matters is that you're all happy.

Mesuli: You know what they say happy parents means –

Them: Happy children!

Sthelo and Sisekelo: And happy grandchildren. (we laughed)

Sbahle: Through it all praises goes to God.

Us: Amen.

Thapelo: And I am more than happy, more than I have ever been that after five years of marriage my friend has managed to score the goal. (we all laughed)

Thandeka: Ungaphaphi Thapelo please. (don't be too forward)

Mlamuli: Yes I am having a baby brother people!

We laughed and clapped hands for him.

Sbahle: How did you manage to do it Mpendulo?

Mpendulo: Well I thought I could keep up with her injection dates but I failed. Then she changed the method because she was getting fat. You know how you guys like your bodies slim?

Sbahle: Yes.

Mpendulo: Yeah. So she was taking pills. I just switched the pills and I aimed for a goal. I finally score!

We laughed and I looked at Thandeka, she looked really angry. It was very funny because she just didn't want kids.

Monica: This is great. And all of this is love.

Us: Yes.

Lilly: To family and love!

Us: To family and love!

Family is love, love is family. Family is power. We fight for each other, if needed we become selfish for each other. We put each others needs first. We fight but in the end through it all we stand together. We're not perfect because no family is perfect but we are all we got. And we will continue to stand together.

With love from Samkelo Matthew Ndunakazi...

THE END.....