

## A Love Stained By Deception



### Introduction:

It all started when he went away on business trips more often than usual. At first, I brushed it off, but he became consistent. I wanted to question him but hey, I'm a housewife... What do I know about business trips and his line of work? I love him; I love him so much I can't put it into words. When he asked for my hand in marriage which was there most unconversational proposal ever, but I was over the moon and it was magical or at least I believe it was even though I ask him to ask me again. He was quick to put a ring on it and before I knew it we were starting our own family. I wanted to continue with my studies, but he refused saying that a wife belongs at home "You need to take care of the house." He said, and I rolled with it. He never disrespected me, and it has always been him and I against the world.

His father offered him a high paying position in one of his companies in Pretoria and that's when it all came crushing down.

The dream was forgotten. We got a beautiful house in Groenkloof and he took care of everything, from finances to utilities, you know name it, he met my every need. I enjoyed the joys of been married and to top it all off, I was paid for staying at home and taking care of my duties. He gave me his bank cards; he bought me a car, not just any car but a BMW M2 Coupe. He was a blessing but then he made new friends...

Let me introduce myself, I'm Okuhle Maseko married to my soulmate, Lwanda Maseko. Mother to Bontle Maseko. This is my story and how I've suffered at the hands of deception.

1.

OKUHLE:

Let's us go back to where it all started, Mpumalanga, Emalahleni. This was where I was born and bred, I stayed with both my parents, my brother, Luthando (16) and my sister, Mbalenhle (13), I was the eldest. Tasbet Park was where we resided, in a 5 bedroom house. Life was a bliss, we were not well off but my parents could afford our lifestyle.

It was the beginning of a New Year and it meant I advanced to the next grade, which was grade 12. When I brought my report card home in December, my dad couldn't be more proud. You are my pride and joy, he would say. I didn't live to impress my dad but it didn't hurt to put my best foot forward when it came to anything that was related to school.

"Big sis..." Lu walked into my room and threw himself on my bed.

"Lu, no! Get out!!!" I yelled at him. "Mom!!!!!" I screamed at the top of my lungs, Lu was a pain in the arse.

"Whoa! Chill sisi, come on now no need to call umagrezza." He

said and I clicked my tongue getting out of bed.

“Lu I swear if you don’t get out of here, you will not live to see another day!” I said giving him a cold look.

“Okay... I guess I should leave.” He raised his hands up walking to the door. “I guess you don’t want to hear the message I have from Lwanda...” He walked out.

“Lu wait!!!” I chased after him and he ran to the seating room.

“Hey, hey, kids... slow your roll!” Mom yelled from the kitchen. I ran into the seating room and jumped on top of him.

“What did he say?” I asked bouncing on him.

“Guys! Really? Can’t you see you’re making a noise? Some of us are watching TV.” Enhle said rolling her eyes. Lu and I laughed at her, gosh! She can be such a teenager sometimes.

“Aw! Baby sis, what are you watching? Cartoons?” Lu laughed out loud. It was always a pleasure picking on Enhle simply because she was humble at heart and never put on a fight.

“You know what? Forget, I’ll go watch this programme in mom’s room.” She got up clicking her tongue.

“Works all the time!” I said and turned my attention back to Lu

“So? What did he say?” I asked. Lu and I go to the same school, St Thomas Aquinas School and so did Lwanda back then. Enhle goes to Curro, why they had to send her to such an expensive school, I had no idea.

“But you kicked me out of your room sis.” He said, channel hopping.

“That was before you mentioned Lwanda, so out with it.” Lu and I were close, we’re inseparable. We came from the same womb after all.

The story with Lwanda was that, he had been asking me out since like forever and I’ve been rejecting him. Yes, he continued to date other girls but he would still try his luck with me. It was when he was doing matric that he stopped wooing me but asked to be my friend instead. Obviously I said yes to that, who wouldn’t want to be friends with a senior? I enjoyed his company and we grew

closer together, I began to develop deeper feelings for him. Of course, I couldn't tell him that because I was scared of rejection. I loved him from afar, he got a girlfriend and it didn't sit well with me but I had to accept my reality. He went on to study BCom Accounting at UJ and we saw less of each other. He would come to visit during recess but it wasn't the same like seeing him every day.

When the schools closed for the December holidays last year he told me he was coming to visit but then he and his family went away on holiday. We communicated over the phone but I missed his presence more than anything. He told me that he has broken things off with his girlfriend of 2 years because he still wanted to pursue something with me, this was on the 31st of December and that was music to my ears. I didn't tell him I felt the same way because I was playing hard to get, that's when he started communicating with Lu. He ceased all kinds of communication with me because he wanted to "get over" me.

"So are you going to tell me?" I asked. Persistence was one of my best character traits, if I wanted something and it was proving to be a challenge, I would not give up until I got it.

"Well I know that he is coming back today and he would love to see you. His words, not mine." He said focusing on the TV.

"Are you sure?" My heart was dancing, I couldn't be happier. I haven't seen him since last year October.

"Yes!!! Can you let it go now?"

"Of course, thank you little brother." I kissed him on the cheek and he was quick to wipe my kiss off. I walked to the kitchen to help mom out with breakfast.

"Mother..." I said walking into the kitchen. She smiled at me.

"I don't have money Okuhle yoh!" She said giggling.

"Ah! I'm so hurt, why would you think I came to ask for money? I merely want to help you with breakfast." I said shaking my head.

"I know you too well and since when do you help with breakfast?" She asked raising her eyebrow.

“Because I need some motherly advice with regards to a boy problem.” I said in a lowered tone and she looked at me shocked. I had never had “the talk” with my mother, I learned everything from school so I’m guessing me coming to her for advice about boys shocked her a bit.

“You want to talk to me about boys?” She asked. I guess this was hard to believe.

“Not boys but a particular boy I’m slowly falling for.” I looked down embarrassed.

“Okay... Uhm... yeah sure, why not. Who is this boy?” She asked. Phew! At least she didn’t curse me out, you know how black parents are.

“Well his name is Lwanda, he has been asking me out since I was in grade 7.” I said.

“Grade 7 huh? Wow! Times have changed.” She said shaking her head.

“Don’t worry, in grade 7 I was solely focused on my books. He was persistent mom and when I was in grade 10, he was in Matric we became friends and it was then I think I started to develop feelings for him.” I sat on one of the bar stools and got comfortable.

“So he is three years older than you, which means he is in varsity now and has his life figured out. Mhmm... Continue.” She placed everything on the dining room table, getting ready to call everyone to come have breakfast.

“Age is beside the point mother and I’m doing matric this year so I also have my life figured out. I love him mom, I mean he broke up with his girlfriend of 2 years because he wants to be with me. That should count for something right?” I’m desperate to hear mom say that I should go for it. I really, really hoped she would understand my situation.

“My child, it’s amazing that you’re exploring these things. And it makes me happy that you’re comfortable enough to come to me and talk about these things but I would fail you as a mother if I

told you that this Lwanda is your soulmate. Honey, he is in Varsity and you're still in high school, your maturity mentally is not at the same level. He is thinking about settling down, getting a good paying job and all those kind of things and you're thinking Varsity, what you want to study next year, where you want to study. He is thinking future, long term. You're thinking on your plan of action for the next 12 months, short term. Baby please, I need you to focus on school, if he loves you then he will wait for you. Now, go call your sister and tell her that breakfast is ready, we'll talk more about this some other time." She said and left me in the kitchen with a hard pill to swallow. This woman didn't understand where I was coming from. Of course, I was still going to focus on school. And 3 years age difference was not that much of a bigger deal. Because of my mom's advice, that was how I became a rebellious child. I vowed from that day onward not to listen to what my mother or father said about my life and how I lived it.

OKUHLE:

TWO MONTHS LATER

It was towards the end of March and the schools were closing. The first term was not that much of a challenge, a little hiccups here and there but I believe I did well, of course the report card will attest to that. My phone rang on the sideboard and I smiled getting up from the bed, I knew who that was because he had made it a habit to call me every morning before I got out of bed. "Good morning..." I answered with a huge smile on my face. "My queen, how are you this morning?" He asked in a seductive tone. I knew nothing about being turned on but Lwanda's voice did things to me.

"I'm good now that I'm talking to you. How are you doing?" I asked.

"I'm ecstatic. You're still coming to visit me right?" The excitement



in his voice was impossible to miss. I told him that I would like to come visit him in Joburg during the March holidays and he didn't object. Instead, he had been telling me about what he planned to do with me as soon as I arrived. I was excited, I have to admit but mom was going to be a problem.

"Of course. You know that that is all we've been talking about so I wouldn't miss it for the world." I said.

I heard a soft knock on the door and it could only be one person, Enhle. When mom knocked, she shouted out my name and Lu never knocked, he just barged into my room like he owned the place.

"Look babe, I have to go. I'll see you tomorrow."

"I can't wait." He said. I blushed. Mom didn't know what she was talking about. This was love I tell you.

"Bye." I said and hung up. I got out of the bed and opened the door smiling.

"Morning Enhle..." I greeted her with a smile. What can I say? It was a beautiful morning after all.

"You can stop smiling now, you look awkward." She said rolling her eyes. Miss attitude got to me sometimes.

"What do you want?" I asked. She clicked her tongue and walked away slowly.

"Mom is calling you." She said walking into her bedroom. I stood at the door shaking my head, Enhle was a special case I tell you. I went to the bathroom to brush my teeth first before going to mom.

"Morning big sis." Lu said entering the bathroom.

"My goodness, whatever happened to privacy? Lu you need to stop!" I said clearly annoyed by him.

"Whoa! Somebody didn't get a good morning text." He said and laughed. I rinsed my mouth and playfully slapped him before walking out. Lu didn't respect me and that needed to change. I knocked on my mom's bedroom door before letting myself in.

"Mommy..." I said softly. She was getting ready for work. She turned and looked at me.

"Morning baby, how are you this morning?" She asked with a

smile on her face. Okay, I'll pretend that was not awkward at all.

"I'm good mom and you?" I responded.

"Come sit for second. I want us to talk about something." She said.

"Now?" I asked, "I need to get ready for school." That was not the time to have a mother - daughter talk.

"I won't take too much of your time." She said. "Please honey, I know you like being punctual but this can't wait." She pleaded.

Obviously, I couldn't refuse. She was my mother.

"Okay, I guess I can spare a minute or 2." I sat on top of the bed and she came and sat next to me holding my hand in the process.

"Uhm. Baby I need to ask you something and I want you to be honest with me." She said and I nodded.

"Mom, where are you taking this?" I asked.

"Look baby, I have picked up a change in you and your behaviour lately and I was wondering if you are sexually active? [I opened my eyes wide] Don't get me wrong, I just wanted to find out if you are sexually active or not and that if you are, you're practicing safe sex." She nervously said. It must have taken a lot of courage for her to ask me that.

"Uhm... Mother, I'm still a virgin, just to get that out of the way.

And don't worry, you didn't take me to a private school only for me to be dumb enough not to practice safe sex. They teach us about these things and I wouldn't dream of disappointing you and dad in anyway." I said and she heaved a huge sigh of relief.

"That's good to know." She said.

"Can I be excused? Thando's mom will be here any minute now."

I said getting up from the bed.

"Yes, of course. Thank you for your honesty." She said. I gave her a hug "I love you." She said.

"I love you too." I smiled at her. My mom was the best, strict at times but I knew that she always meant well. I made my way to the door, mom really did care about us.

"Wait..." She said. I turned around slowly.

"Yeah..." She reached for a packet of condoms from her



handbag.

“I want you to have these...” I looked at her awkwardly, was this woman crazy? Did she not hear me say that I was a virgin?

“O-kay... Why are you giving me condoms?” I asked raising my eyebrow.

“I just want you to be safe. I have already given a pack to your brother so I thought that I should give you one too.” She said forcefully handing me the pack of condoms. I looked at them and chuckled a bit.

“You don’t believe that I’m not sexually active? What are you insinuating mom?” I asked displeased by this. Why would she give me condoms if she knew that I still had my V-card?

“Baby girl, boys can be persuasive and it’s easy to fall prey to their manipulative tactics. I’m happy that you’re not sexually active but eventually you will reach a stage where you’ll feel that you’re ready and I think it is in your best interest that when that time comes you’re better prepared.” She said trying to convince me.

“Mom I don’t think this is necessary. Boys are there ones who are supposed to have condoms with them. I’m not going to carry these around, sorry.” I threw the pack on the bed and walked out. Mom was really losing it, her obsession with me was getting out of hand.

I got ready for school and before I knew it Thando’s mom was at the gate waiting for Lu and I. Enhle left with mom every day.

“Lu let’s go!!!” I yelled out to him. I walked out and went to the car.

“Good Morning...” I greeted as I got in.

“Morning dear, where is your brother?” Thando’s mom asked.

“You know him, he is always running late.” I said. We waited for Lu for a good 10 minutes until he emerged from the house.

“Sorry I’m late.” He said getting in.

“Like always.” Thando said rolling her eyes. I laughed, Lu hated it when he disappointed Thando. If I didn’t know any better, I’d say that he had a little crush on my bestie. We drove in comfortable silence until we got to school.

“Thank you Mrs Nkuna.” I said getting off. Thando and I walked

into the school yard, we were always on time, meaning we always had a chance to catch up before school started.

“Did he call?” Thando asked with a goofy smile.

“Yes friend and he still wants me to come visit.” I said blushing. I had never been this certain of a guy before, I was totally consumed by what I felt deep down.

“But do you think it’s a good idea to go visit a guy for a whole week? What are you going to tell your mom?” She asked.

“That’s where you come in. You’re going to visit your dad at the Vaal right?”

“Yeah but I’m only leaving on Monday.” She said.

“It doesn’t matter, we just need to tell my mom that I’m going with you to the Vaal. I know she’ll agree because she knows we’re close and she trusts you.” I smiled at her.

“Okuhle I don’t think that’s a good idea. Who do you know in Joburg? What if he chases you away? Anything can go wrong.” She shook her head. “Can’t he come this side instead?” She asked.

“We won’t have privacy if he comes this side. Please friend, I need this. Do me this one solid and I’ll owe you one?” I begged her. I really wanted to go to Joburg and Thando was my only hope of getting mom to agree.

“Fine!!! I hope I won’t regret this.” She said rolling her eyes.

“You’re the best.” I gave her a hug and she clicked her tongue.

“I hope you’re not planning on losing your virginity to this guy.” She remarked.

“Of course not. What do you take me for? He’ll wait a good 6 months before he gets anywhere near my cookie.” I said laughing. Thando needed to trust me, I wouldn’t give up my v-card to a guy I had been dating for like a month and a half.

The siren went off and it was time to put the first term to bed.

3.

OKUHLE.

It was finally Saturday and I woke up at the speed of light, the excitement was just too much and it couldn't keep me in bed. My bags had already been packed and all I could think about was Lwanda and the joys of being with him with no parental supervision. It was already past 06:30 AM, I had long taken a bath, which I took my time of course and I got dressed in a simple summer dress with brown gladiator sandals. I took my bags and placed them next to the kitchen door and started with breakfast, I was beyond happy and my family deserved to share in that happiness.

"Somebody woke up on the right side of the bed..." Enhle said walking into the kitchen.

"What can I say, it's a beautiful morning." I was humming my favourite song and dancing to the rhythm in my head. Enhle looked at me and shook her head.

"You know Okuhle, I might be 13 but I'm not dumb. Are you even going to the Vaal?" She asked with her left eyebrow raised. I stopped dancing and gave her the evil eye. Her big mouth would make mom question this trip.

"Enhle what is your problem? I'm just happy that I don't have to spend a week in this boring place. So, a little excitement wouldn't kill anyone, now would it?" I snapped. "You need to keep your mouth shut if you know what's good for you." I said sternly and continued with breakfast. Enhle was the golden child and just one word from her would turn this whole thing around.

"Fine, I'll shut my mouth but don't think mom won't find out about your little white lie." She poured juice from the fridge and went to the sitting room. I set the table in the dining room, everything looked just as I imagined. I guess I would be scoring points with Lwanda if I did the cooking and the cleaning during my stay. I was lazy but I won't show him that. He needed to know that I'm domesticated as well.

“Morning angel, mmm... the aroma in here is appetizing.” Dad walked in holding a newspaper.

“I thought I should leave you guys with something to remember me by.” I smiled “Enhle, breakfast is ready!!!” I called out to her. “How long will you be gone for? I’m going to miss you. You know, you bring the family together.” He said with his eyes focused on the newspaper.

“Well I’ll be back on Friday, if not Saturday.” I said.

“Friday, we agreed on Friday.” Mom said walking into the dining room.

“But mom...” I sulked.

“No honey, you’re already going to spend the entire week there. You’re coming back on Friday and that’s final!” She took a seat right next to dad. I wanted to argue this Friday thing but I knew when to back down from an argument.

“Morning family, hehehe... We’re surely going to die of food poisoning.” Lu walked in causing all of us to laugh because of his remark.

“Well little brother if you didn’t know, I’m actually a good cook.” I said.

“Oh... You don’t have to convince me.” He snickered. Trust Lu to make me second guess anything I did in life.

“Where is Enhle?” Mom asked. I just rolled my eyes.

“Can we eat?” I asked. Enhle needed to grow up and mom had to stop babying her.

“Go get her Okuhle, we have to eat as a family.” Dad said looking at me with a smile. I got up and dragged myself to the sitting room and she was watching her cartoons.

“We’re waiting for you.” I said standing at the door.

“Yeah, I’m coming.” She said with her eyes focused on the TV. I walked in and switched off the TV.

“Now Enhle!!!” I yelled. She’s got attitude this one and God forbid one of these good days I would slap the attitude right out of her.

“Gosh! Must you always be this rude towards me?” She got up

and threw the cushions on the floor with anger. I walked back to the dining area and she followed with tears in her eyes. Drama queen, gosh!

“Baby, what’s wrong?” Mom asked.

“Nothing...” She said. We ate breakfast in perfect harmony, there was a light conversation between mom, dad and Lu. I was focused on my phone chatting with Lwanda.

Lwanda: What time are you getting here? The anxiety is surely going to kill me.

Me: Soon my love. As soon as mom is done she’ll drop me off at Thando’s and I’ll catch a taxi from her house to the taxi rank.

Lwanda: Remember, as soon as the taxi passes Eastgate Mall you must let me know.

Me: Yes of course. I won’t get lost I’m a big girl.

We continued to chat until breakfast was concluded. Mom left to go get ready, dad had somewhere to go to and I was now watching TV with Lu and Enhle.

“So when are you coming back?” Lu asked.

“On Friday, it was supposed to be Saturday but you know your mom.” I said. I was getting anxious and it felt as if mom was taking forever.

“Are you really going to the Vaal?” He asked.

“What’s with you two? Yes, I’m going to the Vaal. I’ll take pictures if you don’t believe me.” I stood up and left, they were busy raising suspicions and I was afraid that I might not be able to keep up with the lie. Mom came to the kitchen with her handbag looking gorg...

“Hey, you’re somebody’s wife; you shouldn’t be looking that gorgeous in his absence.” I said laughing. She playfully slapped my hand laughing as well.

“I might be married but that does not mean I must start looking like a magogo. That’s a definite no, my husband still needs to lust after me.” She said checking herself out on the door of the fridge.

“Mhmm... I see.” She was definitely looking the part.

“Okay, I’m ready. Let’s go.” She led the way to the door and I followed after her. It was finally happening, I was going to spend the week with the love of my life.

Within a few minutes mom parked next to Thando’s house. I looked out and smiled. I was just a few seconds away from getting away with this lie. This was a proud moment.

“Baby please behave yourself. Represent yourself well and no lazing around.” She said.

“Of course, I wouldn’t want to disappoint you like that.” I said with a huge grin on my face.

“You’re really excited about leaving hey. Is there more to this visit than you’re letting on?” She asked bringing her eyebrows together. Shit! If I continued like that, I would blow my cover.

“Not at all mom. I’m just happy to be going out of town for a while.” I said, losing the smile.

“Okay. Please apologize to Thando’s mom for me I’m in a bit of a rush. Call me when you have arrived.”

“Yes ma’am.” I said stepping out of the car. I took my bags and waved goodbye. She blew me a kiss and drove off. I did a little victory dance on the street and made my way to the taxi stop. I didn’t know what I would’ve done if mom wanted to talk to Thando’s mom, I for one knew that they are not around today so getting her to drop me off was a risk on its own but I had to sell my lie.



4.

OKUHLE:

Within a minute the taxi was full and I was ready to go. We paid the taxi fare, dad was generous enough to give me R 1000 and mom gave me R 500, so when it came to money I was sorted.

The taxi drove out of the taxi rank and anxiety kicked in, I was really doing this. My phone rang and it was Thando.

“Girl...” I answered immediately.

“Where are you?” She asked.

“Hello to you too... Anyway, the taxi is approaching the N12. Why?” I asked.

“Nothing, I was just checking if you’re really going through with this madness.” She said and I laughed.

“Dear this is love and the sooner you accept that the better.” We both burst out in laughter.

“Okay friend. Please be careful, take care of yourself.” She said.

“I will.” I hung up and heaved a huge sigh. I kept my eyes on the road but sleep slowly consumed me and within a second I was out.

The lady next to me tapped my shoulder, thus waking me up.

“You have been sleeping for too long. Do you know where you’re going?” She asked. I looked out and I wasn’t familiar with the surrounding area.

“Have we passed Eastgate Mall?” I asked praying she says no.

“Yes, 5 minutes ago.” She said and turned her focus on her phone. I thanked her and sent Lwanda a text letting him know that the taxi has passed Eastgate Mall.

Lwanda: Cool. You must get off at the MTN Noord Taxi Rank and I’ll get you there.

He was quick to respond and that put my heart at ease. I kept my eyes on the road and before I knew it we were in JHB CBD. I started getting nervous, I have travelled to Joburg before but I was not alone and it was not to the CBD. I did a silent prayer and kept my composure. I was a big girl, I could do this.

The taxi driver turned onto Plein Street, I saw the MTN branding and I knew that this was where I had to get off. My heart started pounding fast, this was an unfamiliar surrounding so it was with reason that I felt a little scared. I quickly sent Lwanda a text letting him know that I was about to get off and that I'm switching my phone off. I didn't want to be a victim of crime, Joburg didn't really have that good of a reputation. I hid my phone deep within my bag. The taxi finally stopped and people started getting off. I got off as well and sat on the benches, I tried to look normal. I needed to blend in with the crowd to avoid attracting unnecessary attention. With every second that passed, the more scared I got. People were minding their own business and going about their day but I felt like I was thrown into the lion's den.

After waiting a good 15 minutes which felt like forever, Lwanda slowly approached making his way towards me. He was dashing hot, he wore a muscle top with black torn skinny jeans and red fierce Puma sneakers. He had a Nike cap on his head and he looked all sorts of yummy. Lwanda was your typical fuckboy image, I'm not saying that he was one but he looked like one. He had caramel skin, hazel brown eyes with long ass eyelashes, thick eyebrows and he had a movember going on with sideburns for days. He had an average physique, not skinny and not too buffed. He was somewhere in the middle. I enjoyed looking at him walk, he just had that thing.

"Hello..." He said revealing his beautiful smile with dimples. My knees got weak, I didn't even respond but just smiled.

"Are you going to say something? Or, I should join you and we can sit and watch people the whole day." He said bringing me back to reality.

"Uhm... Sorry where are my manners? Hi, Lwanda." I said. My cheek bones were already tired from the blushing. He pulled me up for a hug and all I could say was, damn! It felt like home. He pecked my lips and took my bags.

"Let's go, I parked down the road." He said leading the way. I had

been in Lwanda's presence before but it was like only for 10 minutes, this was after he started Varsity and he didn't have this effect on me. Right now I was feeling all kinds of love for him and his handsomeness was a bonus. I could already see myself married to him, this was the guy I wanted to get married to.

"So how was your journey?" He asked as we slowly approached his car. He drove a Polo GTI, it suited him just fine.

"It wasn't bad. I fell asleep during the journey and thank God for the lady who sat next to me. If she didn't wake me up, I'd still be panicking." I said. He opened his boot and loaded my bags and then went and opened the door for me. He ticked all the right boxes, he was proving to be a complete gentleman.

"Are you hungry?" He said as soon as he got in.

"I'm good for now, maybe later. I'll cook when I get hungry." I said as he slowly drove onto the road.

"So you can cook?" He asked with a smile. I guess I was also ticking a few boxes on his checklist.

"I'm a great cook, I learned from the best." I said giggling. That was actually a lie, I did know how to cook but I was not great at it.

"Hmm... I can't wait to taste food prepared by you but tonight we're going to eat out. Just to show you around so that you can familiarize yourself with the place before your next visit." He said focusing on the road.

"Oh! So there's going to be a next time?" I asked.

"Babe, this is long term. I'm afraid but you're stuck with me for all eternity." He placed his hand on my exposed thigh squeezing it. I got uncomfortable but rolled with it.

"You've got beautiful legs." He said pushing my thighs apart. My palms started sweating, I hoped he was not trying to start something with me. His hand went up and down my thigh slowly pushing my dress up.

"So where do you stay?" I asked swallowing a bit of saliva. He removed his hand to indicate to the right and I sighed in relief. That was really intense.

“I stay in Rosebank, in a two bedroom apartment. I have a roommate but thankfully he has gone home for the week.” He turned to look at me and smiled “You do know what that means right?” He asked with excitement.

“No, what does it mean?” I faked a laugh. I had hoped he was not planning on having sex with me. That would really disappoint me.

“We have the entire apartment to ourselves, so we can fool around all we want without any disturbances.” He said and placed his hand back on my thigh, this time a bit closer to my nuna.

“Oh! Yeah... We’re surely going to have fun.” I said faintly looking out the window. Maybe this was not such a good idea after all.

We drove in complete silence with him brushing my right thigh and squeezing it. I took a glance at his dick and I could trail his dick print on his jeans. He was hard and my heart started beating fast, did he really expect me to have sex with him?

We finally reached his apartment, it looked fancy. I didn’t think his parents were that loaded. He removed his hand from my thigh, and I let out a deep breathe. Tears were already threatening my eyes, I kept blinking them away. This was no way I imagined to lose my virginity.

“Come, let’s go.” He stepped out. I followed shortly, I pulled my dress down and I walked after him. We got to the door and he slowly opened it.

“Welcome to my second home.” He said making way for me to enter. The kitchen unit was beautiful with marble top counters, fitted with a gas stove. I could already imagine myself cooking up a storm.

“This is beautiful.” I said with a smile.

“It’s a kitchen. Follow me to the bedroom.” He said. I followed him to his bedroom, he opened the door and I walked in. The room was really big, he had a 55” Samsung TV mounted to the wall, a King size bed with expensive bedding. I said expensive because it did look expensive. The room had high ceilings, guy was truly leaving the dream. With everything summed up, the room really looked beautiful and neat for a guy’s bedroom. He placed my

bags in his closet and turned around to look at me.

“And, why are you stiff all of a sudden? You can sit on the bed you know. This is your bed as well.” He said.

“So we’re going to be sharing the same bed?” I asked. I knew that sounded dumb but I had to prepare myself mentally and physically for whatever might transpire between us.

“You’re full of jokes.” He laughed at me and I shyly joined him. He walked towards me biting his lower lip and I swallowed hard. He placed his hands on my waist.

“Do you know how long I’ve been waiting for this?” He asked in a soft voice.

“Uhm. That makes the two of us.” I responded nervously. Nothing about him holding my waist felt right, I wanted to push him away.

“Can I kiss you?” I gave him a weird look, who asked for a kiss? I didn’t know what to say, I just froze and he leaned in and kissed me anyway. I didn’t want to make things awkward so I kissed him right back. The kiss intensified and he pinned me against the door. What a great kisser he was but things got heated way too quickly. He lifted my right leg up and I knew deep down I had to stop him before he thought I wanted this too.

“I’m a virgin...” I said breaking the kiss, it came out as a whisper. He slowly let go of my leg and moved backwards. I looked down in shame, I hope I didn’t disappoint him.

5.

OKUHLE:

I just stood there and he looked at me from head to toe, I didn't know what he was looking for but his facial expression spoke volumes.

"Are you going to say something?" I asked. He was just too quiet for my liking, I needed him to say something to me even if he shouted or lashed out, at least that would put me at ease.

"Come here..." He whispered stretching out his arm towards me. Tears were already threatening my eyes. What if he threw me out? I thought. I slowly walked up to him, I guess I was in over my head. I grabbed his hand and he pulled me towards him, hugging me. I rested my head on his chest, it felt great being in his embrace. He planted a kiss on my forehead and made me to look at him.

"I'm sorry I made you uncomfortable..."

"I'm there one who should be sorry." I cut him short. I felt like I was the one who was at fault. He was probably used to this and here I was, inexperienced and all disappointing him.

"No, I shouldn't have acted out like that. I was not going to have sex with you, believe me. Things got heated, yes I have to admit but you just got here for goodness sake. I'm not going to treat you like some one-night stand." He said and let go of me.

"So you're not mad?" I asked raising my eyebrow. I didn't expect him to handle that so calmly and in a matured manner.

"Mad? Are you for real? Babe, I'm 21 in case you have forgotten. I'm way too old to be throwing tantrums over sex. I'm not some high school immature boy, I'll wait for you." He pulled me and we walked out of the room "I think you should call your mom just to be on the safe side." He said.

"Yeah sure. Let me go get my phone." I walked back to his room and got my phone from my bag. I switched it on walking back to him.

"Still not hungry?" He asked as soon as I got to the lounge.



“I’m still good.” I dialled my mother’s number and she answered almost immediately.

“Okuhle, you want to give me a heart attack? Why was your phone off?” She shouted.

“You do know that phones run out of battery so please mother, calm down.” I said rolling my eyes. Just like Enhle, she too could be a bit of a drama queen.

“I’m sorry, I was just worried. Did you travel safely?” She asked. I didn’t even know what to say because I didn’t know how long it took one to travel from Emalahleni to the Vaal.

“We’re almost there mom, you know how taxis are.” I played it safe.

“Was it not a hustle changing taxis in Joburg?” She asked.

“Nope, not at all. Look mom, I have to go. I’ll call you later.” I said trying to get rid of her.

“Okay baby, bye.” I hung up immediately and I faced Lwanda who had a smile on his face.

“And then? What are you smiling about?” He looked awkward, cute but awkward.

“I can’t get over the fact that I made the right choice. You are what I want and your purity is a cherry on top.” He said grinning. I smiled right back at him, he kept on saying the right words.

Our day turned out great, he took me sightseeing and I got to see Joburg in a different light. He was a total gentleman, of course he got away with a kiss or two which I had no problem with, and he could kiss me all he wanted. He assured me that there was no pressure when it came to us having sex, he would wait for me even if it meant I gave him my virginity on the night of our wedding. He sounded convincing but I was not dumb, he was just trying to make me comfortable when it came to kissing and touching. He took me to Hard Rock Café in Sandton, the place was great and the food was amazing don’t even get me started on the ambiance, the atmosphere was out of this place. I had never been in a place like that before, Emalahleni needs to upgrade. My

first night in Joburg with a guy was amazing, when we got back to his apartment we watched movies cuddled up on the bed and we fell asleep in each other's arms.

### THREE DAYS LATER

I got woken up by someone banging on the door, I turned to Lwanda's side of the bed but he was not there. However, he left a note on his pillow saying that he had to rush off to campus and that he would be back soon. I dragged myself out of bed after reading the note, the person at the door was persistent. I took the key on the kitchen counter and unlocked the door yawning.

"Hi..." I said and she just looked at me.

"Where is Lwanda?" She asked giving me attitude. Luckily for me, I have had training with my baby sister.

"Oh! I'm great thanks, my name is Okuhle by the way. Nice to meet you!" I said pouting my lips.

"Look doll, I'm not interested in who you are or where you're from. I'm here for Lwanda, is he in or not? It's a simple yes or no answer." She said sternly. Maybe she thought she was intimidating me but it would take more than just a stinking attitude to intimidate me.

"No! Is that all?" She laughed in disbelief.

"Lwanda can sure pick them. Tell him Thandeka was here. Oh and before I forget, keep my side of the bed warm, you won't be around for too long!" She winked at me and walked away laughing. I closed the door and thought about what she just said. Could that be his ex-girlfriend that he dated for 2 years? She looked really pretty, not that I'm doubting my looks or anything but Thandeka was quite the looker.

I went back to the bedroom and made the bed, my phone rang as I was busy and it was Lwanda.

"Morning..." I answered.

"Hey babe, I hope I didn't wake you up." He said.

"Not at all, I woke up a few minutes ago." I wanted to tell him about Thandeka but I thought it would be best I told him face-to-

face that way I would be able to read his facial expression and body language.

“Good! I’ll be home soon, I haven’t had anything to eat. Hint, hint.” He laughed.

“Are you trying to tell me something Mr Maseko?” I giggled.

“Maybe I am. I have to run, I’ll see you soon.”

“I can’t wait, I miss you already.” I sulked. Why did he have to leave me so early in the morning?

“I’ll be there before you know it. Bye love.” He hung up. I took my toiletry bag and went to freshen up, he couldn’t find me chilling in my jammies. I took a quick shower and when I was done, I applied lotion on my body and wore a bum short with a tank top. I loved how clothes looked on my body, I wasn’t thick or slender but my body was appealing to the human eye.

I got started on breakfast listening to some good music in the background. I felt like I owned this apartment and I could already imagine myself staying with Lwanda when I come here next year. I heard people laughing on the other side of the door then I heard the door unlock. I turned my attention to the door and Lwanda walked in with the girl from earlier and some guy.

“Mmmm... Sure smells nice in here.” The guy said making his way to the stove.

“Hey baby...” Lwanda said with a smile. I was confused to say the least, this girl just told me that I would not be around for long and she was here laughing with my man.

“Hi...” I faked a smile. Thandeka gave me an evil smile and winked at me.

“You’re quite the catch aren’t you?” She said walking to the lounge. What was her deal?

“Uhm... Okuhle that was Thandeka, a good friend of mine and this is Trevor my best friend. Trev this is my baby, Okuhle Ndlovu.” He introduced us. Well, Trevor wasn’t paying much attention to Lwanda because he was already digging into the food.

“Nice to meet you Trevor. Please excuse me...” I walked to the bedroom and did a few breathing exercises. Lwanda walked in after a few minutes and looked at me.

“Are you okay?” He frowned.

“Yeah, I’m fine. I didn’t know you were coming with company. A little heads up would have been appreciated.” I said in a faint voice.

“Don’t worry about them, they’ll be leaving soon. Thandeka told me that she stopped by earlier and you gave her attitude.” He said. I looked at him and shook my head, this must be a joke.

“She did, didn’t she?” I chuckled. It hasn’t even been 5 days and already I had girl trouble.

“Babe look, Thandeka is a big part of my life and she will always be around. Please try and find a common ground and be civil with one another? She is willing to try if you’re down for that.” He said. Did I miss something? Did Lwanda just ask me to be civil with his ex-girlfriend?

“Oh! She wants to be civil?” He nodded and I smiled dropping my head, so much for going for a Varsity guy “I guess I can try to be civil with her.” I shrugged my shoulders. He jumped up and hugged me. I just stood there and didn’t hug him back, he was asking for the impossible. The girl I met this morning was anything but civil and I knew for a fact that she would try and ruin things between Lwanda and I.

6.

LWANDA:

It had been 3 months since I heard from Okuhle; we had a major fallout when she visited me in March because of Thandeka. I never thought I would fall for a girl like I had fallen for Kuhle. With Thandeka it was a different story, I met her in first year and we hit it off, she was a freak and brought life to my dull world. Of course, I still kept trying my luck with Kuhle but as always she would turn me down so I continued with Thandeka. Our relationship was more of a sexual and physical attraction, and I was content with that. When my family and I came back from vacation in January, I got Luthando to talk to Kuhle for me, I would deliver messages to her through him and that was how I learned that Kuhle loved me. I made my move and when all I was expecting was rejection, she said yes.

I lied when I told her that I broke things off with Thandeka, I was scared of losing my sexual buddy over something I didn't think was going to last. She came to visit and she hit me with the "I'm still a virgin" line. At first I didn't believe her but then I saw how uncomfortable she was so I had to be a gentleman and not pressure her into doing anything with me. We had fun when she was here but I messed it up when she found me kissing Thandeka in the corridor of my apartment building. She packed her bags that very same day and told me she was leaving. I thought she was bluffing but she literally left, got an Uber to take her to the taxi rank and that was the last time I saw her.

"You need to stop calling me. You're becoming a nuisance."

Finally she answered her phone. I had been calling her for the past three months and she hasn't been taking my calls. I tried to get to her through Luthando but that attempt failed as well.

"Good morning baby." I said trying to pull my charms on her.

"What do you want from me? I'm busy with my June exams and you're disturbing me." She said. I could tell from her tone that she was not in the mood to talk to me.

“Look Kuhle, we need to talk. Schools are closing soon and I’d love for you to visit me again. I’m sorry about what happened, I was...”

“Look I’m not interested in your apologies [She cut me short] you knew what you were doing. I mean, you brought your ex to your apartment when I was there and you asked me to be civil with her. I might be 3 years younger than you but I’m not stupid or gullible. Bye Lwanda.” She hung up on me and that felt like a sharp knife piercing through my heart.

“Morning handsome...” Thandeka walked into my bedroom wearing nothing but my shirt holding two mugs of coffee. I blankly stared at her, she was such a beauty but I loved Kuhle. The sex was great, Thandeka was my drug but I needed to choose.

“I didn’t think you’re still around. Didn’t you say you’re writing later today?” I asked. I needed to get rid of her. I had decided to drive to Mpumalanga, I needed to see my queen.

“Come on Lwanda that was yesterday. I’m done with my exams just like you’re done with yours. So I was thinking...” She handed me one mug and she sat on the bed supporting her back with the headboard.

“Thinking about what?” I looked at her.

“I want to meet your family. I mean, this thing between us is serious babe, we can’t deny these feelings we have for each other any longer. We must allow destiny to take its course.” She sipped on her coffee and I chuckled. Feelings? What feelings was she talking about? I wanted to work things out with Kuhle and there was no way I was taking Thandeka home to meet my mom, she was not wife material.

“Uhm. Thandeka, when are you going back to your place?” I needed to change the subject because if I had attempted to respond to her I would’ve hurt her feelings and that was the last thing I wanted to do. She was a good person and I would love to keep her as a friend.

“Tired of me already? Lwanda, why are you changing the



subject?" She turned to face me. I shrugged my shoulders getting out of bed.

"I'm not changing the subject, we just haven't reached the stage of meeting each other's parents." I said putting my pants on.

"But you have met mine." She said faintly.

"Because you forced me to. I'm going to take a shower." I walked towards the door.

"It's her right?" She asked softly. I stopped on my tracks, I really didn't want to hurt her. I walked back to her and embraced her. She cried on my chest.

"Look, this has nothing to do with Kuhle. I'm just not ready for that kind of commitment. If I take you home to meet my mom, they are going to think that I want to settle down and I'm not there yet." I lied to her.

"It's almost 3 years Lwanda, I can't just sit around and wait for you to marry me. If you're not serious about me then let me go." She sniffed. I looked into her eyes and all I could see was hurt. I never thought she loved me, but she never told me that she did.

"I'm going home; I need to deal with something. Can we talk about this when I come back?" I asked. I didn't want to rush anything. As far as I'm concerned, she could be my soul mate so I didn't want to mess that up.

"Oh my goodness Lwanda, you're going home to her? Do I look stupid to you? I can't believe you want to keep me on standby. I really thought I knew you..." She shook her head and stood up with her mug and walked out. That didn't go well but I knew Thandeka and I would deal with her upon my return. I walked to the bathroom and took a quick shower.

**OKUHLE:**

We (Thando, Palesa and I) just got to school and I was not doing so great. The past 2 months had been nerve wrecking. Lwanda took me for a ride and I sure rode along with him. I still couldn't get over the fact that he showed me his true colours so early on in our relationship. I almost gave him my virginity, I had planned it so

well but the very same day I was planning a surprise for him, I found his tongue down his ex's throat. To say I was hurt would be an understatement; I hadn't been myself ever since that day. I loved him and a part of me wanted to forgive him but I'd be playing myself if I let him anywhere near me.

"You're awfully quiet this morning." Palesa said bringing me back to reality.

"You do realize that we're writing maths right? So I have every reason to be quiet." I lied. Lwanda was all I could think about. I loved everything about him and I missed him so much.

"How are things between you and Lwanda? I hope he is still not bothering you?" Thando asked rolling her eyes. She knew what went down and so did Palesa.

"Lwanda? Who is that again?" I said faking a laugh. It was hard pretending in front of them. I knew they wouldn't approve of my love for him. They hated him already and it would be adding fuel to the fire if I mentioned he called me this morning.

"You go girl! Good riddance to bad rubbish." Palesa said laughing and Thando joined in.

"Yeah..." I faked a smile "look guys, let me rush to the ladies real quick. I'll be right back." I walked away reaching for my phone from my pocket. I needed to call him and tell him how much I missed him.

"If it isn't the beautiful Okuhle Ndlovu..." I knew who that was, Lifa. If there was a guy who wouldn't catch a hint, it was him.

"Lifa, Mr. President. How are you?" He was the school's head boy and a pain in my arse.

"I'm good and you beautiful?" He asked. Lifa was okay for a high school boy. I would date him if I hadn't met Lwanda. He was handsome but compared to Lwanda, Lifa was just a 7. Lwanda was man, strong and sexy and Lifa was just a boy and I didn't do boys.

"I'm okay I guess." I said.

"So when are you giving a nigga a break?" I laughed at that

question. Did he just say nigga? Shame poor guy, he was really trying hard but this was not for me.

“Lifa you need to stop. You and I will never work. I’m flattered and all but you’re just not my type.” I had to put it out there.

“Oh! So you have a type now? Just yesterday you were crying on my shoulder about something that happened in Joburg and now I’m not your type?” He looked angry but I refused to be intimidated by him.

“Calling you was a mistake and it will not happen again. I was in a bad space and I needed someone to talk to and you popped up in my head.”

“Okuhle I love you, please don’t do this to me?” His eyes were filled with tears but I was just not feeling him. When Lwanda begged me he did it in a manly way and here was Lifa with tears in his eyes, that was a total turn off.

“Lifa, I’m sure there is someone out there made for you and I’m afraid that someone is not me. Excuse me.” I walked away from him. I should be feeling bad but that was like a load lifted off my shoulders. I made up my mind, Lwanda was the guy I wanted to be with and nothing was going to stop me from being with him, not even the bitter ex Thandeka.

7.

OKUHLE:

LATER THAT DAY

I was sitting outside with my brother and he was telling me about how much he really fancied Thando but scared to tell her because he fears being rejected. I really found it cute that he loved my friend but I doubted she would ever agree to date a junior. I didn't want to be the bearer of bad news so the big sister in me encouraged him to make the bold move and try his luck. I was not setting him up for failure but I was simply toughening him up for the real world.

"I mean Lu, what have you got to lose? Take a chance at love and who knows? She might just feel the same way." I said and giggled. Deep down I knew Thando would reject him but he would get over the rejection and move onto girls in his age group.

"So you think I have a chance? Like deep down you believe that Thando might just give the one and only Lu a chance?" He asked with a smile on his face. Lu was such a charmer and too full of himself, if Thando agreed to being his girlfriend it would be the death of me.

"Baby brother the world is your oyster, go and sweep Thando off of her feet." I laughed out loud. I hoped he would do it in my presence but I was good. I didn't want to ruin his mojo.

"Your confidence in me is beyond my understanding. I hope you're not pulling my leg because I'm definitely going to ask Thando out." He bit his lower lip as he envisioned how he was going to go about the whole thing. We continued to chat, like any other day we always shared a good laugh. I wanted a similar relationship with Enhle but as always, she chose to isolate herself from us.

As we were chatting, a white Polo GTI pulled up at the gate but I paid no mind to it. It could be one of Lu's friends, he was one to associate himself with guys older than him.

"That's Lwanda." He said and I looked at the car. I wanted to

smile and leap up for joy but then I remembered how he lied to him. "Are you going to go to the guy?" Lu asked and I shook my head no.

"Why should I go to him? Let him come here." I said with a straight face. Lu got up and walked to the gate. Lwanda stepped out of the car and they met halfway. They fist bumped and chat for a while. I kept stealing glances at them and Lwanda was looking at me the entire time. I felt the nerves kick in, why did he have to be so handsome? They approached me laughing out loud, I could tell Lu was fond of him. It seemed they have built a brotherhood bond. I guess Lwanda was Lu's older brother that he wished he had.

"MaNdlovu..." Lwanda greeted with a smile. I looked at him and just nodded. I might love the guy but that did not mean I must forgive and forget just like that.

"Excuse me guys, I need to get started on my studying. I'm writing Physics tomorrow so every minute of studying counts." Lu said walking to the door.

"Good luck bra, you must study hard." Lwanda said to him.

"Sure..." Lu disappeared into the house and Lwanda sat next to me.

"How are you?" He asked. His cologne made me weak, he really smelled good.

"I'm great thanks and you?" I lowered my head avoiding eye contact.

"Can I take you somewhere?" He asked. This guy must think he was some type of a god.

"Take me where exactly?" I shrugged my shoulders. He had to sweat a little before I forgave him.

"Come on Kuhle, can't we just move on from what happened in March? Please allow me to make things right? I did you wrong and I want to correct myself." Lwanda was one person who knew what to say and when. I always fell victim to his charms and smooth tongue.

“My mom is about to get back, how am I going to explain my whereabouts?”

“You managed to lie when you came to visit me so come up with something. Aren’t high school kids the masters of lies?” He laughed and I just shook my head. Lwanda didn’t understand that I’m mad at him and he came there telling me to jump and I should ask how high. He should be imploring and begging for my forgiveness but I guess I expected too much from a guy who was used to sweet talking woman into doing what he wanted.

“I’ll be right back.” I said and walked into the house. I went to Lu’s bedroom and he was indeed studying, the Ndlovu genius. He was serious about his books and I loved that about him.

“My sweet baby brother...” I said with a smile on my face. He looked at me and laughed. “What?” I laughed with him.

“You can’t be serious? Mom will be home anytime soon, you know how she is during the examination season.” He said removing his glasses, they made him look extra handsome. Thando might just say yes to this nerd.

“Please brother, you can just tell her I went over to Thando’s to study. It’s just for a few minutes.” I pleaded.

“Lwanda doesn’t strike me as a guy who goes for just a few minutes.” He said and I looked at him confused by his remark.

“What are you talking about?” I asked. He chuckled a bit shaking his head.

“Big sis do you really think I’m that stupid? There only reason why a guy would drive a 100 Ks to come see his girl would be because he wants some. So, a few minutes is not going to cut it.” I burst out in laughter, who was this guy? And, what did he do with my brother?

“You’re disgusting Lu. I went over to Thando’s. You better sell that to mom.” I walked out and walked back in “Oh! And I’m not sleeping with Lwanda. Get that out of your head.” I laughed.

“I’m no fool big sister. I hope you enjoy every moment of it. Don’t worry I got your back.” He winked. I gave him a death stare and



walked out. Lu was just too forward for his age. I got to my room and changed into warm clothes. I took my schoolbag and walked out bidding Lu goodbye, he insulted me even further but I knew he was just fooling around.

I found Lwanda waiting for me in his car. He got out and came to open the door for me.

“Thank you.” I gave him my schoolbag and got in. He came to his side and looked at me.

“So what’s the schoolbag for? I hope you’re not planning to study in my presence?” He said.

“Maybe I might just do that but it’s all up to you. So where are you taking me?” I asked. He switched on the ignition and drove off.

“We’re going to Protea Hotel.” He said keeping his eyes on the road. ‘There only reason why a guy would drive a 100 Ks to come see his girl would be because he wants some’ Lu’s voice played in my head.

“Why Protea Hotel out of all the places we could go to?” I asked nervously.

“Well, because I want to talk to you without any disturbances.”

“We could do that at your house...” I said.

“Yeah we could but my mom doesn’t know I’m in town and I would like to keep it that way. After we have talked and resolved our issues, I’m driving back to Joburg.” I didn’t respond but kept quiet. Metro FM was playing in the background, my stomach was in knots and tangles. If anything, I didn’t expect him to book a room just to talk to me. Within a few minutes we drove into Protea Hotel and he parked his car.

“Come, we don’t have all day and I don’t like being on the N12 after 8 PM.” He said getting out of the car. I followed suit and we walked together to the reception. He checked in and took the room key.

“Do you have any bags you would like the porter to assist with?” The lady asked.

“No, thank you.” Lwanda said. He took my hand and we walked

up the stairs. I was already nervous and I didn't know what to expect. We got to the room and we walked in.

"Beautiful room." I said. I sat on the couch and he sat on the bed staring at me.

"Come join me. The bed is big enough for the both of us." He said. "No, I'm good on the couch. You said that you wanted to talk." I kept my cool. I didn't want him to pick up that I was uncomfortable but also, I didn't want him to think that we were good when we were not.

"Come here please, I won't do anything you don't want me to do." He begged. I guess we could have an innocent conversation on the bed, I thought. I got up and got on top of the bed and lay on my side facing him. He looked into my eyes brushing my cheek.

"I'm sorry about Thandeka." He said after a while. "I didn't think you were ever going to catch me but after you did, I felt different. I... uhm. I'm not good with apologies but please, can we start over?" He asked. He was being sincere but I didn't know whether or not I should trust him. He did drive all the way just to apologize, I should give him credit for that.

"What guarantee do I have that after you leave you will not go straight to her? I mean, I'm here and you'll be in Joburg. I can stay faithful to you but the question is, will you stay faithful to me?" He looked at me and smiled but I kept a straight face.

"Baby girl you managed to turn my world upside down. I'd be a fool if I messed with what I have with you. Thandeka is the past and if it makes you happy, I'll cut all ties with her." He said.

"You would do that for me?" I was desperate to hear him say that he would choose me over her any day.

"I would do that for you." He licked his lip and I got lost in his eyes, Lwanda was goals. I did a little prayer that I do not regret this decision.

"I guess we can try but please don't hurt me." I said in soft voice. He grinned and pulled me closer to him.

"Thank you babe. You just made me the happiest man..."

He pulled me closer and he kissed me. I responded, the nerves had already subsided I wanted to kiss him. He pulled my leg up and rested it on his hip as he kissed me nice and slow. He was such a great kisser that I felt things I had never felt before. I grabbed onto him as the kiss deepened. I didn't want him stop. Matter of fact, I wanted him to go all the way. His hands were roaming all over my body, touching the right places. He grabbed my butt and flipped me over, I was now on top of him and he made me grind on him while kissing him. It was a bit of a task because I didn't know what I was doing but I felt his manhood hardened under his pants. I moaned in his mouth and so did he, it felt great. I was losing myself and my senses. He grabbed my waist and I felt an electric wave going down my spine, what was he doing to me?

He flipped us over, he was now on top of me and he parted my legs. He stared deep into my eyes, his eyes were red, I didn't even know what that meant but I loved how he looked at me. He slowly leaned in for a kiss this time around it was more intimate. He took off my jersey and I allowed him to. I took off his top and he was just left in his trackpants. We continued kissing and things were getting heated, he was playing with my nipples from underneath my bra and I moaned out in pleasure. I was now left in my bra and matching panties and he was left in his briefs. We kissed for a while and he stopped. He planted a kiss on my forehead and got off the bed.

"What are you doing?" I asked. I had all these feelings I couldn't even comprehend, I felt I wanted something but I didn't know what it was.

"I'm sorry but I have to take you back home. I said that we were just going to talk and we talked. I should be on my way back to Joburg now." He said putting on his pants.

"Lwanda please, I'm ready..." I had tears in my eyes. He couldn't leave me hanging like that.

"You think you're ready but you're not. Time for this will come

there is no rush.” He was putting on his shoes. A tear escaped my eye, what did he expect me to do with all these feelings?

“Get dressed babe, we have to get going.” He got up and walked out of the room. I slowly got off the bed and put on my clothes. I was disappointed but I was also impressed, if it were any other guy he would have initiated sex even though I was not thinking straight. Lwanda was the perfect gentleman.

8.

OKUHLE:

Things between Lwanda and I were pretty much amazing. After he came to apologize things took a turn for the best. I visited him for a week again during the June holidays and it was a week I would live to remember till the end of time. There were no signs of Thandeka and he made my stay a pleasurable one. The year went by pretty quick and it was already the beginning of the New Year. I spent the December holidays with Lwanda and of course, my family. I still held onto my V-Card, Lwanda refused to deflower me “It is not yet time” was what he would say every time we were in a heated moment and I had given up trying to get him to sleep with me. I guess he knew best and when the time came, I was certain it will be a magical moment but I wouldn’t hold my breath.

“Are you nervous?” Lu walked into the sitting room and I flashed him a fake smile. In a few hours the matric result would be released and I couldn’t sleep a wink. I was nervous because I didn’t have a good exam season, I focused more on Lwanda and neglected my books and I feared that my slacking off would come back to bite me.

“To be honest baby brother, I am nervous. I can’t even sleep.” I heaved a huge sigh. I’m scared of failure and disappointing my dad. Mom, I could handle but dad, I won’t be able to explain why

the sudden drop in my marks.

“I’m sure you did well. Come on, where is that confidence Mrs Maseko?” He giggled and I blushed, he always addressed me by Mrs Maseko when the parents were not around.

“You need to stop. How are things between you and Thando?” I asked. It turned out my brother was quite the charmer and Thando couldn’t resist his charms, they had been dating for 3 months now but Thando said that it was just for fun. As soon as she got to Varsity, she was going to break things off with him. I hated that she was just in it with my brother for fun but the excitement he embodied when he came to share the news with me wouldn’t allow me to tell him that Thando was not in it for the long run.

“Uyazi moes nawe, Thando is bae. I love her man.” He said with a smile. I shook my head, pretty soon his heart will be broken.

“You’re whipped brother and I fear for you.” I focused my eyes on the TV and he continued to tell me about how he planned to treat Thando right and how age was just a number. I felt sorry for him but I refused to be the bearer of bad news.

The sun had risen, Lu and I fell asleep on the couch. I slowly got up and stretched my limbs, I quickly reached for my phone praying I made it. I read the SMS and my heart sank, I failed...

“So how did you go?” Lu asked as he slowly got up from the couch. I looked at him and shook my head.

“Excuse me...” I got up and ran to my bedroom. I knew I did badly, I was willing to settle for a D or an H but not a complete fail. I jumped on top of my bed and wailed. I heard a soft knock and my mom walked in.

“Honey...” She said in a soft voice.

“Not now mom.” I sniffed and covered myself with the duvet cover. She sat on the edge of the bed and rubbed my back.

“Get up Okuhle, your dad wants to talk to you. Lu already shared the news with us, we know you received the results by SMS so please; it is no use crying love. I will not make you feel bad but

failure shouldn't determine your tomorrow. You need to pick yourself up and think about your next step." She said. I knew she was trying to make me feel better but I was not crying because I failed, I was crying because I let myself down by focusing on Lwanda more than I did on my books.

"I'll join you just now, I need a moment." I said faintly.

"Of course." She stood up and walked out. I wiped away the tears from my eyes and took a moment. My phone rang and it was Lwanda, I was not in the mood to talk to him. We celebrated his pass in December and soon he'll be graduating with a Bachelor's Degree cum laude. I was stupid enough to neglect my books for him, he was going to have a degree in his hands and I was going to have nothing. He kept on calling but I ignored his calls, I got out of bed and switched my phone off.

I opened my bedroom door and Lu was about to knock.

"Lwanda wants to talk to you." He said handing me his phone. I cursed at him under my breath and sighed before placing the phone on my ear.

"Yeah..." I said in a low voice.

"MaNdlovu, why are you not answering your phone?" He asked. His voice brought tears to my eyes.

"I didn't want to talk to you. Lwanda, I need space. Can I call you later?"

"Okay but can you tell me how you did?" I shook my head and took a deep breath.

"I failed..." I said softly. I was already ashamed, he was probably going to dump me because I'm a failure. Who in their right mind would want to date a failure?

"I'm sorry to hear that my love but you can always re-write or upgrade. Which subjects did you fail?" He sounded sincere but I was not buying it, he was simply pretending to care but I knew better than to fall for his pretence.

"I have to go. I'll call you later." I hung up and made my way to the dining room. Great! The entire family was there.



“Family...” I said. I gave Lu his phone and I just buried myself in the chair next to dad.

“Okuhle my love, I’m sorry you didn’t make it. I know it must be hard after you have been doing so great these past years but things like these happen. We’ll go to your school and get your statement. After we know which subjects you failed then we’ll take it from there.” My dad said. He has always been a supportive dad, he would never make you feel bad not even when he wanted to.

“I guess...” I smiled, dissembling my true emotions. I dished up for myself and slowly ate. Enhle kept stealing glances at me, she must be disappointed in me but I couldn’t care less. What was done was done, it was no use crying over spilled milk.

We concluded breakfast and dad accompanied me to school, it was hard seeing my friends celebrate their pass but I celebrated with them. After I got my statement I bid Thando and Palesa goodbye, I knew they were headed to Highveld Mall to go celebrate but I was not in the mood.

“Okuhle Ndlovu...” I tried to walk fast but he quickly caught up “Hey, hold up.” He pulled my arm.

“What? What Lifa? I’m not in the mood.” I snapped. He was a straight A student so I knew he came to gloat.

“I’m sorry, I wanted to talk. Do you have a moment?” He asked.

“No, I don’t. Bye.” I left him standing and walked away. I got to my dad’s car and he drove off. I slowly opened my statement of results and looked at it. I failed Mathematics and Physics both with very low marks. I shook my head and shed a few tears.

“It’s not the end of the world sweetheart.” Dad said.

“I know...” I whispered. He drove us straight home. He took my statement of results and I went to my bedroom. I switched my phone on and went on all my social media accounts, it seemed that everyone I knew was celebrating their pass and here I was cooped up in my room with tears in my eyes. I received an SMS from UJ letting me know that they have rejected my application due to my failure to reach the minimum admission requirements.

All other universities that I had applied to followed suit. It was hard to go through the same SMS over and over again but reality quickly set in. I accepted that I failed and life had to go on.

### THREE MONTHS LATER

I was sitting in my room preparing for my Physics paper, I took the decision to re-write both the subjects that I had failed. I had to take control of my life, all my friends were in Varsity and I was the only one left behind. It was hard but I knew that I would not always be at the bottom. I told Lwanda that I needed a break, he wasn't happy about my decision but respected it. I would stalk him on Facebook when I got bored but that was as far as I would go. He would check up on me through Lu because I blocked his number. It was always a pleasure to hear from him through my baby brother and he always made sure to let me know that he loved me.

Lu walked into my room with sunken eyes. He threw himself on my bed and I looked at him.

"And then?" I asked him getting up from the chair.

"Thando..." He whispered. I frowned as he buried his face in my pillows. I sat next to him and sighed.

"You need to forget about Thando Lu. She's a varsity girl now." I said. Thando was at UCT and there was no way their relationship was going to flourish.

"But I love her sis." He said in a breaking voice. I felt bad because I knew she was planning to dump him all along. I didn't think he was going to take it this badly.

"You don't know what love is, that was just infatuation." I said rubbing his back. He cried out loud and I cried along with him, not because he was hurt but because my life was stagnant. I guess this was his first heart break but he'll get over it. I continued to comfort him until he fell asleep.

9.

THREE MONTHS LATER

OKUHLE:

I got into my mother's car, I was a nervous wreck. This was my second chance and I gave it my all. I studied day and night and of course, I had to deal with the negativity of people around me but I didn't let them get me down. I had just collected my statement of results and I was scared to even peep through it. I was sweating, with my heart pounding out of my chest like a base drum. This was it, it was do or die.

"You're just going to sit there? Come on, open that statement." Mom said. She was just as anxious as I was.

"I'll open it at home. Please don't make me open it in the car?" I begged.

"Okay, I guess we can take a look at your results at home with your father." She said. We drove in comfortable silence. I was in my head, all I could think of was 'What if I failed?' I'd hate to disappoint my parents yet again. They both wanted the best for me and so did I. If this was a pass then it meant I would be studying further next year and that was the dream I wanted to realize.

Within a few minutes mom drove onto the driveway, dad was already at home. Enhle and Lu were still at school, life at home was boring. My peers were out there making something of themselves and all I did was to turn with the sun, day in day out. I even thought of getting a job just to pass time but my dad refused "You need this gap year to think about what you want to do." He said.

Mom and I stepped out of the car and made our way to the house. "Why is dad not at work?" I asked. He was one to come home late so, him being here at this time was quite a shocker.

"I wish I had the answer to that question love." We walked into the house through the kitchen door. I walked to my bedroom to change my shoes then made my way to the sitting room.

“Daddy...” I said in a sweet voice. He was watching the news. “Princess...” He said. He switched off the TV and turned his attention to me “How did you go?” He asked. I sat on the single couch adjacent to his and handed him the results. I looked down praying I passed.

“Hmm...” He opened the results and took a moment looking at them. I didn’t know what he was looking at for so long because it was just two subjects. He stood up and cleared his throat. I looked at him trying to read his facial expression but he kept a straight face.

“Get up.” He said sternly. I froze, he sounded rather angry. Could it be that I failed? I started to panic “Well...” He said. I slowly stood up and fiddled with my fingers. Tears threatened my eyes, I could feel my chest tightening. I gave it my all, I promise I did.

“Look at these results and tell me what do you think I should do with you?” I was a bit hesitant but he gave me the results by force. A tear escaped my eye as I slowly turned the paper around.

“So?” He asked. I looked at my marks and I screamed, I knew I could do this. My dad burst out in laughter and I jumped into his arms. He spun me around like he always did when I brought home a good report card.

“What’s going on?” Mom came rushing in. She looked rather shaken, I guess I startled her by my loud outburst.

“Honey we raised ourselves a genius. Look at the marks your daughter brought home.” I handed mom the statement of results and she leaped up for joy. She gave me a tight hug, she literally squeezed the breath out of me.

“I’m proud of you baby, look at you miss smarty pants.” She grinned pulling my cheek.

“You are my pride and joy.” Dad said with a smile. Here was that line again, hadn’t heard it in a while. I brought home 70% in Mathematics and a 67% in Physics. I couldn’t be more proud.

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It was now November and I was on my way home from the mall. I

was finally at peace and with my marks looking so great, I'm finally going to study Medicine. I was in a taxi when my mom called.

"Mommy, I'm almost there." I answered.

"Make it quick dear. Someone is here to talk to you." She said.

"Oh? Who?" I asked. Who would want to see me?

"Just get home love. Your dad is here too."

"Okay, I'm about to get off. I'll walk fast." I hung up and asked the taxi driver to drop me off at the next corner. Never in my life have I walked that fast, within the speed of light I was at the gate and I saw a Black Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT. I admired the beast in front of me then made my way to the house. I didn't know anyone who drove a Jeep so I was anxious to find out.

I took my bags and drop them off in my bedroom and made my way to the lounge. I peeked before I walked in and boom! Lwanda and some yummy looking old man, he did look yummy. I slowly walked in.

"Good afternoon." I greeted. I wondered where the kids were, they were most probably watching TV in the sitting room. This must be an important meeting, we never used the lounge. It was for grownups only, I felt like an important somebody just walking in there.

"Okuhle, please take a seat." My dad said. He was being too formal for my liking. I sat next to mom who was dressed like a makoti with a doek on her head and scuff on her shoulders. Awkward, I tell you. I made eye contact with Lwanda and he flashed me a smile then looked down.

"Baby, do you know these people?" My dad asked. I slowly nodded, I didn't know the old man but I knew Lwanda.

"Do you know why they are here?" He asked. I shook my head no. I shrugged my shoulders at Lwanda and he blatantly ignored me.

"Well this young man, accompanied by his father [Oh, so that's Mr Maseko. Now I knew where he got those good looks. Maseko Snr

was all types of hot] he has come to request for your hand in marriage.” He said. I gasped for air.

“Say what?” Oops! I covered my mouth, shit I said that out loud. I looked at Lwanda, I could tell he wanted to laugh but this was no laughing matter.

“Yes Okuhle, Lwanda Maseko wants to marry you.” My mom said. I giggled covering my mouth. This must be a joke, I thought. I stood up and left, I couldn’t handle the heat. Lwanda was crazy to think I was going to accept this old fashioned proposal. The last time I checked we were taking a break and I was still enjoying my break. He just graduated and now he wanted to make me his wife. He was full of jokes.

I walked to my room and threw myself on the bed, I loved him yes but it was not enough for me to marry him right away.

“Okuhle?” My mom walked in. I got up and sat on my buttocks.

“That was rude.” She said. I almost laughed but kept my cool.

“I can’t believe you’re entertaining this. I’m still young mom!” I shouted under my breath.

“I know but that does not mean we shouldn’t listen to what they have to say. Didn’t you say you love this young man?” She asked. I chuckled.

“So dad is entertaining this too?” I asked. She sat next to me and looked at me.

“Your dad is just keeping calm. He is not entertaining anything. I commend the step Lwanda has taken but we shouldn’t dismiss him just like that. Come hear what they have to say then you can throw tantrums.” She said. I shook my head, was this woman listening to herself?

“Fine! I’ll come, can I have a moment?” I sighed.

“Sure.” She stood up and walked out. Lwanda was crazy, these were the type of things you discuss with your partner. You don’t just rock up and propose marriage. That was just crazy. I took a moment and after a few minutes, I made my way back to the lounge.



10.

OKUHLE:

I slowly walked back into the lounge, Lwanda looked at me and smiled. Lord knew how much I wanted to curse his arse. I failed to understand why he would pull such a stunt. I mean, we last spoke to each other in February and even then it was me telling him to back off. This proposal was a sham, he would have to kill me first before I said yes. I sat next to my mom with my heart beating out of my chest. I still wanted to explore my independence and Lwanda was on a mission to steal that away from me.

“Okuhle...” Maseko Snr said. I looked at him, what a charming old man. He looked a bit younger than my father “I’m sorry that we just dropped in unannounced but my son has been pestering me about coming here. This is not how things are done, at least I don’t approve of this step but he forced my hand. We don’t mean to disrespect you or your parents in any way but please hear him out.” Well he said his piece and Lwanda kept his face down. I didn’t want to disrespect Lwanda’s dad but he was just asking for too much.

“Dear...” Mom said holding my hand. I faced her, my eyes twinkled with tears, a part of me felt as if they (Mom and dad) wanted me to accept this proposal. I was only 19, what did I know about being somebody’s wife? Or, being somebody’s daughter-in-law? That was just too much of a responsibility to bear. “We’re going to give you and Lwanda time to talk. Hear him out, discuss a way forward. I’m not saying accept his proposal, all I’m saying is that talk things out with him and reach a consensus.” She said. I shook my head, I didn’t want to talk to him. If it was up to me, I would have long kicked them out.

“Baby [I looked at my dad] I’m surprised to say the least.” He said. “I didn’t even know that you were dating. This is not what I want for you. No disrespect to Lwanda or his father but you’re still young, you have your whole life ahead of you. Marriage can wait but of course, you’re not a minor anymore. At the end of the day it

is your decision to make and all I can do is support you.” He sighed. His words made me shed a few tears. I had known my dad to keep calm even in the toughest situations. One could never tell when he was angry or hurt, he was good at hiding his feelings. Only mom knew him and right now I wished I knew him like mom did.

“Bab’Maseko, please join us for tea in the dining area. We’ll leave Lwanda and Okuhle to talk.” Mom said getting up. Dad and Lwanda’s dad followed her to the dining room. Suddenly the room was silent and we both kept our heads down. A part of me wanted to go back to my room and lock myself in there but I knew better than that.

“Kuhle...” He finally said, breaking the ice. I slowly lifted my head to face him, he flashed me a smile but I kept a serious face. Once upon a time, his charms used to work wonders but today I was dancing to a different tune. He came to sit next to me and held both my hands. I turned to face him and he slowly leaned in for a kiss. I wanted to move back but something drew me closer to him. I allowed him to kiss me and it felt great. He held me tight as the kiss deepened, I wanted more but that was not the time. Next thing you know, he was going to propose in the heat of the moment and I might end up saying yes without thinking it through. I gently stopped him and moved away from him a bit.

“So what’s your deal?” I finally asked.

“I want you to be my wife.” He said. I waited for him to say I’m joking but he was being serious.

“I’m still young Lwanda. I know nothing about being a wife and besides I want to go study and get my degree like you did. I want to explore my independence, I want to experience life. I want to go to varsity, go out partying with friends, get drunk for no reason and wake up with no regrets. I want the full experience of being a student far away from home. I want to get married, yes but not today or tomorrow. Maybe after 10 years, yeah... but not now.” I said. He didn’t look happy after that little speech but I was merely

being honest.

“So you want to party and get drunk instead of being with me?”

He frowned clenching his jaw. He was getting worked up for nothing but I didn't give a damn. This was a long shot and he failed dismally.

“Don't take what I just said out of context. I was just saying that I want to enjoy life first before I settle down...”

“Kuhle you will still get to enjoy life even when you're married to me. This will not be bondage, you'll still get to do the things you want to do, only difference is that you'll be married and of course there will be certain things you'll have refrain from doing but either than that you'll still have your independence.” He said with pleading eyes. Why was Lwanda so hell bent on getting me to marry him? All of this was not making any sense to me.

“I don't want any restrictions Lwanda. I want to make mistakes and not feel guilty, I want learning experiences. I'm flattered that you want to marry me really but I'm sorry, it is going to have to be a no.” I looked down. I loved him, God knows I loved him but this was not the right time.

“Okay... I hear you. I hear your argument but Kuhle please. We don't have to get married if that's too much of a commitment. We can consent to being life partners and then we can marry at a later stage.” That sounded worse than marriage, life partners? Lwanda was losing it.

“Why now? Why the rush? I want to study Medicine Lwanda, 7 years of studying. That's if I pass throughout without repeating any modules. How am I going to be able to cope with being a student and a wife?” I was curious, I wanted to know what was going on in his head.

“I want to marry you because I love you and with regards to your studying, we'll cross that bridge when we get there.”

“That bridge is next year as in two months from now. I have already applied at MEDUNSA, right now it is all systems go.” I said getting up “I'm sorry but I can't marry you Lwanda. Sorry that

you wasted your dad's time but Okuhle is not getting married anytime soon." I tried to walk away but he grabbed my hand pulling me towards him.

"Don't do this Kuhle please, I love you." His eyes were glassy with tears. My heart ached just by looking at him, I guess he really wanted to marry me.

"Can I at least think about it?" I was willing to say anything just to get him out of my house.

"I can work with that I guess. Look, I'm going to Nelspruit. I'll be back in January, you can give me my answer then." He said. At least he would be gone for two months and a half. That was definitely going give me room to breathe.

"I'll give you my final answer in January." I said faking a smile. He hugged me and I hugged him right back. It felt great being in his embrace, his broad shoulders allowed me to bury myself in his chest. He smelled so great I got a tingling sensation in my vagina. "Hmm... If only you could break my virginity before you leave..." It came out as a whisper.

"What?" He gently pushed me away.

"What?" I opened my eyes wide. Did I just say that out loud? "You weren't supposed to hear that." I looked down embarrassed. I bet I sounded like some horny freak, who said such things though? He lifted my face with his index finger and glared at me.

"When I get my answer and I'll break your virginity." He said and smiled. Just great! I rolled my eyes. "Time for me to go. We'll talk over the phone. I love you." He kissed me one last time. I cut the kiss short and walked with him to the dining room. The parents were getting along quite well, too well if you asked me.

"You're done talking?" My mom asked as we walked in. I nodded.

"Thank you Mr and Mrs Ndlovu for allowing me to talk to your daughter. I hope that in the near future we'll bring our families together." Lwanda said. He was being too optimistic which made me cringe. We walked them out, dad was impressed to say the least. Any father would be happy to marry their daughter off to a

wealthy family. I didn't care about the money, I cared about my freedom.

11.

LWANDA:

It was now December and Nelspruit was scorching hot. Why I agreed to take a job this side puzzles me. Ever since I got here I had tried to be a good guy because I wanted to impress Kuhle. Temptation has been the root to all my problems, every time I came across a beautiful girl I would question myself whether or not meaningless sex was worth losing Kuhle over. Of course, being the player that I am, it was hard having to turn down free pussy all the time. I am a catch, if I should say so myself but that was now a problem. Girls threw themselves at me, some of them offering to sleep with me simply because I had an undeniable sex appeal that would make any girl drop their panties just by me winking at them. I loved the attention I got, don't get me wrong it felt great being worshiped by the opposite sex.

I haven't had sex for 4 months now and man, I was losing it. I couldn't function and doing the simplest task had suddenly become a mission. There were times were I would laugh at myself for turning Kuhle down, just by thinking about it I'd regret being a gentleman. I should've had her when given the opportunity to. You most probably asked yourself by now why I wanted to marry Kuhle so badly at such a tender age. Well for starters, it's okay for a player like myself to fall in love, just to get that out of the way. Kuhle was my sacred haven and she brought normal to my already complicated life. Yes, I might be rushing the whole thing but I was only trying to keep what was mine. Once she gets to Varsity, a lot of things are going to change. Her independence was going to be my ultimate challenge, not marrying her before

she goes to Varsity meant that I was in danger of losing her and I couldn't have that. I was not trying to trap her, I was simply trying to make things easier for me. I have loved this girl ever since she was in grade 7 or was it 8? Whatever grade she was in, I loved her. The love for her still existed and I refused to lose her to Varsity boys.

It was a week before Christmas and I was wrapping things up at work. The company was closing for the festive season and I was going to Mozambique with the family. It has always been a family tradition to go on vacation during the festive season, hence I told Kuhle I'll be back in January. I had given her space, and I only called her when I felt I needed to hear her voice. She was really excited about going to Varsity and I was happy for her.

"You're still here? I thought you knocked off early, like everybody else." Precious walked into my office that I shared with 3 other interns but they had already left. She was one of the many girls who have offered themselves for sexual favours. All the others girls were easy to turn down but Precious, man Precious... just like her name, she was one precious stone. Rejecting her made me cry myself to sleep, love came knocking at my door at the wrong time.

"I'll be on my way. Why are you still here? I thought you said that you're going to Durban?" I said trying to avoid checking her out. She had a killer body with thunder thighs. She always dressed to kill and I was a sucker for women who knew how to dress.

"Well my flight plans have changed, I'm only flying out tonight." She sat on the chair opposite me and I kept my head down pretending to be typing something on my keyboard.

"Oh okay. I'm driving to Witbank tomorrow morning. I miss my parents and siblings." I said.

"Lwanda..."

"Mhmm..." I avoided lifting my face.

"Look at me..." She said softly. I took a deep breath, why was she doing this? I slowly looked up and she revealed her beautiful



smile.

“She is blessed.” She giggled. I raised my eyebrow, I always wondered if she had a boyfriend or something.

“Who is?” I asked.

“Your girlfriend. You even struggle to keep eye contact with me because you’re scared you might be tempted to do something that you will regret.” She flipped her lively weave to the back and leaned in “She doesn’t have to know. Just one night and we’ll move on with our lives.” She winked.

My body temperature rose and I pulled my tie looking at her. She was the she devil.

“I’m good, thanks. I’ll pass.” I said clearing my throat. She stood up and walked behind my chair. She was making me nervous.

“Are you sure about that?” She whispered into my ear. She turned my chair around and sat on top of me. “Just one round, we can do it here. Goodness that has always been one of my fantasies. Hot, steamy office sex.” She bit her lower lip. As much as that sounded super sexy but I couldn’t. My penis was already betraying me, it responded to her kinky talk.

“Uhm... Presh look, you’re beautiful and super attractive but don’t you think you’re selling yourself off too cheap? I mean look at this, is this the person you are?” I gently pushed her off of me. The devil in me was throwing a fit but I needed to start thinking like a married man. I turned my chair around and switched off my desktop. She stood behind me, I guess she couldn’t believe I rejected her for the 5th time now. I packed my bag and stood up. “Are you going to stand there all day?” I asked. She was making my knees weak, I was really horny and it took everything in me not to act upon it.

“Well Mr Maseko, I’m disappointed in you.” She gently pushed me and I landed on my desk. She stood in-between my legs leaning closer to my face. She breathe down my neck trailing kisses. My heart pounded, shit! That was my weak spot, my neck was my weakness. She wrap her arms around my neck and looked deep

into my eyes. I was sweating up a storm. She leaned in and kissed me, it felt great. I haven't had a woman this close to me in a long time. I grabbed her neck, tilting her head and kissed her with extreme with hunger.

OKUHLE:

I was sitting outside my house with Thando. She has been raving about Cape Town and how awesome it was being in Varsity and not having to answer to your parents all the time. I was happy that she was in Varsity and enjoying every moment of it but not even once did she ask about me or how my baby brother was doing. I was actually relieved that Lu wasn't around or seeing her would have opened old wounds. It took him 4 months to get over her but I was not convinced that he was completely over her.

"So friend, there is this guy [I rolled my eyes] who is studying Medicine. He and I have been trying out this dating thing. Chommie he is so hot, I think I'm falling for him." She said grinning. I was frustrated with Thando, she was a different person and so insensitive. Ever since she came for the December holidays it has been Thando this, Thando that, Thando everything. I was starting to get bored.

"Oh! Funny how people fall in love easily these days." I said under my breath.

"What's that supposed to mean? You easily fell in love with Lwanda and your brother easily fell in love with me and nobody questioned you guys. Why can't you be happy for me?" She snapped. I looked at her shocked by her outburst. I chuckled shaking my head.

"I'm happy for you." I faked a smile. I should've went to Middleburg Mall with the family, their company was going to be far better than being here with Thando.

"No it's fine. I understand your jealousy, I'm in Varsity and you're not. Things are looking up for me but you're moving at a gradual pace. I mean, what have you been doing this whole year besides sitting at home and watching TV the whole day? Did you even

pass or you're making that shit up?" She stood up. "You know what? Forget it, I'm leaving." I looked at her defeated, her words didn't even leave a dent in my heart. I failed to understand what was her problem and the relevance of all the things she just said to me.

My father's car drove onto the driveway, Lu was sitting in the front. I didn't think they were going to return so soon. Enhle got off first after the car stopped and she modelled her way to the door, this one was probably dating. There way she has been acting lately has me questioning her innocence. Mom and dad got off after her.

"Okuhle please come help your brother with the plastics." My mom said. Lu was still in the car and Thando was standing next to me looking at Lu. I walked to the car and she followed me.

"I'll help too." She said. What happened to 'forget it, I'm leaving'? I opened the boot and Lu slowly got off. I stole a glance at him and he looked defeated.

"Hey Lu..." Thando said with a smile.

"Sup..." He didn't even look at her. He took a bunch of plastic bags and went to the house.

"What's his deal?" She looked at me. I wanted to laugh, I had to give it to Cape Town. I took the remaining plastic bags and we walked to the house. Mom was already unpacking and I offered to help.

"Where is Lu?" I asked. I wanted to talk to him.

"In his room." Mom said. I immediately made my way to his room and I knocked before letting myself in.

"Baby brother..." I said softly. He looked at me and shook his head.

"Why would you bring her here?" He asked faintly. I swallowed a huge lump in my throat.

"I'm sorry Lu, she just dropped in unannounced. I thought you guys were only coming back later tonight. Didn't you say you're over her?" I asked.

“I thought I was but when I saw her standing there. The feelings I had for her slowly crept back in. She looks beautiful and it’s a pity I can’t be with her.” He sighed.

“Lu, Thando has changed. I’m thinking of ending our friendship. She is no longer the Thando we know.” I sat next to him and rubbed his back. “For what it’s worth, she doesn’t deserve a geek like you. You deserve way better than her. I’m asking you nicely baby bro, let go of her.” I said.

“Yeah, I guess you’re right. Thank you sis.” He flashed me a smile “You’re the best. Give your baby bro a hug.” He stood up opening his arms. I looked at him and laughed.

“You’re such a nerd.” I said. I stood up and hugged him. He was taller than me, which I found weird because I was the big sister but either than that being in his embrace warmed my heart. I loved everything about the kind of relationship I had with him.

“So...” He pulled away from the hug “Are you going to accept Lwanda’s proposal?” He asked. He had a curious mind.

“Wouldn’t you like to know?” I laughed. “Excuse me, I need to get rid of Thando.” I walked to the door.

“Come on sis, I’d love for him to be my brother-in-law. He loves you, allow him to treat you like the queen that you are. I thought girls were all for marriage? Or, has that changed?” I turned around.

“Lu I’m still young for marriage...”

“Age is just a number...” He interjected.

“Yeah... But I don’t think I’m ready. I love him, yes. But marriage? That’s a big step Lu. Would you marry at 19?” I asked.

“If I found the one, yeah I would. Why wait? If I love that girl enough to marry her then who am I to stand in the way of destiny?” He spoke a lot of sense but Lu and I didn’t think alike.

“That is very profound. One would swear you’re older than me but brother, marriage is not for me.” I said. He laughed and looked at me.

“I trust Lwanda to change your mind-set. Keep telling yourself that

you're not ready for marriage, you're actually in denial. Why tell him that you will think about it when you're against the whole thing? It is clear that you're weighing your options. Stop lying to yourself big sis and face reality." He said. I didn't have a comeback to that little speech he just spun. There was some truth to what he said but marriage couldn't really be an option or could it?

12.

OKUHLE.

It was a Saturday morning, the last Saturday of January and I was getting ready to meet up with Lwanda. Ever since he got back from vacation I had been avoiding him. He called me over a thousand times and I only answered my phone twice out of the numerous times he called. The problem was that, I loved him and it felt great that he wanted to make me his wife but I kept asking myself if I was ready. People do get married at my age and the marriage actually works out but which statistic would I fall under? I was in denial; I wanted to go to school more than anything but I also wanted to be with him. I was conflicted and I didn't have anyone to talk to. Mom always said that follow your heart and trust that you will make the right decision for you and your future. My dad on the other hand just wanted me to be his baby girl for eternity. He didn't want me to get married, not now, not ever.

I got dressed into my grey washed out skinny jeans, a white bodysuit with a navy blue blazer. I did my make-up, something I was good at and tied my hair into a lazy bun. I put on navy blue wedges to compliment the blazer and walked out. I got to the dining room and Lu was busy on his laptop.

"Good morning baby brother." I greeted him with a smile. He raised his head and titled it checking me out.

“Going somewhere?” He asked. I sat next to him and closed his laptop.

“Yeah, Lwanda is taking me out for breakfast.” I loved talking to Lu about anything and everything. At times I would forget that he was younger than me but his maturity made it easier for me to open up to him.

“Breakfast huh? Is it going to end at breakfast? Or, maybe you are planning to have brunch as well, including late lunch? And by late lunch I mean ziggy ziggy high high...” He laughed. I smacked him at the back of his head and laughed with him.

“Ziggy ziggy what now? [I laughed] Lu please, why must everything be about sex to you?” I giggled shaking my head.

“Because men love sex, we live for it and its high time women understood that. Can’t believe you’re still starving that man.” He shook his head “What do you want from me big sis?” He asked with a smile.

“I have to give Lwanda my answer today and I’m... I don’t know Lu. I love him...”

“Do you love him enough to marry him?” He looked into my eyes.

“I don’t know [I dropped my head] don’t you think marriage is a big step though? I mean, once I become his wife, life as I know it is going to change.” I looked at him “Lu, what if he is just trying to trap me?” I asked faintly dropping my head once again. He sighed and held my hand.

“Look at me...” I slowly lifted my head to face him. He smiled faintly causing me to smile as well. My brother was the sweetest, he was going to make a girl super happy someday.

“Kuhle, I know this is scary and what not but don’t be scared to try out things because of fear. The substance of fear is to subdue you from living life to the fullest. Yes, marriage might sound absurd but what if Lwanda means well? What if the only thing that he is guilty of, was loving you? Loving you enough to marry you? He has experienced life and studied but you can also do that even



as somebody else's wife. Your dreams don't have to end because you're married to him, dare to be different.

Marriage is not bondage, not anymore. You can be a wife and still be educated. You're the author of your life and only you know the ending to it. Marrying Lwanda doesn't mean he determines your ending, yes y'all are going to be co-authors but it ends there... And I've said too much." He opened his laptop and focused his attention on it. I looked at him in awe, Lu was full of surprises. He was knowledgeable and has me wondering where got all this intelligence from.

There was a soft knock at the door. I didn't know that the gate was open. I got up from the chair still looking at Lu. He definitely made me see things differently. I walked to the kitchen and opened the door. I was greeted by Lwanda's smile. He looked handsome as always.

"Good morning." I smiled. I felt a lot better thanks to Lu. I knew what my answer was going to be.

"Looking beautiful. Didn't think you'll dress up for breakfast. Thank you, I appreciate it."

"Do you want to come in? Luthando is in the dining room, I'm sure he would be happy to see you." I said.

"Yeah, sure. I guess I can come in before we go." I made way for him to come in and we walked to the dining room. Lu had his headphones on nodding to whatever he was listening to. He didn't even see us walk in. I banged the table to get his attention and as soon as he lifted his head, he jumped out of his chair.

"Lwanda my guy..." He walked up to him and they fist bumped, exchanging a manly hug.

"Sup young man?"

"Well what can I say? I have nothing to complain about. Take care of my sister yeah?" He held my hand.

"Don't I always? If anything, she should take care of me." We all laughed.

"Anyway, let me not keep you lovebirds. Enjoy your breakfast

date.” He gave me hug and a kiss on the cheek. “Remember what I said.” He whispered into my ear. I cleared my throat and pulled away from the hug.

“I’ll see you later. Tell mom I’ve already left.” Lwanda took my hand into his and we both walked out. I kept weighing my options in my head and they all took me back to what Lu said. This was going to be harder than I thought.

“Goodness, how many cars do you have?” He came with a Mercedes Benz A45 S, white with black rims and a black stripe in the middle.

“Only this one.” He opened the door for and went to his side.

“What happened to the Polo?” I asked.

“This is an upgrade love. Daddy dearest was being generous after I graduated cum laude. And besides, I’m too old to be driving around in a Polo.” He shrugged his shoulders.

“Oh...” I hoped Lwanda was not an arrogant rich kid, there were things he would say that said a lot about the kind of person he was but I refused to judge him prematurely. We drove all the way to Highveld Mall and went to Cappuccinos for breakfast. He was being touchy as always, not that I was complaining, I was used to it by now. We got a table for two and we sat down.

“You look beautiful.” He said biting his lower lip.

“Thank you.” The smile I had on was permanently plastered on my face, I couldn’t contain myself. Lwanda’s presence did things to me. I couldn’t look at him straight in the eyes, he made me nervous. His deep voice was enough to get me to fall in love with him over and over again.

“Thank you for allowing me to bring you here. After the numerous attempts at calling you, I thought you didn’t want to be with me anymore. I love you Kuhle and I want you believe that I do.” He held my hand, gently squeezing it.

“I believe you. I’m sorry, this is overwhelming. I’m 19 turning 20, this is not how I imagined life would turn out.” I shrugged my shoulders. The waiter came to take our order and I just ordered

their breakfast special, I wasn't really hungry. A lot weighed on my mind and food was the last thing I thought of. He ordered the same thing.

He took out a small box from his pocket and placed it on the table. He looked at me and his eyes twinkled with tears. He then looked down fighting the tears away and that warmed my heart. I guess this was what he wanted and who was I to stand in the way of his happiness?

13.

LWANDA:

When I took out the ring box and placed it on the table, I was engulfed by an overwhelming urge to cry but I couldn't. She made me weak but this was not the time for her to see that side of me. When I left home this morning, I was with my father and he told that I must take the bulls by the horns and embody strength. He said that a woman would never go for a man who was weak and I took that with me. My tears were going to be a sign of weakness and I couldn't have that.

"What's in the box?" She asked. Okuhle was humble at heart and she smiled at everything, she was a happy soul and that was what drew me to her. Shit! I loved her.

"Pay no mind to the box. Your answer to my request determines how we handle the box at the end of our breakfast date." I giggled.

"That is going to be a challenge. You're not being fair Lwanda. I want to see what's in the box." She folded her arms and pretended to be mad. I laughed at her, she looked so cute.

"Patience is virtue love. Lose that frown, it makes you look ugly." I

said laughing. Her frown slowly turned into a smile and she laughed along with me.

Our food came and she asked that we pray first before we ate. I was impressed, she was a God fearing woman and that was a cherry on top. After praying we dug in and we engaged in light conversation. I would take a moment and just stare at her as she spoke whilst eating. I felt myself fall deeper and deeper for her. "Are you listening to me?" She raised her eyebrow and I snapped back to reality.

"Yes I am. Uhm.., yeah, you are right." I didn't even hear what she said but I had to say something. She laughed shaking her head.

"We're not even married yet but already you're lying? This is definitely a bad start to this whole thing." She smiled and continued eating.

"Lwanda Maseko, man..." We both turned our attention the where that came from and my high school fling stood before us.

"Pearl Zulu..." I said with a smile. I couldn't believe I used to date her. Her beauty has faded but she still looked pretty. I got up and gave her hug and she grabbed on to me until I heard Kuhle clear her throat. Flip, I messed up. I was not good at this. I pulled away from the hug and turned my attention to Kuhle, she didn't look pleased.

"Uhm... Babe, this is Pearl. Pearl this is my fiancée, Okuhle." I had to pull the fiancée card to ease Kuhle a bit. Pearl's facial expression changed.

"So you're engaged?" She looked disappointed but hey, we have all grown up and she was probably dating.

"Yeah, I have met my soul mate." I smiled and sat back down.

"Oh well... It's a pleasure to meet you Okuhle." She took a good look at her

"Pleasure is all mine." She flashed her a fake smile.

"Wait... [Kuhle and I looked at her] don't I know you from somewhere? You look awfully familiar."

"Pearl, if you don't mind. We were in a middle of something. It

was nice seeing you after so long but if you'll excuse us..." I said calmly. I knew Kuhle could recognize her but Pearl used to be there it girl back in high school, she never paid attention to the juniors so her remembering who Okuhle was, was 1 out of a 100. "Yeah, of course. Sorry to disturb you guys." She walked away.

"I'm sorry about that, she was..."

"Was your ex- How could I forget the girl who had the guy I loved?" She rolled her eyes "I think I've lost my appetite." She pushed her plate away from her and rested her back. "Can you take me home?"

"Kuhle come on, just because of her?"

"No, just because I don't feel like being here anymore." She folded her arms. She was being serious and I had to find a way to get her to smile again.

"Let's start over. I'm sorry, there won't be any more disturbances. I'll even switch my phone off." I reached for my phone and switched it off.

"Don't do me any favours. Why would you hug your ex in front of me like that? You were even lost in the moment. Why do you even want to marry me?" She shook her head "I think you're confused Lwanda, you think you're doing what's right but no, you're doing this because you're scared you might lose me. This is not even about love or growing old together but it is about you being selfish. To think I was going to say yes. I thank God for Pearl." She stood up "You'll find me in the car." She took the car key from the table and walked away. I gently banged the table, I was starting to think that destiny was against this whole thing. I settled the bill and told the waiter to dispose of the food. I took the ring and walked out.

I got to the car and she was sitting at the backseat. I giggled slightly and got in. She gave me the key and clicked her tongue. "Take me home." She said sternly. I looked at her through the rear-view mirror and smiled. She needed to be tamed. I started the car and slowly drove out of the parking lot.

“Can I have 3 hours of your time? And, then I’ll take you home.” I asked.

“Whatever...” She whispered.

I drove to Protea Hotel. Upon arrival, I parked the car and stepped out.

“Let’s go.” I said.

“I’m not getting off.” She pouted her lips. I chuckled and walked over to her side of the door and opened it.

“Let’s go...”

“No!” She folded her arms.

“I’ll drag you out of this car and carry you to the hotel room. Try me!” I said holding the door. I had to intimidate her or else I was going to give into her being angry at me and I didn’t want that.

“Go ahead.” She gave me attitude. I laughed pushing the door further.

“Fine!” I reached in, in an attempt to grab her and she moved away.

“Fine! Fine! You have proven your point. I’ll come with you.” She was suppressing her laughter. At least I was getting somewhere.

“Good!” She got off and I locked the car. We walked to the reception area hand-in-hand, she didn’t want to hold my hand but I forced her to. I booked a room for the day and we walked up.

“Why bring me here?” She asked as we walked up the stairs.

“I want to be with you, just the two of us. I want to connect with you.”

“Okay...” she went silent. We got to our room and she sat on the bed and switched on the TV.

“I didn’t bring you here so that you can watch TV Kuhle.” I stood before her and took the remote switching off the TV. I pulled her up and hugged her, she hugged me. I kissed her on the forehead and pulled away from the hug.

“What do you want?” I asked looking at her.

“What do you mean?” I took off my top. She checked me out and swallowed hard. She kept ogling me. She was giving me the exact reaction I wanted.



“You can touch if you want, I won’t bite.” I grinned flexing my muscles.

“No I’m good.” She bit her lower lip. I moved closer to her and she moved back until she couldn’t move any further because of the bed.

“What do you want Okuhle?” I glared at her and her breathing pattern changed.

“What is this Lwanda? I...” I smashed my lips into hers and she responded. She wrapped her arms around my neck as I grabbed onto her. The hunger was too much to contain. I picked her up and she wrapped her legs around my waist. She moaned in my mouth, I didn’t think virgins could do that but hey, what did I know? The kiss was so intense that my member was rock hard. I slowly laid her on the bed and took off her shoes. I then got in-between her legs and she looked deep into my eyes. I knew that all she could see was hunger.

“Do I have the permission to deflower you?” I asked softly. She nodded slowly. “Are you sure?” I whispered.

“Yes...” She licked her lips. I unbuttoned her jeans and pulled them off. She was not wearing any panties under the bodysuit and it turned me on. She took off her blazer and I took off my jeans. I was left in my briefs and got on top of the bed. I went straight for her neck and sucked on it, I wanted to leave a mark. I saw it as marking my territory. I moved from the neck to her mouth, kissing her. I squeezed her boobs as her hands roamed all over my body. It felt great that I was the one to take her virginity and I was planning to make this moment a memorable one.

14.

OKUHLE:

He caressed my thighs as he sucked on my neck. I had goosebumps all over my body, it felt great being romanced and my body responded to every touch and every kiss. My heart was pounding out of my chest, simply because I was anxious and scared at the same time. He took his time with me, I couldn't rush him because I was inexperienced. All I knew was that I was ready. My nuna had a tingling sensation, he pulled my hand and made me rub against it. I could feel the moist, just by touching myself my body temp rose in an instant. He squeezed my breast and kissed me numerous times, I went with the flow. He ushered me into an unknown place of pleasure and I didn't want him to stop.

"Close your eyes." He whispered. Of course, I wanted to see everything as it happened but then I did as I was told. He spread my legs, which was a challenge because I kept closing them but he told me to relax and give him control over my body. He rubbed my nuna first then inserted two of his fingers. I gasped for air, it was painful but in a pleasant way. A moan escaped my mouth, I didn't think I had it in me. He gave me a good fucking but all I could think about was that, if he was that good with his fingers then how great was he with his machine gun?

"Are you ready?" He asked and I nodded repeatedly. I could feel my heartbeat on my throat, that was how scared I was.

"It's going to be painful but all I ask is that you relax your body and your vaginal walls. Okay?" I nodded once again. He positioned himself and spread my legs a little wider, he placed the tip of his dick on my entrance and I shut my eyes real tight. 'Any moment now, any moment now' I kept saying in my head.

"Look at me... I need you to open your eyes and look at me." He said. I opened my eyes and he smiled at me "You're so cute when you're scared. Do not worry, soon enough you'll be moving at my rhythm. Relax okay?" I bit my lower lip blushing. I felt so special.

This was what I wanted. He held his member and slowly penetrated me. The pain was too much and I pushed myself up. I shook my head.

“I can’t do this...” I whispered. He smiled once again and pulled me down. He took both my arms and held me by the wrists. He pinned my arms above my head ensuring he had a tight grip.

“Relax... That’s all you have to do.” He looked at me deep into my eyes as he tried to penetrate me yet again. It was painful, I tried to move away but he had a tight grip on me. Tears eventually fell from the corners of eyes as he slowly moved in and out without breaking eye contact. He slowly picked up the pace but I was still struggling to relax my body. The pain was too much, which begs the question: How do people enjoy this when it was this painful? He moaned and groaned, he was clearly enjoying himself. I faked a moan or two but I was not enjoying myself. I wanted him to stop, after a few gentle thrusts he started cursing, he shut his eyes real tight and his grip got tighter. I didn’t know what was going on but I felt warm liquid fill me up. It hit me in that very moment that he didn’t use a condom. He collapsed to my right-hand side breathing heavily. I didn’t know whether to move or stay in that awkward position but my vagina was on fire and I was filled with regret.

“Thank you. That was great.” He said turning to face me. I kept staring at the ceiling. I couldn’t hold back the tears, I had mixed feelings about what had just happened. I thought I’d be over the moon but I felt empty instead. I felt as if a part of me was ripped right out of me.

“Kuhle?” I was lost in my thoughts. “Kuhle?” He shook me. I swayed my eyes at him and he frowned.

“Why didn’t you use a condom?” I finally managed to ask.

“We’ll take care of that, don’t worry. I didn’t plan this but don’t stress yourself we’ll go buy emergency contraceptive pills just to be on the safe side.” He said getting up from the bed. “Let’s go take a shower.” He pulled me up. I slowly got off the bed and his

semen slid down my legs. I looked at it and I was disgusted. I looked at the duvet cover and there was a blood stain. I frowned at the sight of the blood, this was not what I signed up for.

“Hey, Kuhle? Babe come on, that’s completely normal.” He picked me up and carried me to the en-suite bathroom. He opened the water in the shower and we awkwardly waited for the water to get warm. I felt less loved, this feeling was unfavourable. He stepped in and I followed. We showered in complete silence. I didn’t want to be here with him. I wanted to go home and cuddle my teddy bear. After we were done he stepped out of the shower and then he dried me up. I didn’t want him to but he insisted so I let him be.

“Okuhle?”

“Hmm...” I said getting dressed. This was wrong on so many levels.

“Come on baby, talk to me. Are you okay?”

“I’ll be fine. Please take me home.” I said faintly.

“I thought we’re going to spend the night here? I’d love for us to spend the night...” I looked at him in disbelief. There was no way I was going to put myself through that excruciating pain once again, so spending the night with him was a definite no – no.

“I don’t think so. I want to go home!” I put on my blazer and slowly made my way to the door. “Are you coming or what?” I asked looking at him.

“I’ll be right behind you.” He said. I shrugged my shoulders and walked out. My thighs were painful, it felt like I was exercising. The walk to the parking lot was a shameful one but I was glad that he was not walking with me or else I was going to be a laughingstock. I waited next to his car and he slowly approached. I checked him out and he looked gorge but why was I feeling the way I was feeling towards him? I didn’t want him near me, I didn’t want to see his face. I just wanted to be alone. He opened the car and I gladly got into the backseat.

“Are you okay?” He asked as soon as he got in and I nodded looking out the window. He started the car and slowly drove off.

He kept stealing glances at me through the rear-view mirror. He tried to initiate small talk but I shut him out. I was not in the mood. We went to Clicks and he gave me money to go buy the morning after pills. I felt like dirt just by requesting for them from the pharmacist. They made me fill-out a form before giving me the pills. I didn't know that people had to go through all this just to get the freaken emergency contraceptive pill. I was never planning on having unprotected sex ever again, this was just too humiliating. I paid for the pills and once again, I strolled to the car. I got in and gave him the change.

"Keep it." He said. It was a R 100 note and a few coins.

"No thanks!" I was being rude, not because I wanted to but it was because of how I felt. I didn't want to be in his presence. He gave me a concerned look then took the money from me.

"So about the proposal..."

"Forget it, not going to happen!" I cut him short. "Just drive me home please." I shook my head. He just took my virginity and all he wanted to talk about was the proposal? How insensitive could he be? I lost my pride and he was concerned about my response. I was mad, I was breathing fire, man I was overwhelmed by mixed emotions and I wanted to shout at him but I didn't have a reason to.

Within a few minutes he parked at my gate and I waited for him to unlock the door so I could run to my room.

"Kuhle can we talk about this?" He turned to look at me.

"Now you want to talk?" I chuckled shaking my head. "Open the door Lwanda. You got what you wanted, now please let me go." I said faintly. Tears threatened my eyes, I didn't expect to lose my virginity like that. It was supposed to be special and I was supposed to plan for it. I know I wanted this but I didn't anticipate to feel so empty after having done the deed.

"I love you Kuhle. This was not about sex, I'm honoured that you let me deflower you but it wasn't about sex. Will you marry me?" His eyes were twinkling with tears and he opened the black box

showing me the ring, I couldn't miss the size of that stone. I looked at the ring and then looked at him.

"I don't know Lwanda..." I whispered.

"Okay... Take the ring then and think about it all you want. When you're ready, let me know and I'll ask you again." He closed the box and handed it to me. I took it and sighed.

"I'm sorry for being rude. Can we talk tomorrow when I have made sense of everything?"

"Yeah, sure... I'll call you tomorrow." He unlocked the doors and I got off. I waved goodbye and ran to the house. I bumped into Lu on the passage.

"And she's back." He said with a smile.

"Not now Lu." I pushed him to the side and ran into my room. I locked the door behind me and threw myself on the bed. I reached for my teddy bear and cuddled him, I had never felt so empty and I regretted losing my virginity. Before I knew it, I was out.

15.

A FEW DAYS LATER

OKUHLE:

I woke up with a banging headache, consequences one suffers after a night of drinking. Lu has become a bad influence and I didn't even know how he does it. I hadn't spoken to Lwanda since he took my virginity, he has been calling but I hadn't been answering. I had come to terms with the fact that my v-card was gone and never coming back. I felt less guilty and I had been reminiscing about the day I lost it. I overreacted after the whole ordeal I must admit, but I felt a lot better now and I was ready to sit down and talk with Lwanda.

My phone beeped on the sideboard and I reached for it. I was home alone which was a bummer but people had lives to live,



mine was only taking off the following week when I go to O Week. The excitement of going back to school was beyond me.

Lwanda: I'm going back to Nelspruit today, can I come see you?

I read his text with a frown on my face. I never got to spend time with him because I was busy being a child but it wouldn't hurt seeing him before he left.

Me: Yeah sure, I'm home alone. You can drop by any time before 12:00.

I sent my text and jumped out of bed. It was already 09:30 which meant he would be here before 10:00. His house was in Bankenveld Estate which was 19 minutes away from here, he could drive faster and be here within 15 minutes.

Lwanda: Great! I'm on my way, plus I'm hungry \*wink\*

I chuckled shaking my head. Lwanda was such an opportunist, now I had to prepare breakfast for him. I rushed to take a quick shower in mom's bathroom and by quick I meant like 10 minutes max. After I was done, I dried my body and walked back to my room to get dressed. I didn't know what to wear so I settled for leggings with Lu's T-shirt. I loved wearing Lu's clothes, I felt cute in them. I knew that he was going to throw a fit when he got home because this was his favourite T-shirt but I didn't have anything better to wear. I combed my hair and tied it up into a messy bun and did a natural feel make-up. I glared at my reflection on the mirror and it dawned on me that soon I'll be Mrs Maseko, yes I was going to accept his proposal but I had conditions.

After doing the finishing touches I went to get started on breakfast. Whilst I was busy frying the bacon he sent me a text letting me know that he was at the gate. I pressed the remote to open for him and continued. Within a minute he was at the door and I opened for him with a huge smile on my face, I missed him. "Somebody woke up on the right side of the bed." He said with a smile.

"Actually it was in the middle with me facing up." I laughed.

“Please, come in.” I made way for him to enter and we walked to the kitchen with him holding my waist from behind. It felt great being held like that.

“So honey, is my breakfast ready?” He playfully bit my ear. I giggled, this felt great. I could already see us in our own house as husband and wife. The feeling was surreal, in my head I was already married to him.

“I was just wrapping up. Brace yourself for a full English Breakfast courtesy of mwa...” I broke free from his embrace and he sat on the kitchen counter close to the sink.

“I don’t think Mrs Ndlovu will appreciate you sitting on her kitchen counter like that.” I laughed and dished up for us.

“She’s not here, so allow me to get away with it this once.”

“Of course.” I poured juice for myself and he asked for Sprite. I gave him his food and we walked to the dining room.

“This looks good MaNdlovu and spells divine too.” He said.

“Thank you. I tried.” We sat down, I requested that we pray first before we ate which he gladly agreed to, and he even led the prayer.

“...for this we pray and we thank you. Amen.”

“Amen.” I opened my eyes and smiled at him. His intentions could be pure, it was time to put my doubts to rest.

“So...” I said as we dug in “I’m sorry about the after myth of our sexual encounter.” He looked at me and giggled. He chewed what was in his mouth and swallowed almost choking because he was busy giggling.

“What’s so funny?” I asked.

“Did you just call losing your virginity an encounter?” He laughed covering his mouth “I’m sorry to laugh but Kuhle come on. You saw that as an encounter?”

“Okay, maybe encounter was not the correct phrase to use but you get what I mean. My reaction was just immature and I acted like you coerced me which was the total opposite. I was a willing participant and I gave consent so everything that happened after

was unnecessary.”

“Spoken like a true 20 year old. I was beginning to think that maybe your level of maturity was lacking. I accept your apology and I’m sorry that losing your pride was a painful experience. The painful part is over, you will enjoy sex from now on. I promise.” He winked at me and we continued eating. It felt good that we addressed the elephant in the room and he handled it like a pro. I was expecting him to say things like how he got turned off by my reaction or how immature I was by not answering his phone calls, instead he did the complete opposite. I would be a fool to let him slip right through my fingers.

We finished eating and he helped me wash the dishes. He couldn’t stop complementing how scrumptious the food was and I was happy that he enjoyed it. I was trying to impress him after all.

“May I please see your bedroom?” I neatly hung the dish washing cloth and slowly looked at him.

“I hope you’re not trying to get into my pants? I’m still recovering.” I said. He burst out in laughter, he was in good mood I tell you.

“Kuhle, I don’t need you to be in your bedroom in order for me to the fuck the lights out of you. I can fuck you right here in your mother’s kitchen [I looked at him with my eyes wide open] so relax, I just want to see your room. I don’t promise to be on best behaviour though.” He pulled my cheek and I shook my head. I took his hand into mine and we walked to my room. I’m a lover of chick flick movies, you know how when the girl is about to have sex with a guy in her house and then she holds the guy’s hand leading him to her bedroom? Yes, I did the same thing, I wanted to know how it felt like leading a guy to my bedroom.

“This is my sanctuary.” I said as soon as we walked in. He looked around and kept nodding his head.

“I love the feel, it’s inviting. Clean too. I’m impressed.” He threw himself on the bed and I sat on the chair next to the study table.

“You say that as if having a dirty room would be a deal breaker. In case you have forgotten, you have already proposed so there is

no turning back.” I said swinging the chair from side-to-side.

“Speaking of proposals, did you think about my proposal...” I nodded “And?”

“Yes, I’ll marry you...” He jumped up from the bed before I could even finish my sentence.

“Thank you baby. Oh! Thank you.” He pulled me up from the chair and started kissing me all over my face. I just froze, I needed to finish my sentence.

“Calm down tiger, I’m not done.” I gently pushed him away.

“What do you mean?”

“I have conditions Lwanda, yes I’ll marry you but I have conditions.” I shrugged my shoulders. His facial expression changed, I guess I ruined the moment.

“Conditions?”

“Yeah, I’m accepting your engagement but we’ll only get married after I graduate. I’m still going to MEDUNSA to study, I’m still going to get a place to stay and enjoy my independence. I’ll respect you and your engagement, I’ll even wear your ring but I’m not going to stop doing things that I want to do just because I’m engaged to you. If we can agree on that then yes, I’ll marry you Lwanda Maseko.” I smiled at him but he just kept a straight face.

“Kuhle...”

“Mhmm...” I looked at him.

“I don’t have 7 years. I can’t wait that long.”

“Those are my conditions Lwanda and I’m not going to change them.” I kept a straight face.

He walked closer to me and pulled me towards him. He tilted my head to the side and smashed his lips onto mine. He passionately kissed me with his hands roaming all over my body. The kiss intensified and I lost all my senses, I wanted him. We slowly walked us to the bed and he gently laid me down without breaking the kiss. I moaned in his mouth, it was happening again and I was more than ready. His hands went under the T-shirt I was wearing and he squeezed my boobs. As much as I was loving what he

was doing to me, I was not about to have sex in my father's house. Lu might be doing it but he was a guy, guys tend to do that but I was not comfortable with that thought. I gently broke the kiss.

"My conditions still stand." I crawled from underneath him and got off the bed. He sighed and looked at me.

"Can we negotiate at least?" He asked calmly.

"No Lwanda."

"Let me get going. I'll call you when I get to Nelspruit." He walked towards the door.

"You're leaving just like that?"

"I have a lot to think about. Please walk me out?" We both walked out of my room and made our way to the kitchen. I took the remote from the kitchen counter and walked him out.

"Thank you for coming." I said when we got to his car.

"I had to see you. I'll come visit you in Pta." I nodded. We hugged which lasted for a while then he pulled away planting a kiss on my forehead.

"I love you." He got into the car.

"I love you too." I closed the door and he started the ignition. He drove out as I waved goodbye.

A few hours later the kids came back from school. I was in my bedroom listening to music. I knew Lu would be in my room any minute now. There was a knock on my door, that's a first. Lu never knocks.

"Come in." I said. I was lying on my tummy listening to the music on my phone.

"Hey baby." I turned my head to the door.

"Oh, mom..." I got up and sat up straight.

"Were you expecting someone else?"

"Yeah, Lu always comes in here at this time." I said.

"Good! I love the relationship you have with your brother. You should try and build a relationship with your sister as well, she complains about you two a lot." She said.

“I tried mom but you know your daughter. I’ll keep trying if it will make you happy.” She nodded. She kept looking around and I waited to hear why she was in my room.

“Can I sit so that we can talk?” I frowned. Not this again... The last time she did this she gave me a pack of condoms to carry around.

“Of course. I love talking to you mom.” I smiled. She sat next to me and looked deep into my eyes. Her eyes were glassy with tears and I got scared. I started thinking of the worst, like my dad being dead or anything along those lines.

“Mom, are you okay?” I asked.

“Of course baby. I want you know that I love you, no matter what and I’d love for us to be more open with one another. I don’t know if I failed in some departments as a mom but I tried my level best.” She looked down as one tear escaped her eye.

“Mom you’re scaring me.” She placed a pink box on the sideboard and looked at me. I looked at the box and my heart nearly stopped. I forgot to drink the morning after pills!

16.

OKUHLE:

I looked at the box and dropped my eyes, how could I forget? This was going to mess with everything I’ve worked so hard for.

“Okuhle, whose pills are these?” Mom asked. Her voice was breaking, I could tell she wanted to shout at me but composed herself.

“Not mine, obviously! Is that a rhetorical question?” I shook my head. I couldn’t tell her that they belonged to me.

“Look at me in the eyes and tell me that these pills are not yours and then explain to me why they were under your bed!” She said sternly. I swallowed hard and took a deep breath.



“Under my bed? Mom what were you doing under my bed? [I raised my voice] you go through my things now? Am I not trustworthy? What were you doing in my room to begin with? Like I don’t under...” She slapped me so hard I saw butterflies. I had to throw a fake tantrum or else she was going to kill me.

“You will not raise your voice at me and this is my house. If I feel like raiding your room, I will raid it. My house, my rules. Now answer me dammit!” She yelled under her breath. I had never seen my mom that angry. Her eyes were filled with tears, I couldn’t bear the thought of being a disappointment yet again.

“I... mom I’m sorry. I don’t know how I forgot. I was supposed to drink them but like... I don’t know...” I hung my head in shame as tears graced my cheeks. She heaved a huge sigh and got up from the bed. I couldn’t bring myself to look at her, all she ever wanted was the best for me.

“Okuhle, Okuhle Ndlovu kodwa yini? You told me that I didn’t send you to a private school only for you to be negligent and have unprotected sex but yet we find ourselves in this situation. What do you have to say for yourself now? Clearly, going to a “private” school didn’t stop you from having unprotected sex.” She spoke calmly but her words pierced right through my heart. She was in tears and the disappointment was far too great.

“I’m sorry mom, it was an honest mistake.” I said in a low voice.

“Nyonest mistake? [Chuckled] this mistake is going to cost you the future that your father and I have been working so hard for. I pray for your sake that your father doesn’t disown you. I am disappointed in you.” She walked towards the door and I looked at her with sunken eyes. “And oh [She turned] abortion is not an option. In this house we’re believers so if you are pregnant you will keep that baby, nurture it and love it wholeheartedly. A baby is a blessing and you will not, I repeat, you will not at any given time blame that child for your carelessness. When you’re ready, come to me so that we can talk. You will tell me who this lucky guy is. I mean, he managed to get you to have sex with him without using

protection, he was pretty lucky. Also, I'd like for you to tell me about your first time [paused] come here..." She stretched out her arms to me and I got up from the bed, my lips were trembling. She pulled me into her warm embrace and rubbed my back.

"I'm disappointed in you but that does not mean I love you any less. You are my child, I could never bring myself to hate you even if I wanted to. You made a mistake, yes this was a stupid mistake but what is done, is done. We'll deal with things as they come." She pulled away from the hug and wiped the tears away from my face. "I love you." She faked a smile and walked out. I threw myself on the bed and cried my lungs out. 'How could I forget?' the question kept repeating itself in my head over and over again. This was the harsh reality I had to accept, I might be pregnant and that scared me. I took my phone and went straight to my period calculator app, I had to check if I was ovulating or not. I looked at it and tears just rolled down from the corners of my eyes, Lwanda and I had sex 3 days before ovulation and at that stage pregnancy probability was high. I threw my phone on the floor and covered my face. This was a nightmare, the first time I had sex had to be the same time I conceive my first baby.

"Big sis..." Lu said. He was most probably peeking through the door. I didn't look or respond, I just kept my hands on my face.

"Kuhle..." I could hear him walking in. I didn't want him here but I didn't have the energy to kick him out either.

"Are you okay? Have you been crying? Why is your phone on the floor?" I chuckled in disbelief. Lu was the perfect child and he carried himself like the eldest sibling. It hurt that I was going to disappoint him too. He would always tell me that I was his role model and that he loved how I respected my body. This one time he praised me for being a virgin and even said that Lwanda was lucky to have me. Now I had nothing to brag about, I lost my virginity and conceived in the process. If that didn't take a trophy for anything then I don't know what would.

"Kuhle please say something? We don't have to talk, we can just

sit here in silence.” He sat on the edge of the bed and I slowly got up. He was being sweet, I had to meet him halfway. I sat upright and looked at him. He frowned and shook his head.

“Who am I killing?” He asked. He looked angry but cute. The reason why most people mistaken Lu to be older than me was because of his physique. He played rugby at school so he would go to gym on the regular. He had muscles in the right places, he was buffed but not the body builder kind of buffed. He was the right size for an average rugby player. And man my brother was handsome, especially when he had his glasses on. He had both, beauty and brains.

“You love killing people.” I playfully punched him on the shoulder.

“You know what I mean. You’re crying, mom is crying. What’s going on?” He looked concerned. Lu was growing up too fast. He was already in matric, soon enough he would be off to varsity.

“Aish! Lu I messed up. I messed up pretty bad.” I dropped my head, shaking it.

“Messed up? Wena? Mess up? Never, this is Okuhle we’re talking about here. Daddy’s princess, the Virgin Mary. What could you possibly do?” He laughed. I loved his sense of humour. He was already putting me on a pedestal. How could I ever bring myself to disappoint him?

“Virgin Mary, really? Lu this is serious.” I tried to fake a laugh but this was not the time for laughter.

“Okay I’m sorry. So, what’s going on? I haven’t seen Lwanda in a while, I hope you didn’t break the poor guy’s heart?”

“You’re fond of Lwanda neh?”

“He is a cool dude, plus I saw he has upgraded his car. He should hook a nigga up.” He nudged my arm.

“I’m sure he’ll borrow you his car if you asked nicely.”

“Does he have siblings? I bet he has some yummy sisters.” He winked.

“Lu! How many times must I teach you about using derogatory remarks? Yummy sisters? My baby brother knows better than to

say something like that.” I sighed. Lu was a handful but I loved him like that.

“Okay, I’m sorry. I take that back. Manje ke, are you going to tell me what’s eating you?” He asked with a straight face.

“Uhm... I think I might be pregnant...” I said in a low voice. I didn’t even look at him, I was too embarrassed to even try and face him.

“Say what? When did you lose your virginity? Hhabe Kuhle, I thought you trusted me enough to share that important milestone?” He sounded disappointed but at least he was not judging me.

“I was planning to tell you but then mom came with the pills and she dropped a bomb on me.” I took a deep breath “Lu I’m sorry.”

“Wait, pills? I’m not sure I follow and why are you apologizing?”

“Morning after pills, I forgot to drink them. Mom came across them and so she confronted me about the whole thing. I messed up baby bro.” I whispered.

“Kuhle, you freaky bastard. You let a guy hit it raw?” He burst out in laughter “I never thought you had it in you. You go girl!” He clapped his hands “So, who is the baby daddy?” He looked at me. He was anxious to know who the father was.

“Lu this is serious...”

“I understand.” He snickered.

“That’s it, get out of my room!” I got up from the bed and pulled him up. “Out!!!” I yelled. I wanted to laugh so badly but how could I? This was no laughing matter. He stood at the door and looked at me.

“So, I’m going to be an uncle huh?” He grinned.

“Phuma!!!” I threw a pillow at him and he ran out.

17.

LWANDA:

It has been a week since I left Witbank and as always, I missed being home with my family but duty called. I couldn't rely on my father's wealth to get ahead in life, his money was his money and that meant his money, his rules. I was my own person, I couldn't have him dictating how I should live my life just because he sponsored me. Yes, he did give me money from time to time and he paid for my tertiary fees, bought me a car, paid for my apartment but I still paid for most of my living expenses.

I woke up super early today, mainly because I wanted to draft a schedule to balance my work life, my personal life and my studies.

I had registered at UNISA to do my BCom (Honours) Accounting, I needed to get that over and done with if I really wanted to see myself doing my desired career. At the moment I didn't know whether I wanted to go down the CA stream or focus on other things so I majored in everything. My phone rang as I was busy getting dressed for work and my face lit up.

"MaNdlovu, this is a pleasant surprise." I said with a smile on my face. Kuhle and I had been communicating like couples do on a daily basis, she would call me and I would call her. The engagement was still on pause and I knew better than to push her into saying yes. An opportunity would present itself and when it did I would grab it with both hands.

"Morning... I woke up missing you. How are you this morning?" She asked.

"I'm good love, you?"

"I'm okay [sighed] I don't feel like attending O week. I know I should go but I'm feeling a bit under the weather."

"Did you attend yesterday's session like you said you would? You felt the same way yesterday, are you sure you're okay?" She kept quiet. Kuhle hasn't been herself lately, she zoned out whenever we talked and she was forever feeling under the weather.

“I did, which was a disaster. I don’t think I’m keen on studying medicine anymore.” She whispered.

“That’s not you talking. Maybe the change in environment is the reason why you’re feeling the way you do. You just got to Pretoria, give it a chance and in no time you will be enjoying your independence.” I was actually happy that she was having second thoughts about studying medicine but I had to say what any boyfriend would in this situation. I was trying to win her over so Lwanda routing for Kuhle to study was actually a strategy over everything.

“I guess I’ll give it a chance. I’ll be sleeping in, I don’t feel good at all. Talk later?”

“Okay love. I’ll check up on you during lunch.” We said our goodbyes after expressing my love for her then I hung up. I concluded getting ready for work, had my breakfast and drove to work.

**OKUHLE:**

After I spoke to Lwanda, I didn’t feel better like I had hoped I would. I had been stressed lately and anxiously waiting for my period. All I did was think about the fact that I might be pregnant and each time I spoke to Lwanda I would have the edge to tell him that I might be pregnant but I always found a way to stop myself from telling him. More than anything, I’m scared that he might reject this pregnancy even though he was the one who took my virginity. I cuddled up on my bed and covered my lower body with a blanket. I stayed in Arcadia, in a two bedroom flat. I had a flat mate and her name was Yandisa, she was a fun character and studied at UP.

“Okuhle!!!” Yandisa yelled from the other side of the door. I failed to mention that she was bubbly and loud as well. She let herself



in, I was not in the mood. Not for her or anyone for that matter. “Ntombi, you can’t be serious. You’re supposed to be at school. How are you going to know your way around campus if you don’t attend orientation week?” She had her hands on her waist and I just looked at her.

“Not today Andy, please. I’m not feeling well.” I covered myself with the blanket.

“Hmm... I think you should go see a doctor or something but please make sure you’re healed by Friday.” I slowly rose up giving her a questioning look.

“Friday? What’s happening on Friday?” I asked.

“Honey, you and I are to going to Moloko on Friday. Brian will pay for everything.” She smiled.

“Who is Brian? And, I don’t remember agreeing to this...” Yandisa was that one person you could never say no to. Even the way we met was out of the ordinary, I was with my mom and we were looking for places to rent out and I bumped into her at Sunny Park. She was walking out of Checkers and we kind of bumped into each other, she dropped her things and I helped her pick them up. She introduced herself after apologizing and I did the same. Her introduction came with her life story, that was how I learned that she was looking for a roomie and the rest as they say was history.

“There is no need for you to agree. This will be our first weekend in Pretoria so why not?” She shrugged her shoulders.

“Okay, fine. Who is Brian?” She giggled naughtily covering her mouth.

“You’ll meet him on Friday.” She grinned. “Anyway, let me love and leave you. Ube’right yeva?” She winked at me and walked out. If only I was as bubbly. My phone rang as I was about to sleep.

“Mother...” I answered.

“Morning baby, how are you feeling? How’s school?” I chuckled.

“Mom it’s only been 3 days and I’m okay, I just miss you guys.

How's Lu? I haven't heard from him since Sunday."

"Everyone else is okay and Lu has been grounded."

"Hhee... Grounded? I didn't think Ndlovu's did that. What happened to hitting a child to reprimand them?"

"That's because your father doesn't like hitting you guys. Trust me, if he did you'd always wake up in hospital the next day. That is why he refrains from hitting any of you. I, on the other hand gave Lu a good slap or two." I laughed at how she sounded when she said "a good slap or two."

"What did he do?"

"Okuhle [Paused] did your dad and I spoil you and Lu that much that you'd disrespect us like this?"

"Hau ma, where is that coming from? I already apologized about the whole pregnancy possibility thing. Are you now going to hold it over my head for the rest of my life?" She sounded like she was still condemning me.

"I am not holding it over your head, I am just failing to understand my off springs that's all."

"Look mom, I need to get to school. Can we talk later about this?"

"Honey, I'm not trying to make you feel bad. I want to be there for you like I always have been but lately... Uhm, you know what? I'll get Lu to call you and he'll tell you what he did. Enjoy your day."

"Yeah, you too. Bye." I hung up and heaved a huge sigh. It became evident that mom was never going to get over the pregnancy thing. I felt bad because she did try to get me to carry condoms but I refused, she most probably felt like she was bad at this parenting thing but I was to blame for this whole mess and not her. I sent her an SMS expressing how much I appreciated her and her efforts then I slowly drifted off to sleep.

18.

Okuhle:

I woke up later that day with hunger pangs. I felt a lot better and my mood was up. I slowly got up from the bed and reached for my phone, I had 5 missed calls (3 from Lu and 2 from Lwanda) I made a mental note to return their calls once I have filled my stomach. I walked out of my bedroom and the flat was quiet, too quiet in fact. I tiptoed over to Andy's bedroom door and I could hear soft moans. I snickered shaking my head, Andy was moving at a fast pace. I found it hard to believe that 3 days in Pta and she was already getting laid. I walked away and made my way to the kitchen. We hadn't done any groceries so I settled for chicken noodles.

Our flat was an open plan, my mom bought us couches which was not necessary because I spent most of my time in my room and so did Yandisa. I sat on the couch closest to the window, I didn't want to sit on the one close to Yandisa's door because I wanted to avoid eavesdropping on her sex session. I took my phone and dialled mom's number. She picked up after the 3rd ring.

"Hi baby. How are you?" She sounded happy. I was happy that she was now in a better mood than earlier.

"Hi mom, may I please speak to Lu?" I heard giggles coming from Andy's room and I assumed they were done.

"You can call him on his phone, he is at rugby practice. Your dad allowed him to take his phone with because he has to fetch him when he is done."

"I thought Lu drives himself to school during practice? Kanti ma, what did Lu do exactly?" I asked. I was anxious to know. She sighed and paused. "Is it that big?" I asked.

"You know your brother is worse than you, that's all I can say."

"But mom..." My phone beeped as an indication that there was a call waiting. I looked at the screen and it was Lwanda calling.

"Sorry mom, I have a call coming in. I'll call you guys later. Please

hang up.” I said.

“Okay baby. Bye.”

“Hey...” I answered Lwanda’s call.

“Okuhle!” He sounded angry.

“I’m sorry I was on the phone with my mom.”

“Why are you not answering your phone? Are you trying to give me a heart attack?” He yelled. Andy and her catch for the day walked out of the room laughing. My eyes swayed to them and they both waved at me. I nodded and stood up.

“I’m sorry but I did say that I’m sleeping in.” I walked into my room and threw myself on the bed.

“No Okuhle! I said that I was going to call you during lunch. Are you a heavy sleeper now?” Lwanda was really exhausting me.

“You need to calm down. I told you I was not feeling well. You know what? I’m not going to explain myself to you.”

“Okuhle!!!” He yelled once again and I hung up. He needed to calm down. I sighed and walked out of my room. The love birds were cuddled up on the 3 seat couch.

“There is a reason why we have private rooms you know.” I said rolling my eyes. I took a seat once again and continued to eat.

“Babe, this is Brian.” Andy said. I looked at him and he was not bad looking, if I had to compare him to Lwanda he was a 7.

“Hi Brian, I’m Okuhle. You can call me Kuhle or whatever tickles your fancy.” I said. I kept my focus on my noodles which had a foul taste but I was hungry.

“Can I call you beautiful?” I choked on my food coughing.

“Excuse me?” I gave him a weird look. I looked at Andy and she shrugged her shoulders. Her facial expression said it all, she wasn’t pleased by that question

“You said that I can call you by whatever tickles my fancy and beautiful seems appropriate enough.” He said with a smile. I was flabbergasted, I didn’t even have a response. He deliberately disrespected Andy right in front of me. Imagine, calling me

beautiful right next to the girl he just fucked. I would certainly put Lwanda in his place if he tried that shit with me.

Lwanda:

I rested my head on my desk, I was confused and didn't know what to do. Okuhle was acting out and it got to me and now she was ignoring my calls. I was planning to call in sick tomorrow, I needed to get to Pretoria and fast. A part of me felt that Okuhle was trying to push me away and it scared me because if that was what she was been doing, then she was succeeding. I was slowly losing interest in her because of all this unnecessary tension between us and the constant arguing, it was getting to me.

"There you are... Come, I want to lock up." I would recognize that voice even in my sleep.

"Precious I have my own key. I'll lock up." I kept my head down.

"What's wrong? You have been acting weird, are you okay?" She asked.

"I'm okay Presh please."

"Look at me and tell me to my face that you're fine?" I was avoiding looking at her because she made me weak. Every time I looked at her I would think of the time we kissed. I will never forget that fateful afternoon, Precious's lips were full and juicy and I had to hand it to her, she was an amazing kisser. When I look her, all I could think about was to bury my lips into hers and with everything that was going on, I'm compelled to takeout my frustrations on someone and what do you know, she walked in. The devil was really testing me.

I slowly lifted my head up and looked at her, maybe I should let Kuhle go. She still needed to grow, yes I loved her but she was not worth all of this. My dick was rock hard just by looking at Presh and of course, my mind played tricks on me by taking me back to that passionate kiss. How I even managed to walk away that day without fucking her was a question I was yet to answer.

"I'm okay Presh, happy?" I said with a straight face.

"No smile? Really? Come on, what's wrong? Try me." She walked

in and sat on top of my desk exposing her thighs. I kept rubbing my dick underneath my desk, trying to calm it down but I was not succeeding. I really wanted to rip her out of her clothes and fuck her hard. I was angry at Kuhle and I needed to blow off steam.

“It’s nothing really. I miss my mom.” I lied.

“Aw! That’s so sweet. Tell you what, let’s call her together. You might feel better after that.” She smiled. Precious was really beautiful and matured, that was what I needed or at least I thought.

“You can’t be serious?”

“I am actually. What’s her number?” She picked up the phone and looked at me waiting for me to call out my mother’s numbers. I laughed, she was being cute but there was no I was going to call my mom with her present.

“Put that phone down. I’m not calling her. I feel better now, thanks to you. I’m even smiling, see...” I grinned.

“Good! Enjoy the rest of your evening.” She got off of the desk and pulled down her skirt. She winked at me and modelled her way to the door. My eyes were glued to her ass the entire time, I enjoyed the view. She walked out and finally I could breathe. I stood up and re-positioned my dick, it was still hard but I had to leave. I switched off the lights and walked out.

Okuhle:

I was finally on the phone with Lu, Andy had accompanied her guest to go buy food. He offered to buy us something to eat since our fridge was empty. I was of the impression that Andy was not who I thought she was, Brian looked monied and part of the working class but what do I know?

“So tell me, what did you do to the rents that they had to ground you?” I laughed.

“Eish sis, don’t laugh yaz. I wish it was December already. Can you understand the awkwardness I’m faced with? It’s hard to even have breakfast or dinner with the fam. I’m always making excuses to avoid being with them at the dining table.”



“Are you going to tell me what you did or what?” I was anxious and Lu was just going around in circles.

“Dad walked in on me hammering Amanda’s pussy....” He said faintly. I literally burst out in laughter. I knew that his day was coming.

“Say what? Lu but I told you to stop bringing Amanda at the crib. What time was this?”

“Don’t laugh, this is serious. I bunked school and had Amanda do the same, she came over and we played husband and wife. It was nice being home alone. I got her to watch this other porno with me and we saw this one position and wanted to try it out. I didn’t know that dad was going to come home early.”

“Shit! That’s messed up.” I tried not to laugh. “So were you guys inside or outside the covers?” I had to ask.

“Outside...”

"Woo! Issa mess moes!" I couldn't hold back my laugh.

"...like I was standing and She was on the edge of the bed with her round juicy butt high up. I can’t explain this but man I was hitting it good and Amanda was insanely wet and her moans drove me crazy so I hit it hard. We were both moaning out loud. I didn’t even hear the door open. You know what your father did?” He chuckled.

“[Laughing] what did he do?” Lu’s story was intriguing.

“I suspect he was watching me hump the fuck out of Amanda because after I came, he cleared his throat and went like I hope you have a condom on.” He laughed “Dude, I jumped up so fast and covered Amanda’s body while holding my dick. This guy faan, and then he just walked out.” I wanted to laugh but I could imagine how hard it was for him facing my dad after that huge encounter.

“I’m sorry bro, are you and dad okay though?” I was concerned about their relationship. They were really close, well dad had a close relationship with all of us.

“For now we’re still trying to find a way to talk to each other but I

think I've scarred him." He said in a low voice.

"He'll be fine. Give him time and stop bringing girls over!" I said sternly.

"Yeah, I've learned my lesson. I can't believe mom slapped me, she was disappointed bra."

"Eish! Sorry, at least you haven't impregnated anyone. They'll get over this, it proves to them that you are not gay and that you're a freak in bed. Dad must be proud." I laughed.

"[Laughing] ja vele, I bet he took that style and tried it out with mom." He laughed even harder.

"Ew!!! Go wash that dirty mouth. You are disgusting Lu." I joined in in the laughter.

"On a serious note though, things are bad. Mom doesn't look at me the same anymore and dad has stopped being dad. He has become super strict. Can I come visit during the March holidays? I need to give them a break." He said faintly.

"It can't be that bad bro. This happened on Monday, today its Wednesday. This is still fresh in their minds. People have sex every day, they'll get over it. And besides, I might be pregnant. As soon as I drop that bomb on dad, they'll forget about what you did and focus on me. Ride the waves for now, they'll calm down eventually." I could understand where Lu was coming from. We were a happy family and it was things like these that interrupted harmony within the Ndlovu residence but we're kids and kids make mistakes. This was a learning curve for Lu and I believed that he won't repeat the same mistake twice. We continued to talk about other things, however, our conversation was cut short when my phone switched off due to a low battery.

19.

OKUHLE:

It was finally Friday and I woke up in a jolly mood. I had decided to go see a doctor and put the pregnancy issue to bed once and for all. I stood in front of the window in my bedroom and allowed the sun rays to hit my skin, I missed home but I told myself that I had to spend at least a month without going to Witbank just to get used to the idea of staying a 100 Ks away from home. Yandisa knocked on my door before letting herself in, this had become a norm and I had stopped complaining.

“How are we doing today?” She asked throwing herself on the bed. I flashed her a huge smile. I was feeling really happy and I didn’t know why.

“I feel good thanks and I’m going to the doctor today.” I smiled and continued to harness the energy of the sun.

“I don’t think direct sunlight is good for your skin.”

“Allow me to be me. Are you not going to campus today?” I asked still looking out the window.

“Nope, Brian insisted that I skip school today. He wants to take me shopping for tonight.” I turned slowly. Yandisa was really gambling with her life when it came to this Brian character. I just didn’t trust him.

“So you’re telling me that you’re going to skip school to go buy clothes? Andy, what are Brian’s intentions with you?” I folded my arms and looked at her shaking my head.

“Okuhle please, I left my mom at home thank you very much.”

She stood up from the bed “And, I know what I’m doing. If Brian wants to spend money on me, why not let him? You need to lighten up a little.” She walked out. I sighed and made my way to the bathroom to get cleaned up. After I was done bathing, I dried my body and applied lotion. I made my way back to my room with a towel wrapped around my body.

“Mhmm... Now that’s a sight I’d love to see every morning.” I got startled. I didn’t expect for him to be around. He looked at me with

lust and I felt violated. I rushed to my room and locked the door after walking in. Brian was a regular and I was starting to believe that he stayed here because he was always around. I got dressed in a simple long blue dress that hugged my body. I combed my hair and powdered my face. I checked myself out on the mirror and I was satisfied with how I looked. I took a few mirror selfies and reached for my bag. My phone rang as I unlocked the door, it was Lwanda.

“Mr Maseko...” I answered.

“Morning Sthandwa sami.” I blushed. I was really in a good mood and I was happy to hear his voice.

“How are you?” I asked with a smile on my face. The butterflies had finally returned and it felt good.

“I’m good, are you going to campus today?”

“Yeah but I’m starting at the doctor first then I’ll go to campus.”

“Are you okay? Why are you going to the doctor?” He sounded concerned.

“It’s nothing major, I have been having headaches and I want to get that checked out.” I didn’t want to tell him about the possibility that I might be pregnant because I wanted to be sure first then present my case to him.

“Okay love, enjoy your day. I’ll check on you later.” He said.

“Thanks babe, you too.”

“Did you just call me babe?” He asked laughing.

“Stop it Lwanda, you will ruin my mood.” I giggled.

“Please don’t stop calling me that, it makes me feel special.” I could tell he was smiling and I was blushing like crazy. I don’t remember the last time we had such a peaceful chat over the phone.

“Okay babe, I won’t stop.” I laughed.

“Yes please, I’ll see you. Do not forget that you’re loved by me.”

“How can I? I love you too Mr Maseko.”

“Bye...” He hung up and I leaned against the door smiling.

I snapped back to reality and walked out. Brian was in the kitchen blankly staring at the fridge, something he did all the time. I cleared my throat and he slowly snapped back to reality.

“Hey beautiful.” He said with a smile. I gave him a weird look and walked towards the door.

“Are you joining us tonight?” He asked as I was about to walk out. “I don’t know. I’m not in a partying mood.” He sure knew how to ruin one’s mood.

“Well, I really hope you can come along so that I can show you and Yandi around and introduce you to the lifestyle.”

“Lifestyle?” I raised my eyebrow.

“Yeah, you know maintaining a life as a student can get expensive so you should do something on the side to earn a little extra cash.”

“Well, I think I’ll manage with what my parents give me and I bet my boyfriend won’t mind contributing too.” I shrugged my shoulders.

“You have a boyfriend?” He raised his eyebrow.

“Of course I do, you thought I didn’t have one?”

“Well I was kind of hoping you didn’t.” He sounded disappointed.

“Sorry to burst your bubble. I have to get going, tell Andy that I have already left.”

“Wait...” I looked at him.

“What?”

“Can I get a hug?” I chuckled in disbelief.

“No!” I said sternly and walked out. Brian was becoming a nuisance and it bothered me that Yandisa was head over heels for him. No matter how hard I tried to steer her away from this guy, I always came across as jealous.

The nice thing about staying in Arcadia was that everything was at a walking distance. I made my way to a nearby doctor which was 4 streets away from the flat. I enjoyed the walk, it was just what I needed. Upon arrival at the doctor, I opened a file for myself. I was number 3 on the queue which wasn’t that bad. I

waited a good 45 minutes before the doctor called me in. When I got up from the chair my heart started pounding, I was scared of the unknown. I walked into the consultation room and took a seat. “Good Morning Miss Ndlovu. I’m doctor Lukhele.” He reached out for a hand shake and I shook his hand.

“Morning doctor.” I smiled faintly.

“What seems to be the problem?” He asked looking at me. I got nervous because I didn’t know what to say or how to say it without embarrassing myself.

“Uhm... I think I might be pregnant.” I whispered.

“Okay...” He wrote something on the file. “When was your last period?” He asked.

“You need the exact date?” I asked.

“That would be helpful.” He said. I reached for my phone and opened my period calculator and gave him the date. He wrote down on the file yet again.

“Okay, your next period is due in a weeks’ time, am I correct?” I nodded.

“When did you have unprotected sex?” I looked at him burning with embarrassment.

“Two weeks back or so.” He nodded and wrote down everything I said.

“Well, there is a possibility that you might be pregnant but we have to be certain. I need your urine sample to run a pregnancy test then we’ll take it from there.” He gave me a small cup and directed me to a restroom where I urinated in the cup. I washed my hands after I was done and walked back with the urine sample. I handed it to him and sat down.

He walked out with the cup and I anxiously waited. I was really scared and shaking. I sent Lu an SMS letting him know that I was at the doctor getting a pregnancy test done but then I quickly recalled that he didn’t have a phone so hopes of him seeing the SMS were slim.

“Okay, well Miss Ndlovu I have your results.” He walked back in and sat down “You are indeed pregnant without a shadow of



doubt.” He looked at me and I just buried my face in my hands. “Are these not the results you were expecting?” He asked.

“Uhm... Not precisely. I knew there was a possibility I might be pregnant but I was kind of hoping I wasn't.” I said faintly. My eyes twinkled with tears, this couldn't be.

“Would you like for us to do a sonogram?” He asked and I just shook my head.

“Thank you doctor but I'm not emotionally prepared for an ultrasound.” A tear finally escaped my eye and I quickly wiped it away.

“It's okay. You can come back to me after two weeks and we can do your first ultrasound and also determine how far along are you.”

“Thanks doctor.” I stood up.

“I'm not going to prescribe anything for you yet but please don't stress yourself, do not consume any alcoholic beverages, no smoking or doing anything that might put the foetus in distress.” I nodded and took my bag.

“It'll be okay, it's not the end of the world.” He said, I faked a smile and walked out. Suddenly I didn't feel like going to campus. This was my doom, my dad was going to hate me and my mom's world was going to be shuttered. I paid the consultation fee and left.

20.

OKUHLE:

I got to the flat and made my way straight to my bedroom. I was torn and I couldn't handle the pregnancy news. I threw myself on the bed and cried myself to sleep.

A few hours later I was woken up by a knock on the door. It was already dark outside, I didn't expect to be out for that long. The person who was knocking was being persistent, I dragged myself

to the door and opened it.

“Whoa! You’re not ready?” I blankly stared at Yandisa. She looked dressed up for the occasion.

“You look good.” I said. I opened the door for her and she walked in.

“What happened to your mood? This morning you looked like someone who was ready to conquer the world.” She sat on the bed and I sat on the chair.

“I’m just tired. Are you leaving already?” I asked.

“Not without you, I’m not. Go get ready, Brian is on his way.”

“Andy I don’t think it’s a good idea to hang around that guy.”

“Please, don’t start. I can handle Brian and you need to get ready. Come on, I can see that you can do with some cheering up. Please doll, I’m begging you....” She pleaded with me until I gave in.

“Fine!” I rolled my eyes and dragged myself to the bathroom. I took a quick bath, as soon as I was done; I dried my body and applied lotion. I rushed to my bedroom and I found Yandisa had already picked out clothes for me including underwear. She picked out a maroon dungaree dress that was four fingers above the knees with a white short sleeved round neck top with matching ankle boots. I looked at the clothes and in my head there was no way I was going to wear that. I took out a black Levi’s ripped skinny jeans, a loose white t-shirt and a leather jacket, paired it up with red-bottom Luis Vuitton heels that mom bought me for my matric farewell. I looked the part for a laid back night out with friends.

“Wow! Look at you?” Yandisa walked back into the room.

“It’s nothing man, I was not feeling wearing a dress. I hope I’m not overdressed.”

“You look amazing. Gosh! Now I’m not so sure about my outfit.” She stood in front of the mirror checking herself out.

“You look amazing babe, we both look good.” She smiled and gave me a hug. For a moment there I forgot about being pregnant

and that was what I liked about Yandisa, she had that effect.

“Let me go call Brian and tell him we’re ready.”

“Don’t you think it’s a bit too early to be going to a club?”

“Relax, we’re going to eat first then paint the night red.” She

winked and walked out. I reached for my phone and dialled Lwanda’s number but it took me straight to voicemail. I dialled the number again and it still took me to voicemail. I sent him an SMS letting him know that I’m going out with friends, he’ll find it when he switched his phone on.

I took a clutch bag and placed in it important things that I might need during the course of the night. I took a selfie and walked out. I sat on the couch and I kept thinking about my unborn child, I couldn’t help but wonder if I would make a good mother. The thought of having a baby actually brought a smile on my face.

“Why are you crying?” I swayed my eyes to where Yandisa was standing. I didn’t even realize she was in the lounge. I wiped the tears away and looked at her smiling.

“It’s nothing, I just miss my mom and baby brother.” I looked down. I didn’t trust her enough to tell her about my pregnancy.

“Home sick, are we? Don’t worry man, you’ll get used to it. Come, Brian is waiting for us downstairs.” She walked towards the door, I stood up and followed her. I loved how comfortable the heels I was wearing were, I could walk a mile in them and not complain. We made it to the car and I looked at it shaking my head.

“What does Brian do again?” I whispered into Yandisa’s ear.

“Stop it Okuhle!” She huffed. She walked up to him and gave him a hug. I was not too sure about leaving with this guy and entrusting him with my life. He was driving a Mercedes Benz E 350d AMG, what did he want with students? And why was he hanging around Yandisa? Those were the questions I kept asking myself.

“Okuhle...” He said with a smile.

“Brian.” I said.

“Can I get a hug?” He stretched out his arms to me but I walked

past him.

“I don’t do hugs.” I opened the door and got in. Yandisa was already in the front seat looking comfortable. Brian got in in the driver’s seat and glared at me through the rear-view mirror. I looked at him and he smiled.

“So where do you want to eat ladies?” He looked at me and I shrugged my shoulders. He then looked at Yandisa who was quick to respond.

“We’re not that hungry, so we’ll just get Steers.” I wanted to say speak for yourself but I was not looking into spending this guy’s money. He had an agenda and I didn’t want to be a part of it. He drove off slowly, he kept stealing glances at me which made me uncomfortable. I was starting to regret tagging along. We drove to Sterland where we bought Original King Steer burgers and I insisted on paying for my own meal. Brian didn’t like the fact that I wanted to pay for my own meal but I didn’t care whether I bruised his ego or not, I was adamant to handle my own bill. I didn’t want to owe him anything.

My phone rang whilst we were eating and it was Lu, I was so excited. I excused myself and stood up.

“Boy, I am happy that you’re calling me.” I said with a smile.

“Okay, so I’m not going to be an uncle?” I laughed.

“Lu really? Is that the first thing you’re going to say to me?” I giggled.

“You sound happy, so I’m assuming your visit to the doctor was favourable. I am disappointed though, I was looking forward to being an uncle.” He sighed. I wanted to laugh, I didn’t think he wanted to be an uncle so bad.

“Askies, maybe next time.” I burst out in laughter.

“You’re really not pregnant? uLwanda uyenzi kanti? Is he shooting blanks?” He laughed, I couldn’t help it but laughed as well.

“You leave Lwanda out of this. When did you get your phone back?” I really wanted to keep him in the dark for now.

“I always get my phone after I get home from school. Dad is lenient or so he says. So, since you’re not preggies, when is Lwanda taking another deep into the honeypot? I hope he scores this time around.” Trust Lu to always find humour in everything.

“You are too forward. I’m still older than you Lu, mind the things you say to me.” I giggled.

“I’m sorry ke big sis. I miss you.”

“I miss you too.” Yandisa tapped my shoulder and signalled that we’re leaving.

“When are you coming to visit?” He asked.

“Soon, look bro I have to go. I’ll call you later yeah?”

“Cool!”

“Bye.” I hung up and walked back to Steers. I requested for a paper bag and we all left.

Within a few minutes we were at Moloko. It was still a bit early so I opted to stay in the car, Yandisa and Brian went inside. I tried Lwanda’s number again and it still took me straight to voicemail. I looked at the girls that came here and man, I felt under dressed. I should’ve just worn that dungaree. All the girls I saw walking into Moloko were dressed to kill, some wearing close to nothing. I was starting to believe that this was not my cup of tea. Brian walked back to the car and got into the back seat. I looked at him and rolled my eyes.

“You should come inside, the ambience is amazing.” He said looking straight into my eyes.

“A few more minutes, please. I’m waiting for a call.” I broke eye contact and looked outside.

“Why are you scared of me? I won’t bite you know, unless you want me to.” He turned my face with his index finger forcing me to look at him.

“I’m not scared of you. I just... You know what? I think I’ll go inside.” I tried getting out but he locked the car. I looked at him and my heart pounded.

“What’s the rush? I just want us to talk.” He said.

“Can we do that inside? Please, Brian. I don’t mean to come across disrespectful but I don’t appreciate this...” He looked at me and smiled. He then rubbed his thumb on my lower lip biting his. “The things I would do to you. I swear you’d dump your boyfriend.” He unlocked the car “After you...” I jumped out of the car without hesitance.

I made my way to the door and he quickly followed behind. He paid for my entrance fee, he was really getting to me. He led me to the VIP area where Yandisa was sitting with 3 guys and 2 girls. I got uncomfortable in an instant. I greeted everyone and one of the guys caught my attention. He had beautiful eyes, hazel brown just like Lwanda’s, he was light in complexion and was properly built. He was a reserved guy, didn’t say much and kept eyeing Yandisa. My friend was just loud and chatting away. She was comfortable with everyone. The vibe was actually nice, people were having a good time but I failed to let loose. Brian kept asking if I was fine and I’d respond with a yes, completely shutting him off. He was making me uncomfortable. Slowly but surely I got the vibe of the club and I ended up dancing with the girls. A bottle of Chateau Merlot and Moët Hennessy were brought to our table, the girls cheered. The guys were chilled and laid back, I guess this was the lifestyle Brian was talking about.

A few hours into the night, around 21:30 the ladies were on their fought bottle of Merlot and the guys kept spending. I didn’t drink, not even a sip but I still enjoyed myself. I excused myself to go to the restroom. I reached for my phone and saw 7 missed calls from Lwanda, my heart skipped a beat. I was having too much fun that I totally forgot about my phone. I dialled his number immediately, it rang for a second and then he answered.

“Okuhle! What is your problem? Are you having that much fun that you can’t even answer your phone?” He sounded really mad but I didn’t blame him.

“I’m sorry babe, I lost track of time...”

“Where are you? And, who are you with?” He was being assertive



and that scared me.

“I’m at Moloko and I’m with Yandisa.”

“Is that the only person you’re with?”

“Not really, we came with her boyfriend who came with his friends and other girls.” He kept quiet for a while and I didn’t know what to say.

“I’m coming to get you. Ung’jwayela kabi!” He hung up. In my head he was a plus minus 400 Ks away from Pta so I didn’t think much of it. I did my business and walked back to where I was sitting. I continued to dance and totally pushed Lwanda to the back of my head. The light skinned guy came to me and danced with me, he was holding my waist from behind. I was having fun until I felt someone pull me roughly.

“Hey!!!” The light skinned guy said pulling me towards him. I looked up only to be met by an angry looking Lwanda.

21.

OKUHLE:

I looked at him and he didn’t look happy. I pulled my arm from the light skinned guy and stepped away from him. All the guys were already on their feet ready to pounce on Lwanda but he wasn’t intimidated.

“It’s okay guys, he is my boyfriend...”

“Fiancé...” Lwanda said with anger. I looked at him and shook my head. Yandisa looked at me with a frown on her face.

“Asambe!” He huffed. He walked away and I silently followed after bidding everyone goodbye. He didn’t have to embarrass me like that. I took my time getting to the car, he had no right to pull me like that. In my defence, I did inform him about my whereabouts and his phone was off so what was a girl to do? Now, he was out here acting like I committed the biggest sin of all. I slowly

approached his car folding my arms and swaying my hips from side-to-side. He was leaning against the car talking on his phone.

Him: "I drove safe thanks. I hope you're not too lonely, I'll be back on Monday."

I stood in front of him and he opened the door for me. I clicked my tongue and got in.

Him: 2 days is not that bad. Look I'll call you tomorrow, something has come up.

I chuckled in disbelief, now I was "something". He must have thought that I was stupid, I crossed my legs and folded my arms.

Him: "Yeah, me too. Bye."

He hung up and looked at me, I could feel his eyes piercing through my skin but I looked straight ahead.

"Are you good?" He asked. I kept quiet rolling my eyes in the process.

"Suit yourself." He closed the door and rushed over to his side. He got in and sighed.

"Where to?" He asked. I kept quiet and pulled a straight face. "I'm talking to you!" He huffed.

"You're asking me?" I said with attitude.

"You better lose that attitude Okuhle and tell me where your place is." He said sternly. I looked at him, I was fuming with anger.

"I stay in Arcadia. Drive out, I'll direct you." I said. He slowly drove onto the road and we headed to Arcadia. There was complete silence in the car, I only spoke when I had to tell him to turn left or right. We finally made it to my flat and I opened the gate for him. He drove in and parked the car. I didn't even wait for him, as soon as he unlocked the car I stepped out. I made my way to the staircase slowly to avoid being shouted at. He finally caught up and we walked up to the flat. When we got the door, I unlocked and walked in. I left the keys on the kitchen counter for him to lock the door and I walked to my room.

I kicked off the heels, I didn't even care how expensive they were and threw myself on the bed. He walked in and stood in the

middle of the room staring at me. I turned to face the wall, his stare was too much.

“Okuhle...” He said calmly.

“Yes...” I said without turning to face him.

“Is this the person you’ve become? Attending nightclubs with random guys and drinking expensive champagne?” He asked. I wanted to laugh but I afforded him the respect that I felt he deserved. I got up and sat on my buttocks and blankly stared at him.

“Are you going to say something? Who were those guys you were with? So, you’re grinding on men now?” He looked disgusted but who made him the judge?

“Firstly, I was not grinding on anyone. I was dancing and he joined in, it was completely innocent until you came in and made it seem as if I was doing something wrong...”

“You were doing something wrong dammit!!!” He roared. “You are engaged for goodness sake, you should act like it.” He clicked his tongue.

“I didn’t accept your engagement. I had conditions and as far as you’re concerned, you are yet to give me your response so technically I’m a free agent.” I rolled my eyes.

“Okuhle, you will not disrespect me! Why am I even here?” He shook his head.

“Ja vele, why are you here? I hate surprise visits!” I said out of anger. He looked at me with his mouth agape.

“Wow!!!” His eyes twinkled with tears and he walked out. That didn’t go well at all.

**LWANDA:**

After she said that I walked out to try and avoid doing or saying something I might regret later. I sat on the couch and buried my face in the palms of my hands. I couldn’t believe she said that to me. I really thought she was going to be happy to see me but I guess, expectation was the fall of all men. I wanted to leave but I didn’t want to sleep in a Hotel and it was late for me to be driving

around. I leaned back on the couch and stared at the wall, a lot was weighing on my mind. Could I have been wrong about Kuhle all along? Maybe she was not there one.

“Hey...” She emerged from her room. I looked at her, she had changed into her jammies and she looked cute in them.

“Hi...” I said. She sat on the single couch and heaved a huge sigh.

“I’m sorry about what I said. Can we start over?” She looked nervous.

“I guess...” I shrugged my shoulders. If I could, I would be on my way back to Nelspruit.

“Look, I’m sorry about what you saw. I was letting loose and I guess I went too far.”

“Who were the guys you were with?” I asked.

“One is Yandisa’s boyfriend, Brian. The others were people I found at the club. I didn’t really get their names.” She shrugged her shoulders.

“Okay...” I received a message and reached for my phone. I opened it and smiled, Presh was at it again. She sent me a picture of her in lingerie captioned ‘I’m off to bed’ a smile was permanently plastered on my face as I admired God’s creation. Kuhle cleared her throat after a while of looking at the picture and I quickly snapped back to reality.

“Sorry about that, you were saying?” I asked.

“Never mind. I’m off to bed.” When she said that I wanted to laugh but composed myself. I followed her to her room and closed the door behind me

“Kuhle...” She turned and looked at me. I walked up to her and pulled her in for a warm embrace. I didn’t drive all the way here to fight. We did a slow dance right in the middle of the room and I was reminded why I chose her. She lifted her head from my chest and looked at me, I flashed her a smile and she blushed.

I leaned in for a kiss and she gracefully responded. I held onto her waist real tight and pressed our bodies together. The kiss

intensified with every passing moment. She moaned in my mouth and so did I.

My hands roamed all over her body, sexual hunger consumed me and I lost my senses. I gently pushed her on top of the bed and she looked at me with hunger. I got on top of the bed and got in between her legs. I pulled her pyjama pants off and she had no panties on, which drove me to the edge. I trailed kisses from her toes to her nuna, I teased her a bit and she responded with sensual moans. I then moved to her midsection, I took off her pyjama top and her beautiful titties sprung up, they looked tender. I sucked on her nipples and she couldn't control herself. I rubbed on her clit as soft moans of pleasure filled the room, I inserted my index finger in her vagina and she flinched. I slowly moved my hand in and out just to relax her a bit. I then inserted my middle finger, with both my fingers in her I began to finger her and she seemed to enjoy it. I increased my speed and she moaned out loud, her vagina was dripping wet. I had her exactly where I wanted her.

I quickly took off my clothes and positioned myself in between her thighs and she spread them legs for me.

"I promise, I'll be gentle." I said and she nodded. I slowly penetrated her and she gasped for air, it was a struggle to penetrate right through but with slow thrusts, her vagina eventually accommodated my dick. I pushed in and out of her, her pussy was nice and warm, slippery too. She wrapped her legs around my waist as I rammed into her. I increased my pace and she clutched the sheets moving her lower body to my thrust motion. It felt good fucking her with no reservations, I went in hard and she moaned louder and louder, screaming out my name. I was thankful that her flat mate was not around. I bonked her as hard as I fucken could and when we both climaxed, it was like a rain forest. Once again, I came inside of her.

I dropped to her side as she tried to catch her breath, I brushed her thigh and kissed her on the cheek.

“That was amazing, thank you.” I said. She looked at me and smiled. I got up from the bed and wore my briefs.

“I’ll bring you something to wipe yourself with and then we’ll sleep.” She nodded. I rushed out to the bathroom with a towel and when I came back, she was already inside the covers looking worn out.

“Come on, we need to wipe you.” I said. She got out and I wiped her off. I threw the towel on the floor and got under the covers with her. She didn’t say a word to me but just turned and looked the other way. I cuddled her and we slowly drifted off to sleep.

22.

LWANDA:

Waking up next to Kuhle was a dream come true. She was facing my direction with her head resting on her arm. She was sound asleep and I enjoyed the stolen moments of staring at her pretty face. She had beautiful long eyelashes and a unibrow which complimented her beautiful oval shaped face. She had beautiful facial features and I knew I had nothing to worry about when the time for us to start a family presented itself, she sure would bless me with beautiful babies. I gently got out of bed ensuring that I do not wake her up and tiptoed to the door. I discreetly walked out and froze right next to the door after closing it.

“Morning...” I stared at this guy standing in the kitchen, naked. Well, he had his briefs on but to me he was practically naked.

“And who are?” I asked. He chuckled and went about his business. I marched to the kitchen and repeated myself “Who the fuck are you?” I could recognize him from last night but I needed to know who he was. He turned around and pulled a straight face. He looked rough on the edges and old but I wasn’t intimidated.

“I’m the man of the house.” He said in a husky voice and turned



around. I scanned his behind, a part of me wanted to kick his ass but I didn't want to start a vendetta with a complete stranger who happened to be around my woman all the time. I took a good look at him and then made my way to the bathroom. I did my business and rinsed my mouth then walked back to Kuhle's room. She was still asleep but facing the wall. I gently shook her in an attempt to wake her up, she had some explaining to do. I was never told that a man stayed here.

"Kuhle..." I whispered.

"5 more minutes..." she mumbled in her sleep.

"Now Okuhle! You need to wake up." I said sternly. She angrily got up and shot me a death stare.

"Really, at this time? It's Saturday for goodness sake." She sat on her buttocks crossing her legs and leaning against the wall. I sat next to her and stroked her thigh. She seemed displeased but I couldn't care less.

"What's the name of the girl you share the flat with again?" I asked. She widened her eyes and chuckled shaking her head.

"What? Did she tickle your fancy? Waking me up to ask about her, really?" She crawled and got off the bed. "I need to use it, I'll be right back." She reached for her gown and wore it.

"Please wear something underneath that gown."

"I'm running to the toilet, why should I dress up just to go pee?"

She shrugged her shoulders and walked out. I followed her, I couldn't have another man lusting after what was mine in my presence. She walked into the bathroom locking the door behind her, I played bodyguard and stood by the door. The "man" of the house was sitting on the single couch looking at me.

"Must be a workout being you." He remarked and focused on his phone. At least he now had pants on.

"What's that supposed to mean?" I asked.

"You have nothing to worry about, Okuhle seems like a loyal girl. I tried my luck but she totally rejected me so relax, what you're doing is a total turn off." His phone rang and he stood up

answering it.

“Mr Mason, ah yes the girl...” He disappeared into the other room and I moved away from the door. I hurled my body onto the couch, I felt the impact on my back but that was the least of my concerns. Kuhle finally emerged from the bathroom after what seemed like forever.

“You can’t be serious Lwanda, so you followed me?” She stood 3 meters away from me with her hands on her waist.

“Not really, I missed you.” She laughed.

“Really?” She squinted her eyes.

“Yes, really...” I got up and pulled her towards me. “I don’t want to be far away from you Kuhle.” I said in a low voice.

“It won’t always be like this.” She walked away and I rushed after her.

“We’re still talking love, come on.”

“What do you want me to say? It is what it is.” We got to her room and I closed the door.

“Who is that guy?” I finally dropped the question. I didn’t want to appear insecure but that guy didn’t look trustworthy to me.

“You have nothing to worry about, he is with Yandisa.” She said as she made the bed.

“He stays here?”

“Nope but he is forever here. They must really enjoy each other’s company. Why do you ask?” She turned and looked at me.

“I don’t trust the guy.”

“I don’t trust him either but this is my living arrangement for now.” She opened the curtains and the window. She inhaled the morning breeze and sighed.

“I can get you a place then you won’t have to worry about your safety.” I said. She stood by the window and it seemed like she was far away. “Okuhle?” I tapped her shoulder. She slowly turned and glanced at me.

“We need to talk.” She said and threw herself on the bed.

“Yeah sure but first thing first, we need to get you the pill, then

we'll discuss all else after taking care of my semen inside of you." I rubbed my hands together. If anything, I wasn't ready to be a father so getting her the emergency contraceptive pill was paramount.

OKUHLE:

When he mentioned that we needed to go get the morning after pill my heart sank. How was I going to break the pregnancy news to him without scaring him off? I would hate for him to think that I wanted to trap him with a baby that he didn't want in the first place.

"Are you going to bath first or we'll bath when we get back? He asked. He was eager to get this over and done with. I sat upright and pulled him over.

"Please sit, I need to tell you something." I said faintly. I was embarrassed to say the least 'what if he walked away and never came back?' that was all I could think of.

"Okay, this sounds serious." He sat down slowly and I turned to face him. I was a nervous wreck but he had to know. I fiddled with his fingers with my head dropped, I didn't want to look at him.

"Uhm... I don't know how to say this but I'll just outright say it [I paused] I'm...[swallowed] I'm pregnant." I said under my breath. He retracted his hands from mine and covered his mouth with his right hand. He stood up and paced around, going from one side of the room to the next.

"Please say something..." I said looking at him with misty eyes. He counted on his fingers and laughed shaking his head.

"5 days Kuhle... You spent like 5 days in Pretoria. 5 fucken days!!!" He shouted. I looked at him confused. What did that have to do with anything?

"I'm not sure I follow. Why are you shouting?" Tears descended from my eyes. Why was he shouting? I did a mistake and I owned

up to that.

“Oh! Now you’re going to cry? Who impregnated you huh? Is that what you have been doing? Fucking around and not using protection? Fuck! I just had unprotected sex with you, did you care to think that you might have infected me with whatever diseases you might have come into contact with? The fuck Okuhle!” He yelled at the top of his lungs and I was almost certain that Yandisa and Brian heard everything. For him to even think that I slept with someone else besides him tore right through my heart.

“Lwanda, are you listening to yourself? This [pointed at my tummy] is your baby!” I snapped at him. Tears were already gushing down my cheeks. His words pierced like a double edged sword and I still couldn’t believe that he was quick to judge me in such a harsh manner.

“Mine? Uyadlala! We only had sex once, which was not that satisfying and I bought you the emergency pill to clean up that mess. Don’t you dare try and pin this on me.” He was furious, his anger just took over and he was spitting fire.

“Lwanda you’re hurting me.” I was a crying mess, I had hiccups with mucus descending from my nostrils.

“Hurting you? I’m the one who is hurt dammit! I fight temptation every day because of you but what do you do? Fuck all the Pretoria guys. I never took you for a bitch. I should have left that virginity intact because clearly avulekile amasango...” He looked disgusted.

“I didn’t take the pill...” I kept saying with my head faced down but he couldn’t hear me, he just threw insult after insult. He degraded me using nothing but words, he made me feel cheap.

“I didn’t take the fucken pills!” I yelled at the top my lungs earning his attention “I forgot to take the pills.” I said in a low voice. I dropped to the floor and cried hysterically. I also didn’t want to be pregnant but we don’t always get what we want. He need not

support me or the baby, I just wanted him to know that I was pregnant.

23.

LWANDA:

I stared at her as she curled up like a ball crying hysterically. It broke me to see her in that state, maybe I shouldn't have overreacted like that. I understood that I said hurtful words to her but she never informed me that she never took the pills but that did not excuse my outburst. I squatted next to her and lifted her up.

"Hey, hey... I'm sorry. Please don't cry..." I lay her head on my chest and rocked her back and forth in an attempt to calm her down.

"I'm... I'm sorry. I... I didn't mean to. This... This is not attempt to trap you." She had hiccups.

"Ssh... I'm there one who is supposed to apologize. I shouldn't have said all those things." She sniffed wiping her tears away. She got up and sat on the bed and I sat next to her. We sat in complete silence facing the other side of the room with me rubbing my hands together. I didn't know what to say really, she was pregnant and I had to take responsibility.

"You're not forced to take care of the baby Lwanda. This was my mistake and I'll support him..." She said in a hoarse voice.

"Or her, and what's that supposed to mean? This is my baby." I said. Everything suddenly made sense to me. I understood now why she acted the way she was acting. With her forgetting to take the pills, maybe she was scared of my reaction and judging from what just transpired, I'd be scared too if I were in her shoes.

"Look [She stood up] I don't want this pregnancy Lwanda but I can't have an abortion either, my mom would kill me. I'm not

ready to be a mom and I'm serious about studying Medicine.  
What I'm trying..."

"What are you trying to say?" I cut her short. I hoped she would not say what was already on my mind but she said it.

"I want to give up the baby for adoption." She faced down and fiddled with her fingers. I chuckled in disbelief. Not only did she lie and hide this whole pregnancy thing from me but she also wanted to deny me any chance of ever being a father to my unborn child.

"Do I have a say in all of this?" I asked calmly. I was mad and hurt that she didn't consider my feelings in all of this. It seemed that she had her mind already made up.

"Uhm... Lwanda please see this from my perspective. I'm still young to be making babies. I have a dream to realize and a baby at this age was not part of my dreams."

"You can still realize your dreams even with a baby in the picture Kuhle..." I looked at her with pleading eyes. She shook her head repeatedly.

"No, I don't want a baby Lwanda [Tears flowed down her cheeks] I can't imagine myself being a mother at this age. I want to love it but I'm failing to. I don't want this." She cried pacing up and down.

"Do you understand that this pregnancy is going to ruin the relationship I have with my dad? I can't have that Lwanda!" She sniffed "I should've drank those damn pills." She whispered. She stood next to the window and looked outside. I kept my head down, tears threatened my eyes but I fought them back. I stood up and sighed.

"I guess this is it then..." I said looking at her. She slowly turned around to face me. Her eyes were red and puffy. I couldn't force her to do what I wanted, it was written all over her face that she didn't want this and I knew better than to force the matter.

"What do you mean?" She looked sad but I couldn't anymore. There was just too much of going back and forth.

"Okuhle, I can't do this anymore. I've tried to convince myself otherwise but this was never going to work out. I was curious



about you but it should end there..." I shrugged my shoulders.

"Are you breaking up with me?" She widened her eyes and pressed her lips together.

"There is nothing to break, we were never together. I'll support you throughout the pregnancy, I don't mind. If you need something don't hesitate to call me I'll always be here for you but as far as us goes, it ends here." I reached for my phone and car keys on the table and walked towards the door.

"So this is goodbye?" Her voice was breaking.

"Yeah, I suppose so... Take care of yourself Okuhle." It was painful but it had to be done. I walked out and bumped into the friend. It looked like she was standing at the door and moved quickly when she heard me open it.

"Hi..." She awkwardly greeted me. I shook my head without responding and left.

#### OKUHLE:

As soon as he shut the door, I held my chest in pain. I silently wept, I wanted to cry out loud but my voice failed me. It was painful and my heart was breaking, the emotional pain was too much to bear. I slowly sat on the bed as I felt my chest tighten. I was struggling to breathe and my throat dried up. 'I should run after him.' I kept thinking. I played with his feelings too much that he couldn't play along anymore. I was infused with regret, if only I had done things differently maybe then he was going to be more understanding. My phone rang and I jumped up to answer it hoping it was Lwanda but unfortunately it was my mom.

"Mama..." I said in a shaky voice. I wanted to cry on her shoulder. I needed her more than anything.

"Baby... Are you okay?" She asked. I could pick up the concern in her voice. I sniffed, it was really hard for me to hold back the

tears.

“I wish I was mama... I... I...” I couldn’t even say anything. I wailed like a baby. This was too hard for me. I just found out I was pregnant and before I knew it, I got dumped. This was bad luck. “Okuhle? What’s going on honey? Please talk to me...” She tried to calm me down but I couldn’t. There more I thought about Lwanda, there more the tears descended from my eyes, making it hard for me to say anything.

“Baby please. How am I going to help you if you don’t say anything?” She was right. Crying and not saying anything was not going to help with anything. I calmed myself down by doing a few breathing exercises and finally I was calm enough to talk.

“I’m pregnant...” I said faintly and she kept quiet. I was nervous and scared that she might reject me as well. She was my mother yes but I’ve heard of parents who disown their daughters because they fell pregnant at a tender age. She sighed and forced herself to say something.

“Uhm... What is done, is done I guess. What more can I say? But accept.” She was probably shedding a few tears but managed to hide it from me.

“I’m sorry mama. I know I’ve disappointed you. Please find it in your heart to forgive me.” My heart was already breaking. Talk about rubbing salt to the wound. I couldn’t take any more heartbreak, it was enough for one day.

“We all make mistakes nana and I hope you’ll learn and grow from yours.”

“Yes ma’am.”

“Good! Now, please come home next weekend. I have to inform your dad.” She said.

“Can we wait until I know how far along am I?”

“What difference will it make Okuhle? He has to know either way.”

“But mom...”

“But nothing and you are yet to tell me who took your innocence and made you pregnant along the process. How long are you

willing to keep him a secret?”

“We’ll talk when I get home.” I said.

“Okay my love. Take care. I love you okay?” She said.

“I love you too.” I hung up and threw my head on the pillow. I prayed that my father was as understanding like my mother was.

24.

OKUHLE:

A WEEK LATER

Friday came quicker than I had anticipated, I dreaded going home but it had to be done. My mom came to pick me up from the long distance taxi rank and she was happy to see as I was to see her. We silently drove home, I was not in the mood to engage in conversation. This past week has been hellish if not daunting. I struggled with not being in contact with Lwanda, he called 3 times to check up on me but I told him to cease all form of communication with me, something which he did not put up a fight for. We finally made it home and found Lu standing outside, I was happy to see him. I jumped out of the car as soon as mom stopped and ran over to him.

“Hey you...” I said jumping into his arms and he grabbed me just in time.

“[Laughing] Goodness!!! Okuhle you’re heavy...” He put me down and hugged me “How are you?” He asked.

“I’m getting there. I missed you.” I said with a smile. I felt like crying but knowing Lu very well, he would just make a joke out of me.

“I missed you too big sis. You didn’t tell me you are coming, not cool at all.” He gently pushed me and I giggled.

“I wanted to surprise you hau. Get my bags from the car please. Where is Enhle?” I asked walking towards the door.

“In her room.” He said. I walked to Enhle’s room and knocked.

“Yes...” She said in her sweet low voice. I slightly opened the door and peeked through.

“Hey...” I greeted her with a smile on my face. I wanted to develop some form of bond with her and I hoped that she would be open to that.

“Hey... Come in.” She got off from the bed and came to give me a hug. “We’ve missed you.” She said and sat down.

“I missed you guys more. How’s school?”

“It’s okay, I want to transfer schools. Maybe go to Cambridge or St Thomas.”

“Oh! Why? Curro is a good school, why would you want to transfer?” I found it odd that she would want to transfer schools out of the blue. There had to be some sort of explanation.

“You wouldn’t understand...” She whispered looking down.

“Try me...” I said. She looked at me and smiled.

“Are you being serious?”

“Yeah, I’m your big sis aren’t I? So out with it missy.” I sat next her and nudged her arm. She laughed and looked at me in the eyes.

“Well... There is this guy...” I laughed, totally interrupting her.

“I’m sorry, I don’t mean to laugh. It’s just that I never thought that you miss smarty pants would have guy problems. Don’t mind me, please continue.” I giggled. She rolled her eyes shaking her head.

“As I was saying before I was rudely interrupted [She giggled] there is this guy in my class his name is Omphile. Goodness Okuhle [ she rolled her eyes] this guy is making my life a living hell. He constantly makes it his business to annoy me. He is a joker and always making me uncomfortable, he teases me and does all these nasty things. I don’t think I’ll survive a year in that school arg!!!” I looked her and all I could think about was what a drama queen. I wanted to laugh but held my laughter back. She

was opening up to me and I had to be her big sister and advise her accordingly.

“So that’s the reason why you want to transfer to a different school? All because of a teenage boy?” I asked pressing my lips together. I really wanted to laugh.

“Duh! Wouldn’t you want to switch schools? I mean, we’re in grade 9 and that means if I don’t switch schools I’ll be stuck with this idiot for 3 years. I can’t have that Kuhle, please speak to mom about this?” She was acting out and with reason. My sister was all about books and it didn’t help that she was a late bloomer, so her wanting to switch schools just because of a boy was definitely something Enhle would do.

“Babe, come on. Mom will never agree to that. This Omphile guy likes you and that’s why he is doing all these weird things towards you. He doesn’t know how to voice out his feelings so he acts out instead in an attempt to always have your attention. He won’t always be like this, eventually he’ll outgrow this childish phase and be more matured. Hang in there just for a while and you’ll see, he’ll change.” I assured her.

“Well... I don’t know. I don’t even like guys and please don’t get me wrong. I don’t like girls either but what I’m saying is that I’m not into this dating thing so he shouldn’t waste his breath.” She said. I stared at her and smiled. If only she knew that she won’t always be like this.

“Focus on your books baby girl, boys will only hinder you from your ultimate goal. And, you’re not switching schools just because of Omphile.” I laughed.

“Whatever!” She rolled her eyes and I laughed even harder. She had nice life problems.

The day went by pretty quick and before I knew it dad was home. We had supper as a family, we were in good spirits until mom asked Lwanda and Enhle to excuse us. I stood up to clear the table just to calm my nerves, I was really scared. After I was done clearing the table I took a seat next to mom and dad looked at us

awkwardly.

“Okay, what’s going on?” He asked calmly. I looked down, I was shaking and couldn’t keep my left foot still.

“Uhm... Baba I have something to tell you and I’m afraid it is not good news.” Mom said. My heart was beating out of chest. Couldn’t she break the ice first instead of going straight for the kill?

“I’m listening...” He said.

“U-Okuhle ukhulelwe.” She dropped the bomb and I just kept my head down. I could feel my father’s eyes piercing into my soul but I refused to lift my head up. Tears descended from my eyes as if someone beat me. This was a lot harder than I thought.

“Okuhle...” My dad said. I kept my head down, I couldn’t face him.

“Baba...” I fiddled with my fingers from underneath the table.

“Look at me when I’m talking to you.” He said and I slowly raised my head. I couldn’t read his facial expression, he was just blank.

“Why are you crying? Did someone beat you?” He asked in an assertive tone. I shook my head no, dad was making me nervous and I couldn’t stop the tears from flowing. “Wipe those tears, go to your bedroom, clean yourself up and come back here so we can talk.” He put on his reading glasses and reached for a newspaper. My mom pat my thigh and I slowly stood up. I was shocked to say the least, clean myself up? That was totally out of the ordinary. I walked to my room and did some breathing exercises. I had to find a way to get the tears to stop, I jumped up and down, got my heart pumping and within 15 minutes I was good to go. I made my way back to the dining room and heard dad and mom conversing. I stopped on my tracks and eavesdropped on their conversation. “How can you not know who impregnated her MaNdlovu? Don’t you have a close relationship with her? I thought I did but clearly I was wrong. Where did I even go wrong with both Okuhle and Luthando?” - Dad.

“She refuses to tell me anything. I’m yet to find out about that boy who proposed marriage to her, I’m also wondering if he is still



around and if, he is the father of the unborn child.” - Mom. I felt bad because I never took the opportunity to update either of them about the situation I had with Lwanda. In my defence, they never asked me about the marriage proposal thing so I assumed they didn’t care.

“Okuhle is not getting married to anyone and this pregnancy doesn’t change anything. She is still young to be wedded off to some rich kid who has his life figured out. Nkosikazi, it will help you to dismiss that thought in your head.” My dad’s tone carried a lot of resentment and disappointment.

“Baba yehlisa umoya, at the end of the day Okuhle is the one to decide what is more practical for her. She is no longer a minor and we can’t force her to do what we think is best for her. This is a learning curve, allow her to learn from this.” My mom was the best, she knew how to respectfully argue with my dad without making him feel undermined. I trusted her to be the mediator between dad and me. Yes, she had to respect her husband and understood that his word was final but she would consider our views as kids and would always present our case to him.

“Nkosikazi please, your daughter is pregnant for goodness sake! Your calmness will not help the situation. She is what? 20 and already she is pregnant. What about school?” He huffed.

“Her being pregnant does not mean she has to stop her studies for all eternity. She can always go back to school after the child is born...”

“I feel...” I walked in and dad paused and looked at me. He was angry and he looked at me with utter disappointment. I didn’t blame him though; this was not what he wanted for me. I sat next to mom again and fought back tears that were threatening to fall. I shouldn’t have eavesdropped on that conversation because now I knew how my dad really felt about this whole thing.

“Feeling better?” He asked keeping a straight face. I nodded repeatedly. Once upon a time we were so close, I would say anything to him without fear but right now, things were different.

“Let me start by apologizing. I’m sorry baba, I know I have disappointed you but it was not my intention. Please forgive me.” I looked at him with pleading eyes, my voice was breaking but I had to keep it together or risk him shouting at me for crying.

“Who is responsible for your pregnancy?” He kept his eyes on me and I had to maintain eye contact.

“Uhm... Lwanda...” I said faintly.

“Does he have a surname? Or, he is just Lwanda? That’s all there is to him...” He was being hard on me but I brought this upon myself.

“Maseko, Lwanda Maseko.” I whispered.

“I can’t hear you! Okuhle [I looked at him with glassy eyes] it was nice when you had sex with him right? [I kept a straight face] you moaned and groaned, I bet you were loud too...”

“Baba...” My mom interjected.

“Nkosikazi, know your place!” He said without blinking. My mom shut her mouth and lowered her head. “I said speak up young lady, this is not the time to be shy!” He said sternly. My dad was furious, I had never seen him that mad and it scared me.

“His name is... [Swallowed a painful lump] Lwanda Maseko.” I said a bit louder than before.

“Lwanda Maseko. The young man who asked for your hand in marriage?” I nodded “I don’t understand head gestures, speak young lady!”

“Yes baba, that’s him.” I tried really hard not to shed a single tear but failed.

“Good! That’s all I needed to know. We’ll deal with this issue after we have presented this to the Maseko family. Tell your mom all she needs to know about this pregnancy and what is going on between you and this Maseko boy. Once I have all the information I need from your mother, we’ll take it from there.” He stood up, took his reading glasses and newspaper then left. The moment he disappeared into the passage, I broke down and cried. I didn’t

expect him to be sweet and jolly about this whole situation but I didn't expect him to be this hard on me either.

25.

LWANDA:

I was rudely awakened by my phone, it rang so loud that I jumped up hurting Precious who was gracefully lying on my chest.

"Really?" She said rolling her eyes. It was a Saturday morning and my head was banging, throbbing with pain as a result from the previous nights' drinking. How Presh ended in my bed, naked was something I was yet to ponder upon. My phone rang again, this time attaining Presh's full attention.

"Would you please get that already? Gosh!" She pulled the sheets and covered herself up. I concluded right there and then that she was not a morning person, I knew better than to disturb her beauty sleep any further. I took my phone from the nightstand and walked out. I returned the call to whoever was calling me so early in the morning.

"Yeah, hold on. Dad wants to talk to you."

"Luyanda?" Why was my brother calling me with an unknown number? I waited for my dad to get on the line which took a good 15 seconds of my time.

"Lwanda!" He said in his deep voice.

"Taima."

"When are you coming to Witbank?"

"Uhm... Nami ngikhona. And, I don't know, in 3 months maybe, I don't know dad. Why?" It had been 2 months since I went home to visit which was odd, considering that I loved being with my family but after Kuhle told me to cease all contact with her, I buried myself in work and studies. I tried to call her numerous times but she had blocked my number. It drove me insane that I

couldn't get a hold of her and that I had no means of finding out how she was doing. I finally gave up after a month of her ignoring me and ever since then, Presh and I had been chilling. I enjoyed her company, and she managed to get my mind off things.

"Well boy, you have to drive To Witbank today. Get in your car right away and come home."

"No dad, I can't. I'm tired, I had a hectic week at work and I need this weekend to rest."

"It was not a request. And besides, you don't need that job but because you're stubborn you're out there slaving away. You better come home if you know what's good for you!"

"But taima..."

"Lwanda, I want you here today!" He hung up on me as I was about to state my case. Worry slowly crept in, why would my dad want me in Witbank in such a rush? I made my way back to my room and immediately woke Presh up. She was sleeping peacefully that I felt bad for waking her up.

"Come please, I need to go." She was putting up a fight but eventually opened her eyes. She didn't look too happy but I had to go.

"I'm sorry but I have to drive to Witbank as in now!" I got up from the bed and made my way to the bathroom. She followed shortly and was looking rather comfortable in my gown, she looked really sexy in it but seeing her in my gown rubbed me off in a bad way. Okuhle should be the one wearing my things, not her.

"So, is this how you deal with one night stands?" She asked leaning against the door frame.

"I don't know what you're talking about." I said with a toothbrush in my mouth. I didn't do one nightstands, which begged the question on how she ended up in my bed. If anything, I was not planning on sleeping with her. Yes, flirting here and there was fine and also, stealing a kiss or two was perfectly okay with me but that was where it was supposed to end.

"You mean to tell me that you don't do random sex with random

girls?" I frowned at her, did I really come off as a guy who smashed and passed onto the next one? I rinsed my mouth and opened the water in the shower.

"I'm not that guy. Please, excuse me I want to take a quick shower." I dropped my pants and stepped into the shower closing the glass door behind me. I was struggling to pin everything together in my head, all I remembered about the night before was going hard on the bottle right here in my apartment. I was with a few guys from work, chilling having fun. How Presh came about and ended up in my bed naked? Was something I didn't have a relocation of? I scrubbed my body real quick and stood underneath the shower head for a moment before stepping out. I wrapped a towel around my waist and walked to my room.

"Are you going to shower?" I asked as I walked in. She was in a foul mood but I didn't bother asking. She just stared at me as I got dressed. I sprayed my cologne and brushed my hair. I put on a pair of Nike kicks and admired how I looked through the mirror.

"Please get changed, I need to get going." I said.

"Lwanda we just had sex, I'm not your one night stand." She huffed.

"We had sex yeah but what's that got to do with anything? I need to drive to Witbank, what part of that don't you understand?" I was getting impatient because she was wasting my time.

"Can we please talk before you go?" She begged and I just shook my head.

"I can't, please don't make me kick you out." I said calmly.

"Or I can go with you then you'll have company on the road." I looked at her. That was not a bad idea at all. 2 hours on the road alone at this time could get boring, having her as a travel buddy could do the trick.

"You're onto something, I can book you in at Protea Hotel and we'll come back tomorrow."

"You see, you need me around." She stood up and placed a kiss on my cheek. I'm still confused by this whole thing but I'm

honestly not looking for a relationship. She rushed off to go shower. I cleaned up my room and packed a few things.

OKUHLE:

I was back in Witbank and was not so thrilled about being here. My dad had made the decision that today we must go over to the Maseko family and inform them about what their son had done. All this was unnecessary because I was planning to give up the baby for adoption but of course everyone was against it. My mom, dad, aunt, heck even Lu was against it. I was a few days shy away from being 8 weeks pregnant and the doctor said that I was doing well. There were moments where I would sit and rub my tummy as I imagined a life with a baby in the picture but I always found a way to bring myself back to reality. There was no way I was keeping this baby, not even if I wanted to.

“Okuhle!” I swayed my eyes over to my aunt, she came on my father’s request to accompany me to the Maseko’s. My uncle was also here as well as my aunt’s husband.

“Sorry Mma...” We were sitting in my room and she was just being her sweet self as always.

“You were telling me about Lwanda. Do you love this boy?” I chuckled shaking my head. She has been going on and on about Lwanda, since she arrived the day before. I didn’t know what more to tell her.

“Auntie please, can we not talk about him? That’s a touchy subject.” I missed Lwanda more than the word itself. I would stalk his social media pages just to make myself feel better. A part of me wanted to call and tell him that I wanted us to try again but I knew how he felt about the pregnancy and I didn’t want to find myself in a situation where I had to choose between my life and him in my life with the baby in the picture.



“You know Okuhle, this baby is a blessing. The timing is not so ideal but this is your reality, just accept it and get back with the father of the baby. You’ll never know when destiny is involved.” She shrugged her shoulders.

“I know you mean well auntie but I don’t want this baby and because I don’t want this baby, I can’t be with Lwanda. It is what it is, destiny just knocked on the wrong door. This is not how I imagined my life to be, so I’m going to correct that by giving the baby away to someone who yearns for it more.”

“Kuhle, this baby could be your first and last baby, are you sure you want to risk that?” She squinted her eyes and I knew she was just trying to persuade me into changing my mind but it was not going to happen.

“So be it. I’ll grow up knowing that my baby received the love that I could never offer. This is far better than abortion. Can you please respect my decision?” I got up from the bed and walked to the door. “I’m sorry but this is not for me.” I walked out leaving her with her mouth agape.

A few hours later we approached the driveway to the Maseko residence. I felt embarrassed that I didn’t even know where Lwanda’s home was. When I told my mom that I lost my virginity on a hotel bed she was shocked and embarrassed for me. Looking at Lwanda’s home, I now understood why my mom was so shocked, he could’ve brought me here and snuck me in. It could’ve been romantic but would’ve, could’ve... that won’t change the fact of the matter. The gate was opened for us and my uncle slowly drove in.

“Mhmm... Kuhle you went for a rich kid.” My aunt nudged my arm.

“I didn’t know he was rich.” I sighed. The house was big, double storey had a fountain in the middle of the drive way, triple garage and there were two cars parked right outside. I heaved a huge sigh of relief when I didn’t see Lwanda’s car.

My uncle parked the car and we all stepped out. Mom and dad were not here, my dad ordered mom not to come, she tried to

convince him otherwise but my dad's word was final. A beautiful curvaceous lady approached us, she was brown in complexion and her smile, goodness her smile complimented those deep dimples. She was wearing a long dress that had detail which complimented her brown skin, with a doek on her head.

"Afternoon..." She greeted us and I couldn't stop looking at her. She was perfect. "I'm Mrs Maseko." She said. I understood now why Lwanda was such a looker. His mom was scotching hot and not forgetting his dad, that man was goals. He looked sexy for his age. My aunt introduced us, starting with her husband then my uncle and then me.

"This is our daughter, Okuhle." Her smile disappeared when she turned her focus on me. She shook my hand without breaking eye contact, it was like she was studying me which made me nervous as hell. She led us into the house and then we went to the lounge where we were told to make ourselves comfortable. The interior of the house was beautiful, the lounge overlooked the dam, and it was a beautiful view. We settled in and we were served drinks by the maid, who was sweet. I liked her very much.

"Good afternoon..." Lwanda's dad emerged from the hallway fixing his shirt. My uncle got up and greeted him, shaking his hand. Everyone else followed suit and so did I. Once again, my aunt did the introductions, not that I needed any but I allowed her to do her thing.

"Thank you all for coming through. I hope you don't mind waiting for a few minutes, my son has just passed the Middleburg toll plaza and will be here in no time." He didn't even have to finish his sentence, my body temperature rose the moment he said "my son has just passed the Middleburg toll plaza." I got nervous for no reason and my armpits were sweating up a storm. I had an idea of how this day would go in my head and Lwanda was not part of it. Mr Maseko sat next to my aunt's husband and they engaged in conversation, which was interesting but my mind was far away. I was scared about how Lwanda was going to react to

this whole thing, especially since he knew what I was planning to do with the baby. Before we knew it, he walked in and our eyes locked. I couldn't read his facial expression, not a moment passed and a beautiful lady walked in and stood right next to him.

"Afternoon everyone..." She greeted. I looked at her and then looked at Lwanda, my heart sank. I already concluded in my head who she was and tears threatened my eyes. He took her hand and they disappeared into the hallway. My chest got heavy with pain, I couldn't help but wonder if I pushed him into another woman's arms.

26.

OKUHLE:

Never in my life had I been this uncomfortable, Lwanda shortly joined after disappearing with his significant other. I wanted to cry but it was my own fault that he found refuge in another woman's heart. I pushed him away and I needed to accept that he was no longer mine. He sat on the couch opposite to mine and kept his eyes on me. He looked mad and it was evident that he had no idea what was going on. His mother joined us shortly and the meeting convened. I kept my head down the entire time as my uncle stated our reason for the visit.

"Yes, so our daughter has confirm that your son is the one who impregnated her and claims that he is the father." My uncle said. I looked at Lwanda, I couldn't imagine what was going on in his head. His stare was cold and he kept clenching his jaw. He refused to look away, his eyes were fixated on me and out of guilt I couldn't maintain eye contact. My heart was pounding out of my chest and all that was on my mind was the lady he walked in with. "Lwanda Maseko..." His dad said. He had a distinct tone and his

voice demanded attention. Just a few words from his mouth was enough to send chills down my spine. Mr Maseko was well spoken and respectful. He seemed like a good man.

“Yebo baba...” Lwanda said in a low voice.

“Do you know these people?” His dad asked.

“No I don’t but I am well acquainted with Okuhle.”

“Are the pregnancy allegations made by Okuhle and her family true? Do you know of this pregnancy?”

“Yes...” He said under his breath. I was relieved that he didn’t deny the pregnancy, I wasn’t going to survive the embarrassment if he did.

“Speak up my boy, we can’t hear you.” Mrs Maseko said.

“Yes I do.” He spoke up and sighed afterwards. He finally looked away from me and kept his head down. I was sad, this was bigger than I thought. Maybe I was being irrational, he indeed did deserve to have a say on how we should deal with this pregnancy.

“Thank you Lwanda. Ndlovu family, I would like to apologize on my behalf of my son for impregnating your daughter at such a tender age. He was the adult and should have taken necessary precautions to prevent this pregnancy. I am contrite and acknowledge my son’s wrong doing. We will do right by your family and pay damages for your daughter.” Mr Maseko said. He looked disappointed but I didn’t blame him. He was probably expecting marriage news as opposed to me being pregnant. This was sudden for everyone, including my family as well.

“We are thankful for such a warm welcome into your humble home. This was of course a mistake done by both our children and we shouldn’t put all the blame on Lwanda.”

“Indeed.” Mrs Maseko said. She looked like a lovely woman, sweet and respectful as well.

“What would be the damage price that we are expected to pay?” Mr Maseko asked. I really felt like this damages fee was unnecessary. When were we ever going to move on with the

times? I was at fault, I should be the one paying my own damages. At this point I really felt like I was trapping Lwanda.

“May I please have a pen and paper to jot down the amount requested by Mr Ndlovu?” Lwanda stood up to go get the pen and paper then he came back and handed the items to my uncle. He jotted down the amount and gave the paper to Mr Maseko. I didn’t even know what my father requested and I could only hope it was not a ridiculous amount.

“Very well then, I will send my people over to the Ndlovu residence and settle this amount. Thank you for affording us the opportunity to correct our son’s mistake and hope that we can built a healthy relationship for the sake of the baby and Okuhle.”

“Thank you Mr Maseko.” They got up and shook hands. Mr Maseko came to me and I stood up with my head down.

“I’m sorry my daughter, I can only imagine how this pregnancy is going to delay your studies. Please, don’t hesitate to call my wife if you need anything. She’ll always be on call just for you and the baby. Mel, please come over here...” He called his wife and she walked over smiling. She was indeed a beautiful woman. “This is Okuhle, the girl your boy was so desperate to marry...” He laughed.

“Really?” She looked at me and smiled “I mean, I have seen pictures of you but you are much more beautiful in person. I understand why my son would want to marry you.” I was blushing and couldn’t contain myself. I didn’t expect them to be this warm towards me.

“Thank you ma’am.” I said.

“Please, call me Mel. Thank you, finally I’m going to be a grandma.” She giggled. I swallowed hard, I felt bad. She was excited, too excited but I wasn’t. How was I going to break the news to them that I didn’t plan on keeping the baby? That was surely going to make them hate me.

“Please stay put, I have prepared something for lunch and I’d love for you to join us.” Mel said to my family and they agreed to stay

for lunch. Lwanda quickly excused himself after the meeting was adjourned and finally I could breathe. Unfortunately Mr Maseko had to rush off to a golf meet up, which was totally understandable because it was what rich people did when they had nothing better to do.

I stood up and walked outside, the view was really beautiful and the breeze was refreshing. I stood by the pool to recollect my thoughts. Everyone was happy for this baby excluding my parents. I wanted to make everyone happy and keep my sanity in the process. Breaking the adoption news to the Maseko family was definitely going to shatter their hearts and what I feared the most was them prohibiting me from giving the baby up for adoption. They were going to pay for damages, so that automatically gave the right to say what can or cannot happen when it came to the baby. My life just got more complicated.

LWANDA:

If there was one thing I hated more than anything was being blindsided. I didn't know about this meeting until I walked into a house full of Okuhle's family and her. If anything, that was not how I wanted to make an impression to the Ndlovu's. I walked into the lion's den completely unaware and I had my colleague, if I should call her that, with me. My dad wasn't impressed at all. He didn't have to say anything, but his facial expression spoke volumes. The only reason why I came with Presh to my house was because dad kept on calling me, which was annoying and when I got here, I told Presh to stay in the car but she refused so I had to walk in with her. My plan was to sneak her in and hide her in my room and later, sneak her out but that plan failed as soon as we walked into lounge.

"Let's go..." I said to Presh who was comfortable on my bed watching TV.

"Already? Come on babe, I didn't even meet your mom or the entire family for that matter."

"Firstly, I'm not your babe and secondly, you are not meeting my



family.” I was already drained and hurt, not forgetting to mention angry and I didn’t want to deal with Presh.

“I practically met everyone in the lounge even though there were no introductions so they know I’m here with you. Lwanda we had sex that should mean something.” She frowned. A part of me wanted to slap her so hard but I could never bring myself to hit a woman even if I wanted to.

“Precious get your ass off that bed, we’re leaving! You’ll find me outside.” I walked to the door boiling with anger.

“How do you propose I find my way out of this big house if you leave me here?” She was still sitting on the bed and didn’t look like she was planning to move an inch. I did what I do best, I walked out without even responding to her question. If she knew what my mom was capable of, she would drag her ass to my car. I made my way downstairs and passed by the lounge because I wanted to talk to Kuhle.

She was standing outside and looked like she was lost in thought. I walked over and tapped her on the shoulder.

She turned and blankly stared at me. Her eyes were filled with tears and I felt sorry for her, I didn’t even know why she looked like she wanted to cry but those beautiful glassy eyes moved something in me and I instantly forgot about my Presh problem.

“Hi...” I said with a smile. I was happy to see her after such a long time.

“Hey, lovely seeing you again. You have a beautiful home.” She said and turned around facing the pool.

“Please don’t Kuhle. Don’t shut me out.”

“I’m not...” Her voice was scratchy.

“Look at me, I’m right here.” I stood behind her.

“No Lwanda. This is all a mess, I’m losing control of the situation.” She shook her head and sniffed.

“Let me help you. Allow me to help you please, you don’t have to be alone. I’m right here and I’ll always be here.” She chuckled and looked down.

“Don’t say that only to turn around and do the complete opposite. I really want us to...”

“Fine! We can go!!!” We both turned and faced the door. I wanted to explode, honestly I didn’t know what game Presh was playing. I was about to break through to Kuhle and she just popped up like she always did.

“I’m coming!!!” I said under my breath totally annoyed by her.

“But I thought you said that you wanted to leave right away? And, are you not going to introduce me? Hi, I’m Precious, Lwanda’s girlfriend from Nelspruit.” She pushed me to the side and extended her hand to Kuhle. It was in that moment I wanted the earth to open up and swallow me whole. I couldn’t cause a scene because the Ndlovu’s were sitting right inside and they could practically see everything that was happening outside. Thank goodness they couldn’t hear anything. I was cursing under my breath and scratching my head, she surely was making it her business to ruin my life.

“Oh! Hi, I’m Okuhle. His cousin, nice to meet you Precious.” She faked a smile and shook her hand “You’re beautiful by the way.” I could see how she desperately fought the tears in her eyes from dropping and I hated myself for hurting her like that. Yes, Precious did all that but I brought her here. I should have known better.

“Please excuse me.” She walked back in and sat next to her aunt, burying her face on her thighs. I knew she was crying and that broke me even further.

“Why did you tell her that? Are you crazy? What if I have a wife and you’re introducing yourself like that? What is your problem?” I shouted at her through my teeth. I was mad. “Let’s go!” I walked passed her into the lounge. I bid farewell to everyone and made my way outside.

“Honey, you’re leaving already? But I haven’t met your friend...” My mom said as I was approaching the door.

“I’ll be back and she is not my friend!” I said with anger and

walked out.

“Okay...”

I impatiently waited in the car. I didn't want to see her in front of me. I was annoyed. She walked towards the car after a few minutes and I knew she was held up by mom. I hoped she didn't introduce herself as my girlfriend to her or all hell will break loose.

27.

LATER THAT NIGHT

OKUHLE:

The events of the day had taken a toll on me. To say that I wasn't hurt by the fact that Lwanda had a girlfriend would be a lie. What hurt me the most was that I was once his “girlfriend” even though it wasn't a long term thing and he never took me to his house but he took her instead? His parents probably referred to me as the one who got pregnant, trapping their son for what he had. Sure, the Maseko family seemed like wonderful people but we all put on an act in the presence of people we're not closely associated with. They had to play sweet but only God knew how they really felt the moment we left their home.

“You should talk to him.” Lu brought me back from my thoughts. We were in the sitting room watching TV. The old people were in the lounge probably gossiping about me and that my baby daddy had already moved on.

“No Lu, what good will it do? He moved on and I understand completely. I don't blame him.” I kept my eyes on the TV.

“Try saying that with a straight face and maybe I'll believe you. You clearly still love the guy, so what's stopping you from being with him? He wants to marry you right?”

“Wanted to marry me, it's in the past it doesn't matter.” I blinked away the tears and heaved a huge sigh.

“Big sis, I love and respect you but sometimes I feel like you don’t think. Use that brain of yours for once. I’m convinced that Lwanda loves you; yeah maybe the girl is there to pass time. You want to give away his child, so I excuse him for finding comfort in another woman. This is not just about you, it’s about him too. If you’re not calling him, I’m calling him.” He reached for his phone from the table and it rang as he was about to grab it.

“Huh... Speak of the devil.” I looked at him shaking my head.

“Sup bro...” He answered. I buried myself on the couch and pretended not to listen to him. “Uhm... ngigrand wena?” he looked at me and laughed “Oh she’s here and she’s breathing fire...” I rolled my eyes at him.

“I’m right here you know.” I whispered.

“Yeah sure.” He got up from the couch and came to where I was sitting. “He wants to talk to you.” He handed me his phone and I cursed at him under my breath. Why would he put me on the spot like that?

“Hello...” I said annoyed.

“I’m outside...” He said. I chuckled.

“Good for you.” I rolled my eyes.

“Kuhle please, just come out so that we can talk. Please.”

“I can’t, it’s late Lwanda and I’m not my parents’ favourite person right now so I can’t just walk out at this time of the night.”

“But I drove all the way just so that we can talk.”

“Really I can’t...” Lu took the phone from me and I looked at him with my shoulders raised.

“She’s coming.” He said and then hung up.

“What the fuck Lu?” I got up raising my hands in the air.

“Go to the guy already.”

“I can’t, mom and dad are watching my every move.” I said clearly frustrated by the stunt he just pulled.

“Fine! I’ll walkout with you. You’re talking to the guy and it’s happening tonight.” He pulled me and dragged me to the door.

“Fine! Fine!” I yanked my hand from him “I’ll walk by myself, no

need for you to usher me to the door.” I was mad, Lu was meddling in my business. Once again, he has forgotten that I’m the eldest. We walked to the kitchen door, opened and walked out. He accompanied me to the gate where Lwanda was parked and he walked back inside. Lwanda opened the front door for me and I got in. He was playing Jazz, which was a surprise because I never took him for a Jazz kind of guy.

“Hi...” I greeted.

“Hey...” He said in a low voice “Thank you for coming.” He smiled. “Lu is the one you should be thanking.” I said coldly. I didn’t want to be cheeky but I couldn’t control it, all of me wanted to be mean towards him.

“Yeah sure. How are you doing? How’s the baby?”

“You drove all the way to ask me that? I thought you said that you wanted to talk?” I folded my arms. I was not about to give him a free pass, he had some explaining to do.

“Kuhle, can we not fight? I have no more fight left in me. When I came home I didn’t think I was going to find you there with your family. I’m sorry I subjected you to that but just to put it out there, Precious is not my girlfriend. I work with her and she does a lot of flirting. I was friendly with her and I guess she got the wrong idea.”

“You’re kidding me right? What girl in their right minds will go around telling people that? When all she did was flirt? What really happened between you two? And please, don’t lie to me.” I kept a straight face. I was not sure if I wanted to hear the truth but he was there so he might as well get on with it.

“She says that we had sex...” He looked down clearly ashamed by that.

“Well did you have sex with her?” That stung a little but we were not together so who he slept with was none of my business.

“I don’t know. I woke up naked next to her and next thing she is being weird about the whole thing. I don’t remember the sex but she claims we did get intimate.”

“Oh! So you were drunk?” My voice was braking. I was trying not to subject myself to what he was saying but I felt cheated on and that broke my heart.

“Kuhle please, don’t do this. Why are you hurting yourself? This is irrelevant, Precious is irrelevant. I came here for you. I love you.” He held both my hands and I looked at him defeated. He was good with words, I gave him that. He had an answer for everything and he knew just how to shut me up and have me doubting my decision about him.

“Uhm... I don’t know. I mean, you brought a girl home to your parents. Do you know how painful that was? Knowing that the guy you love brought home another girl when he never took you home to his mom? That killed me Lwanda and it hurts that I love you so much that it’s hard to even think about life without you.” I finally dropped the tears. I tried being strong but my emotions were all over the place.

“It’s okay to love me because I love you. We can do this, trust me we can.” I faced the other way and took a deep breath. I knew where he was going with this. He turned my face and stared into my eyes.

“Can we please keep the baby?” He eyes were glassy with tears. How could I deny him this chance to be a father? I guess I could learn to love the baby and eventually get used to the idea that I was going to be a mother. At least, I was going to have a support system.

“I guess...” I shrugged my shoulders. I was not sure about keeping the baby but I was taking a chance on love.

“I promise you babe, I’ll never hurt you. We’re going to raise the baby together. I’ll never disappoint you.” He said with a smile and that was enough to reassure me that the future was not looking so bad after all. He pulled me in for a kiss and we shared a passionate one. Lu knocked on the window, we looked at him and he signalled that it was time to head back inside. I nodded and kissed Lwanda for the last time.



“Drive safe. Call me when you get home.” I said.

“Remember to unblock my number.”

“Yes, of course.” I got off and waited for him to drive away. I waved goodbye with a smile on my face.

“That went well.” I whispered and ran inside.

2 MONTHS LATER...

It was now June, the winter season and the cold in Pretoria was unforgiving. I was writing my last paper today and I was more than thrilled to finally get rid of the first semester. I got up early because I was writing at 09:00 AM. I had already taken a bath and was standing in front of the full length mirror in my room. I looked at the baby bump, it was not that big but it was noticeable. Lwanda found me a bachelor flat in Arcadia; he said that he didn't want his baby exposed to the likes of Brian and Yandisa. I had no problem with staying alone but I got lonely sometimes. I made new friends and I hadn't heard from Yandisa for in a while.

I slowly got dressed in warm winter wear, my hair was a mess so I put on a beanie just to hide the disaster. Winter had taken its toll on me and my hair but I had planned to go to the salon after writing. My phone beeped from underneath the pillow and I rushed over to see who had texted me so early in the morning. I knew it wasn't Lwanda because he told me that he was not planning to wake up early because we had been having late night talks over the phone so he needed to catch up on sleep. I also needed to catch up on sleep just like did. I opened the message and I got the shock of my life, the pain went from my heart straight to my abdomen. Tears welled up in my eyes as I struggled to breathe; I bend over with my arm directly on my abdomen, pressing against it. I was in pain, it was excruciating. I closed my eyes and did breathing exercises.

“Why? Lwanda why?” I whispered. I felt warm liquid go down my thighs and I quickly took off my pants. I looked at my pants and there was blood and it just ran down my legs.

“Oh no, no, no...” I took my phone and dialled my mom. She answered immediately.

“Morning honey...” She was cheerful.

“Mama, mama, there is blood...”

“Blood? Okuhle?” I tried to respond but I couldn’t. I dropped to the floor and I could faintly hear my mom over the phone screaming my name.

28.

OKUHLE:

I slowly opened my eyes which was proving to be a struggle. The first thing I picked up after I tried to make sense of my surroundings was the beeping sound of the heart monitor and the sound of the oxygen pump. I concluded in my head that I was in hospital, my neck was stiff and the oxygen mask made it hard for me to turn my head as I pleased. I looked around the room with my eyes moving from one end to the next. Yep, I was in hospital and I was with 3 other patients in the room. I slightly moved my arm and it hit something...

“Oh! Finally, you’re up.” I could pick up it was my mom’s voice. She stood up and looked at me smiling. “Welcome back.” She said brushing my hair. I tried to say something but my throat was too dry. I signalled for her that I needed something to drink. She poured water for me in a glass and removed the oxygen mask from my face. She helped me to sit up straight and I drank the water which soothed my throat.

“Thank you.” I said in a hoarse voice. I leaned back resting my back on the pillow.

“How are you feeling?” She asked. She looked concerned and sad.

“I’m okay I guess...” I shrugged my shoulders. I remembered why I was here and a tear dropped from my left eye. I wiped it away and then both my hands slowly travelled to my stomach. ‘Please be hard, please be hard’ I said in my head. I pressed my stomach and it was soft. I pressed it again hoping that the softness was all in my head. It felt too soft for someone who was about four months pregnant. I started breathing heavily as panic slowly crept in.

“Mama...” I whispered looking at her with pleading eyes. I needed her to assure me that everything was okay and that the baby was fine but she looked at me with pity. Her eyes filled with tears and then she shook her head.

“I’m sorry honey.” She dropped her head wiping her tears away. My lips trembled and my chest tightened. I wanted to cry out loud but my voice failed me. Tears fell from the corners of my eyes, I wailed but my cry was inaudible. I was hurt, heartbroken and mad. I was just starting to fall in love with the baby and he/she was snatched away from me with no warning.

My mom buried me in her embrace and allowed me to cry in her arms. I cried so hard it hurt, I started having hiccups and a splitting headache.

“It’s okay my love. It’s going to be okay.” She sniffed.

“Good morning...” said a male voice. I looked over at the door and it was the doctor. Did he just say good morning? I suddenly got confused.

“Morning doctor.” My mom said. He walked over in his white coat with a board in his hand. He was wearing glasses, had a neat beard connected to his sideburns which looked freshly shaved. His dreadlocks were neatly tied up, he looked like he was somewhere in his late twenties. His physique was okay for a doctor, I could tell he goes to gym on a regular basis and was chocolate in complexion. He looked handsome.

“How are you doing Miss Ndlovu?” He asked with a smile revealing his white teeth.

“I’m okay...” I sniffed “I have a bit of a headache though.” I said wiping the tears away from my eyes.

“Okay, I’ll get you something for the headache. You gave us quite a scare when you came in. You had lost a lot of blood which of course resulted in you losing the baby. You have been out for two days but I had faith you were going to wake up.” He said.

“So you couldn’t save the baby?” I asked clearing the painful lump in my throat.

“I’m sorry but by the time that you were brought in you had already miscarried.” He checked my vitals and jotted down everything on his board.

“When can she go home?” My mom asked.

“I’ll be discharging her at 12:00. Miss Ndlovu please take it easy as your body still needs to heal. You must get enough rest and don’t put too much strain on yourself. If you experience anything out of the ordinary please do not hesitate to come back for a check-up.” He said.

“Thank you doctor.” I whispered. He walked to his other patients and I just looked at the ceiling. If only I didn’t open that text message then maybe I’d still be pregnant, I thought.

“I called Lwanda’s mom to inform them about what happened. She got into contact with Lwanda and she has since told me that he is on his way here.” Mom said.

“I don’t wish to see him right now.” I whispered.

“I know this is painful honey but he must be hurting too. Your loss, is his loss. Please don’t shut him out.” I looked down and shook my head. If only she knew why I miscarried in the first place then she wouldn’t be saying all this my loss was his loss nonsense.

The day went by pretty quick with me in my head most of the time. Maybe losing this baby so early on was a blessing in disguise I tried to convince myself. It was time for me to finally go

home and I was happy that my mom was by my side the entire time.

We drove to my apartment in complete silence. She kept saying that talking about my feelings would help me heal quicker but I was not interested. All I wanted was my bed and teddy bear, at least he wouldn't ask me unnecessary questions that I didn't have answers to. We got to my apartment and we took the elevator to the third floor. Once inside the unit I walked towards the bed and hurled myself on top of it. I pulled my teddy bear and wrapped my arms and legs around it. Tears involuntarily dropped from my eyes as I remembered the last time I admired my baby bump. I didn't even have pictures to remind me of what was.

"I'm going to Sunny Park to buy you a few things. I'll be right back." My mom said and I nodded. She took the keys and walked out locking me inside. I heaved a huge sigh and slowly drifted off to sleep.

**LWANDA:**

When I received the call about Kuhle being hospitalized I was fearful and worried. I received the call when I was at work and my day got ruined from that moment on. I was worried because I couldn't even reach her on her phone. I kept getting updates from my mother and her last phone call shook me. I was bewildered because Kuhle and I had a wonderful conversation the night before. She didn't sound distressed or anything. She was in a jolly mood and we spoke until she dozed off on the phone. What could've caused the miscarriage baffled me. She wasn't even stressed about her last paper so this miscarriage happened out of nowhere. I couldn't even think of one thing that might have caused her to lose the baby.

I left work two days ago and went straight home because I was not in a good space and needed my family. The drive from

Nelspruit to Witbank was a complete torture, I was in tears the entire time. I was scared that I was going to lose Kuhle too because I was told she had lost a lot of blood. Mom became my shoulder to cry on, she was being strong for me but she insisted that I drove to Pretoria in order to show my support for Kuhle. I didn't even waste time, the next morning I drove to Pta and the journey was quite short because I was speeding.

I made it to her apartment after driving around looking for a perfect gift but gave up after I struggled to find something that was appropriate. I had a key to her apartment so this was going to be a pleasant surprise. I parked my car and used the stairs to get to the third floor. I unlocked, letting myself in and saw that she was sleeping on the bed cuddling the teddy bear that I had bought her when she complained about being lonely. I tiptoed over to the bed and gently sat next to her. I stared at her beautiful face and how peaceful she looked. I couldn't imagine what went through her mind when she was told that the baby didn't make it. If I managed to breakdown in front of my colleagues without saying anything then for her it might have been worse.

I was lost in thought when she finally woke up. I looked at her and smiled but she just blankly stared at me. She was hurting so I understood the cold attitude towards me.

"MaNdlovu..." I said in a faint voice. I needed her to know that I was there for her.

"What are you doing here? Didn't you get the message that you're not welcome here?" She said coldly. I was confused, I thought she'd be happy to see me.

"Did I miss something?" I frowned. I couldn't help but feel that I did something wrong.

"Yes, you missed the fact that you had a pregnant girlfriend. You promised." Her eyes twinkled with tears. I was lost, dazed and confused.

"You lost me at, you promised." I said. She got off the bed laughing in disbelief.



“So you’re going to play dumb? Do you even love me? Or, you’re in love with the idea of being in love?” She folded her arms and her stare pierced right into my soul. If eyes could kill, I’d be dead. “You know, it would help the both of us if you told me what I did.” I tried to be calm for her sake.

“You know what you did!” She half screamed. Tears started dropping from her eyes as she looked at me shaking her head. I was hurt that she was hurting and I didn’t have the slightest clue of what I did wrong. The door swung open and we both turned our attention to it. Her mom walked in and she froze when she saw me sitting on the bed.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t know you had arrived.” She said.

“It’s okay ma. I only got here a few minutes ago.”

“Okay, how are you?” She asked.

“I’m getting there.” I responded.

“Like I told Okuhle, time heals all wounds. You kids just need to be strong for each other.” She smiled and packed away the groceries that she came with. I looked at Kuhle who was looking angry and I still hadn’t been told what I did wrong.

“Can we go talk in the car?” I asked.

“Be my guest.” She took her phone from the charger and we walked out. She was moving at a slow pace so I bear with her. We got to the car and we both didn’t say anything. We sat in uncomfortable silence. I had to say something and so I did.

“I’m sorry for hurting you.” I didn’t even know why I was apologizing but it felt like the right thing to do.

“Not only did you hurt me but you killed our baby too. You snatched my happiness and ran with it. I trusted you.” She broke down and cried. I wanted to cry too, I mean she blamed me for our unborn baby’s untimely death.

“Whatever it is, I’m sorry. Please forgive me.” My voice was shaky. I was trying to be strong and not bare my weakness in front of her.

“Maybe this will jog your memory.” She unlocked her phone and

went to her messages, all the while I was wondering what she was on about.

“This is why I miscarried....” She threw her phone on my lap and I flipped it over. I looked at the picture and I was immediately engulfed with anger “I couldn’t handle the shock and my baby paid the price. So please, leave. I don’t want to see you.” She snatched her phone from my hand and opened the door.

“Kuhle, I can explain.” My eyes were already filled with tears. She looked at me with disgust and I knew deep down I had lost her for good.

“I don’t want to hear it!” She clicked her tongue and slammed the door. I watched her as she walked away. I repeatedly fisted the steering wheel with anger. I didn’t even know that Presh had a picture of me and her lying in bed naked. Heck, I didn’t even know she had Kuhle’s number. It was true when they said the devil came in many forms and I was the pawn in her game.

29.

A WEEK LATER

LWANDA:

It took me an entire week to build up the courage to do what I was about to do. I tried convincing myself otherwise but this had to be done or risk the chance of ever being with Kuhle. I was still grieving the loss of my unborn baby but this grieving process was a lot harder than I had anticipated. This was the time Kuhle and I were supposed to bond, this loss was supposed to bring us closer together but instead it tore us apart all because someone felt the need to mess with my life.

Kuhle still refused to talk to me, she wouldn’t even take my calls.

She hadn't blocked my number though and I took that as a good sign, I had a chance to vindicate myself.

It was a cold Saturday morning in Nelspruit, I was supposed to be in Witbank but I had far more pressing matters to tend to than being at home and sulk all day. I kept looking at my watch, it was exactly 09:00 AM and she was running late. I was getting impatient but kept my cool. All that was on my mind was whether or not I was sure about what I was about to do, the thought alone made my skin crawl. I was not a violent person, I was brought up well and my parents ensured that they instilled morals and values in me. As far as morals go, I don't know but values... That was my best character trait.

A knock on the door brought me back to reality. I was suddenly nervous, I had never done what I was about to do and I prayed that everything went according to plan.

I got up from the couch and made my way to the door with my heartbeat racing with every step I took towards the door.

"Come on, you can do this. Do it for Kuhle." I whispered. I unlocked the door and pulled the handle. I immediately put on my charm. In order for my plan to work, I had to be my charming self and hide any sign of anger.

"Presh... You sure took your time." I said with a smile on my face. If she was able to smile at me the whole week while knowing she had sent a nude picture of me and her without my knowledge to my girlfriend then I could also pull a convincing character and have her think that I was still unaware of what she had done.

"I had to look good for you. It's not every day you get invited by the hottie from the office, I mean I feel special right now. So, what's the occasion?" She bit her lower lip seductively. I made way for her to enter and she swayed her hips from side-to-side. I followed her to the lounge and I stood in front of her.

"You really didn't have to dress up but for what it's worth, you look beautiful. Are you sure you're not going to catch a cold or something?"

“This is what this fur coat is for darling.” She took it off and I dropped my head. Her body was my biggest weakness. She was wearing a black mini-leather skirt that hugged her round butt perfectly, she wore a long sleeved white blouse that revealed her cleavage and matched the outfit up with red suede knee high boots. She did dress up for the occasion but it was sad that it was all going to waste.

“I want to show you something...” I said trying so hard to keep my eyes on her face. She looked stunning I had to admit.

“Yeah?”

“Yes but it’s not here, we have to drive there.” I said.

“O-kay... Where is this place?” She raised her eyebrow.

“It’s a surprise. Come on, wear that coat. I don’t want you catching a cold.” She looked at me smiling and the devil in me was routing for me to continue with my plan. That smile she was wearing would soon fade. “Let me get my keys.” I rushed to my bedroom and got my keys. I looked at my reflection on the mirror and I clenched my jaw. ‘You have to do it for Kuhle...’ The voice in my head said loudly. I walked back to the lounge and she was ready to go.

“Does anyone know you’re here? With me? I don’t want any disturbances.” I said. I had to check everything to ensure that nothing would come back to bite me.

“Honey please, I stay alone and my family is out in Durban. I would say my friend but she’s in Durban too, she left last night. I didn’t get a chance to inform her that Mr handsome has summoned me to his place. So, don’t worry boo, nobody is going to disturb us.” She winked at me “Can we get going already?” She walked towards the door in excitement.

“Of course. Right after you.” She walked out and I took a deep breath. I had the perfect location to execute my plan, Krokodilspoor Mountains, right on the Uitkyk Road.

OKUHLE:

I had been cooped up in my room for the whole week. I only went out when I needed to bath, make use of the toilet or when I took dirty dishes to the kitchen. I was still in bed when Enhle and Lu stormed in.

“Okay, it’s enough now!” Enhle said with a hint of attitude.

“Come on big sis, it’s been a week. We’re taking you out. Get ready.” I turned to the other side and had my back against them. I pulled the duvet covering myself up. I appreciated their concern but I was not in the mood. I needed a few more days to grieve my unborn baby.

“Kuhle, we’re really worried about you. I know this is hard but life has to move forward. Come please...” Lu said.

“Get out!” I said in a hoarse voice. I had been crying every chance I got and at some point I was questioning my tears. I felt there was more to them than what I led on. I failed to understand why I was crying so much and just thinking about it brought tears to my eyes. They kept quiet and I could still feel their presence in the room. I just wanted to be left alone for a few more days.

“Lwanda is outside.” Lu said. I jumped out of bed at the speed of light wiping the tears off of my face.

“He is here?” I said with a grin on my face. He was there only person I actually wanted to see.

“No he is not but we had to get you out of bed. Kuhle please...” He frowned.

“So he is not here...?” My voice was shaky. My throat dried up and I swallowed a painful lump.

“I’m sorry sis but please, let’s go to the mall. It’ll do you good.” I looked at the both of them as my heart broke. They didn’t understand and I didn’t blame them. They only wanted to make me feel better.

“Okay...” I whispered. “I’ll go with you guys.” I looked down and heaved a huge sigh. They were right, life had to move forward. I lost my baby, fine! Everything happens for a reason. Lu and Enhle

walked out leaving me to make my bed. I opened the curtains and the light stung my eyes and I rubbed them vigorously. I had been in the dark for the whole week, the light was bound to hurt my eyes. I took my toiletry bag and walked to my mom's bedroom to use the shower. I took a quick one and after I was done I walked back to my room with a towel wrapped around my body.

"Oh! I didn't see you there mom." I said walking to my wardrobe. In all honesty, I was always absent minded. My physical body was present but my mind was always far away.

"How are you doing honey?" She asked. I looked at her and flashed her a fake smile. I was getting tired of that question. I dropped the towel and applied lotion on my body without responding to her question.

"I understand that you're still hurting but this trip to the mall will do you good." She said.

"If you say so." I put on my black skinny jeans, a maroon polo neck and wore a cardigan on top. I put on my Nike sneakers and pulled a cap over my messy hair.

"You will heal, don't lose yourself trying to figure out why."

"I have healed, I'm just having one of those days. Thank you for this." I walked out and went looking for my siblings. This could actually help me forget about my issues for a moment. At least I got to spend money that was not mine and who better to spend it with if it was not my siblings? Dad allowed Lu to drive his car and off we went to Highveld Mall.



30.

## KROKODILSPOORT MOUNTAINS

LWANDA:

I turned onto Uitkyk road after passing a few farms. Presh kept on glaring at me but I paid her no mind. I was in my head the entire time, I was planning my every move from the beginning to end. She tried to make conversation but I shut her out immediately. I didn't want her distracting me from my master plan. She became uneasy after a few attempts to get me to talk to her but I couldn't care less. She needed to be taught a lesson and a lesson was what I was going to teach her. I found a good parking spot away from motorist passing by and switched off the engine.

"What is this?" She asked with attitude.

"I told you that I wanted to show you something. You want to be my girlfriend right?" I gave her a stern look and she nodded repeatedly. "Do you love me that much?" I asked.

"Not love per se but I really want to try something with you. There is just something about you that I feel needs to be explored." She bit her lower lip and I smirked, how stupid of her to think that I'd actually consider being with her.

"Okay, there is a hiking trail here and I want us to reach the top of the cliff where we can talk about stuff." She looked at her boots and then looked at me.

"I'm not dressed for the occasion, hiking in boots? I can't, I mean look at the length of this heel."

"We'll take it slow and besides, those heels are not that high you'll manage and if you can't walk I'll piggy back you." I needed her up the cliff and she was protesting.

"Lwanda do you really expect me to walk up in heels?"

"Well this is what I love to do and as my girlfriend I'd appreciate it if we do what I love together."

"So I'm your girlfriend now?"

"Walk with me and you'll find out." I stepped out of the car and the cold breeze hit my face. I rubbed my palms together and went

over to her side. I opened the door and she looked at me. "Come let's go, just 5 minutes and we'll back in the car." She contemplated but eventually gave in. She stepped out and immediately wrapped herself up with her fur coat.

"This cold weather is not for hiking. Can we come back on a warmer day?" She asked.

"Come on now, once we get walking you won't even feel the cold." I pulled her hand and we carefully walked up the hill. She was struggling with every step as there were rocks of different sizes on our path. I held her hand because I didn't want her to fall and break her ankle. We made it to the top of the cliff and she kept complaining about how cold she was.

"We made it, can we walk back now? I'm freezing." She was shivering which was perfect because it meant that she was defenceless.

"Turn around and admire the view. Look at the horizon and see how beautifully the sky meets the earth. This moment here is priceless." She turned around slowly and steadily folding her arms. It was really cold up here but it had to be done. I stepped back and pulled out my father's gun from my back. I looked at the Glock 19 9mm Semi-Automatic Pistol and my hands started shaking just by holding it. I had never held a gun before or shot at somebody, this was just to scare her off and hopefully she would back off.

"Why did you do it?" I asked holding the gun up pointing it at her.

"What do you...?" She opened her eyes wide as she turned

"Lwanda, what is this?" She looked scared and that was the reaction I was hoping for.

"Why did you do it Presh?" I cocked the gun and clenched my jaw. She needed to see that I meant business.

"Wait... Wait... Can we talk about this? Lwanda put the gun down." She was shaking and tears slowly graced her cheeks. She looked terrified and balancing on those heels was proving to be a mission.

“Did you think I wouldn’t find out huh? Your obsession killed my baby!” I huffed. I was really angry and I needed to direct this anger towards someone. Yes, I was mad she sent that picture to Kuhle but more than anything, I was mad because I lost something that could’ve been great for Kuhle and I so I needed to vent.

“Look at me Lwa... do you think I’m capable of murder? I don’t even know your baby so how could I?” She swallowed hard when she noticed that she was moving closer and closer towards the edge of the cliff.

“I didn’t know my baby either. Never got a chance to because you saw it befitting to send my girlfriend a picture of us naked. When was this picture taken? Was it when I was high on alcohol and you raped me huh? Khuluma maan!!!!” I snapped and she jumped up in fear.

“I’m sorry Lwanda, I didn’t mean any harm [crying] you paid more attention to her and you forgot about me. I used to be your office toy but that didn’t interest you anymore so I thought maybe if...”

“Maybe if what? You ruined things for me dammit! And now you will pay with your life.” She opened her eyes wide. She brought her hands together pleading for me to spare her life. She wailed hysterically and I didn’t give a rat’s ass. I walked up to her and put the gun to her head, she froze and shut her eyes super tight mumbling a prayer from her heart.

“Oh God I’m going to die...” She kept saying.

“You know what’s nice about being up here? Because no one is going to hear the gun when it goes bang and I’m just going to drop your body over this cliff. They will never find you, never...” I whispered into her ear.

“I’m sorry, please forgive me. Spare my life and I will not breathe a word of this to anyone. I’ll never bother you again. Please, I beg you...” My phone rang in my pocket and I contemplated answering it. I didn’t think there was a signal up there.

“Don’t move or I will shoot!” I stepped away and pulled my phone from my pocket. I kept my eyes on Presh and answered without looking at the caller ID.

“Yes!” I was not interested. This person was disturbing me.

“Lwanda...” She said in a low voice. I moved my phone from my ear and saw her name on the screen.

“Baby...” I said with a smile. I kept my eyes on Presh and she was still in tears. She kept her eyes on me with her body shaking profusely. I hadn’t even done anything to her but already she was acting up. What a drama queen!

“I’m sorry Lwanda, please forgive me...” She said and I couldn’t believe my ears. I should be the one apologizing.

“Kuhle love, look you don’t have to apologize. We’ll pull through this together.”

“Can you come and fetch me? I need a change of scenery and I hate being at home.”

“You want to come here, as in here in Nelspruit?”

“Yes. Well that’s if you don’t mind. I need to be with someone who understands what I’m going through and you are the only person that came to mind. Of course, you don’t have to if you don’t want to.” She said faintly. I wanted to do a little victory dance but I was in a bit of a predicament.

“Lwanda are you there?” I shifted my focus back to the phone.

“I’ll drive to Witbank tonight and I’ll fetch you tomorrow morning.” I said.

“Okay, I’ll see you tomorrow. Bye.” She hung up and I looked at Presh with a smirk on my face.

“Now ain’t we lucky. I guess I don’t have to use this on you.” I waved the gun to her face. “My woman wants to visit so I can’t have your blood on my conscience.” She heaved a huge sigh of relief.

“I’m sorry Lwanda, really I am. I didn’t mean to...”

“Save it. You’ll find your way down. I have to be in Witbank by tonight.” I turned to walk away.

“You’re not going to leave me here are you?” Her voice was shaky.

“I am.” I laughed walking away.

“Lwanda please, how do you propose I get home? I’m begging you.” She cried out.

“That is not my problem Presh, You’ll hitch a ride back home. Word of advice, get rid of those boots or you will not make it down the hill in one piece.” I laughed one last time and slowly made my way down the hill. I had no regrets whatsoever. If she wanted to report me, it would be her word against mine. She wouldn’t have much to go on so I was safe. I got to my car and made a U-Turn, my girl was waiting for me and I couldn’t be happier.

OKUHLE:

We went from shop to shop buying clothes and shoes, things that we didn’t need. I was not in a shopping mood but I had to try and breakout of my shell. I made a quick call to Lwanda when Enhle and Lu went to Sportscene to checkout sneakers. I needed to get away and Lwanda was my ticket out of this misery. I was happy to know that he was on board with my suggestion and I needed to find a way to get my parents on board too. I withdrew money from my mom’s bank card, an amount of R 750.00 and made my way to Sportscene. I found them shopping around and I pulled Lu to the side.

“I need to go.” I said to him.

“To where exactly?” He asked.

“Down town. There is something I want there...”

“Oh! We’re almost done here, we’ll just go together.”

“No, you guys can stay and conclude your shopping. I’ll meet you guys at home.”

“Kuhle are you okay?”

“Yeah, I’m fine.” I faked a smile. He looked at me raising his

eyebrow.

“Okay, can I pick you up after you’re done with whatever you’re going to do?”

“No, do not worry yourself. I’ll catch a taxi.” I sounded dismissive but I didn’t want him to know where I was going.

“Okuhle why are you being sneaky?”

“Lu it will help you to mind your business once in a while. Here [I handed him mom’s card] Tell the rents I needed some air.” I walked away before he could even respond. I know I sounded a bit a harsh but I didn’t want to find myself telling him my plans beforehand.

I got on a taxi to town and after it dropped me off I made my way to Emalahleni Private Hospital to see Dr Dlamini. I needed to be smart about this visit to Nelspruit and first thing first was to ensure that I got the injection to prevent any unplanned pregnancy. His assistant called me in and he was quick about everything that was why I loved coming to Dr Dlamini, he was not one to give lengthy lectures about life and practicing safe sex. Honestly, I didn’t need the lecture. All I needed was to safeguard against any unwanted pregnancy.

31.

LWANDA:

I was back in Nelspruit and I was not alone, Kuhle was sleeping peacefully on the passenger seat and I didn’t want to wake her up. She fell asleep along the way and I let her be, she seemed tired right from the moment I picked her up from her house. She tried to get the conversation going but by the time I reached Middleburg Toll Plaza she was already gone. We left Witbank at 16:00 PM, 2 hours and a few minutes on the road and we were already at my apartment. It was already dark outside, thanks to



the winter season but at least I wasn't going to sleep alone tonight.

"Babe..." I whispered. She moved slightly and fell right back asleep. If my apartment was not on the second floor I would carry her without having to wake her up.

"Baby, we're here." I shook her slightly and her eyes opened slowly. She looked at me briefly and then smiled.

"Mhmm... it's already dark..." She said in a faint voice. She rose up rubbing her eyes and yawned. My love looked like she had taken a few blows from life. She looked different from her normal self.

"Shall we?" I asked as I unlocked the doors.

"Sure." She opened the door and froze then closed it again.

"Goodness it is cold out there." She giggled and I laughed at her, she was just being dramatic. Witbank was way colder than Nelspruit.

"The car will start getting cold too so get your ass out and let's go. I'll warm you up when we get inside." She raised her eyebrow and smiled.

"Don't get any ideas Mr Maseko. This is rehab so I'm your patient and doctors don't sleep with their patients." She winked and stepped out. I followed suit and got her bags from the boot. She waited for me by the stairs and went on and on about how cold it was.

We got to my apartment and I unlocked the door. She walked in first and I followed. She looked around and slid her hand on the granite kitchen counter, nodding as she admired everything that caught her eyes.

"This is cosy." She turned to face me.

"Welcome to my second home." I walked past her to the bedroom where I placed her bags in the wardrobe. I went back to the lounge and she was already seated but seemed far away. This was what she did time and again, she zoned out without even noticing it.

“Kuhle...” I said and she snapped out of it. “Are you okay?” I asked. I was worried about her. I didn’t know what type of emotions women who went through a miscarriage felt so I was as good as useless when it came to making her feel better.

“I’m good. I’ll be fine stop stressing [She faked a smile] so tell me, what is with you and this open plan set up? Your apartment in Joburg had an open plan too.”

“Easy excess from the kitchen to the lounge, I don’t know [I shrugged my shoulders] is this not where the world is headed? Open plan kitchens, en-suite bathrooms. You know, those type of things” I settled next to her and held her hand.

“Mhmm... So you want our house to have an open plan kitchen?” I gave her an enquiring look. Did she just say “our house”? Maybe I was reading too much into what she just said.

“Well yeah but if the Mrs so allows.” I pecked her lips and she grinned.

“I think I want to marry you Lwanda...” She said under her breath.

“Huh?” She caught me off guard. Maybe it was just the emotions talking so I was not about to celebrate prematurely.

“Yes, please don’t ask me why. Let’s do this and worry about other things later.”

“O-kay...” I was still in shock. Honestly, this was the last thing I expected.

“Tell you what... I’ll be right back.” She got up and ran towards the passage and disappeared. I rose up from the couch and did a victory dance, throwing punches in the air.

“Yes!!!” I whispered. I got myself decent and sat back down. She came back holding the ring box. She stood before me and handed it to me.

“Ask me again.” Her sweet voice echoed in my ears. She looked calm and sure about this. I took the box without thinking twice. I sat her down and I got on one knee. I opened the box and smiled at the ring. I almost forgot what it looked like, this was it and I was ceasing the moment. There was no turning back.

“Okuhle Ndlovu, would you please make me the happiest man alive and marry me?” A permanent smile was plastered across my face and I swear I felt tears burning my eyes. She looked at me and then looked at the ring and then flashed me her beautiful smile.

“Of course, I’ll marry you.” She giggled as I slid the ring onto her finger. She glanced at it and jumped up, leaping for joy. “I’m going to be your wife.” She pulled me up and hugged me. I spun her around and we both broke out in laughter. Finally, she had accepted my proposal.

## THE NEXT MORNING

### OKUHLE:

I am a rudely awakened by a nightmare that I literally jumped out of bed with my heart racing. I was drenched in sweat and my body was shaking. I did a few breathing exercises calming myself down and after a few minutes I felt calmer and at ease. I sat down on the bed slowly and heaved a huge sigh. I looked over to Lwanda's side of the bed and he was not there, instead there was a note, this was his thing. I reached for it and read it...

Good Morning my Beautiful wife

Sorry I left without saying goodbye but you were sleeping so peacefully I couldn't bring myself to wake you up. I have already left for work, I hope you have a pleasant day and please, make yourself comfortable this apartment is now your apartment. See you later.

With love,  
Your fiancé  
Lwanda

I smiled faintly at the “with love, your fiancé.” He was truly a romantic. I walked out of the bedroom and went to brush my

teeth. I didn't plan anything for the day, I was just happy that finally I was far away from everyone and I could finally heal in peace without everyone asking if I was okay or not. I made my way back to the bedroom and I made the bed, my mind drifted back to the dream that had me drenched in sweat. I kept on having the same dream over and over again. I was scared that I was starting to lose my mind. I kept on convincing myself that it was all in my head but even after I sedated myself with sleeping pills, the dreamed seemed to be stronger than the pills.

Maybe I hadn't dealt with the loss of the baby hence he/she was haunting me in my sleep. I'd hate to have to go see a therapist just because I was failing to let go. Being in Nelspruit should be therapeutic and in no time the dreams would no longer torment me like they had been for the past week. I was brought back to reality by my ringing phone and I just looked at it. It was Lu, clearly he didn't get with the programme. I sat on the bed and answered...

"Sup...?" I was not in the mood.

"Okay, so we answer phones like that now?" I rolled my eyes. I think my attitude had dropped a couple of notches down. I had come to realize that I now had a stinking attitude.

"Can I help you with something brother dearest?" A part of me wanted to hang up on him but he has always been sweet towards me so I owed him that much.

"I was just checking up on you. I know you just left yesterday but believe it or not, your baby brother is missing you." I smiled and sighed. I couldn't help it but wonder if I was pushing my family away.

"You're being sweet dear brother. I'd love to say I miss you too but I'd be lying. I need this time away and hopefully after 3 weeks I'd be a new person with more of my bubbly personality. How is everyone?" Not that I cared but I didn't want to come off rude by not asking.

"Dad is mad that mom allowed you to leave with Lwanda. He was

breathing fire last night, he even wanted to call you but mom advised against it. That old man wants nothing with you, he loves you.”

“Oh! Well he needs to get used to Lwanda because I’ve agreed to marry him. I’m no longer a baby Lu.”

“So you said yes?” He sounded disappointed.

“Yes I did and I’m completely okay with it.”

“And school?”

“I don’t know.”

“What do you mean you don’t know?”

“I haven’t thought about it. I missed a semester exam and I couldn’t even make it for the sup so I don’t know if I want to do this medicine thing.” I said.

“This is the depressed Kuhle talking. I know you love medicine, you did well on your semester tests and assignments, so what if you failed an exam? You can always do it again in the next semester.”

“Yeah, I’ll see. Look Lu, I need to go. We’ll talk later.”

“Okay sis, keep well.”

“Bye.” I hung up and switched my phone off. I knew he was going to tell my mom about the possibility of me dropping out of school and I was not ready to listen to her scolding me for throwing away my future. I was planning on going back to school but not anytime soon.

OKUHLE:

A few weeks passed, make that two months and a few days and we were back in Witbank. I hadn't gone back to school when it re-opened and I was okay with it. In my head, I needed to heal and rest but deep down I knew that school was not for me, at least not at the moment. The lobola negotiations were underway and Lwanda was at his happiest, I was still convinced that I was doing the right thing for me but my mom wasn't. She felt that I was rushing into this marriage thing without thinking it through. I remember the night I gave her a call to tell her about the "big" news, I was still in Nelspruit. She didn't receive the news too well "I'm disappointed in you." She said. I for one thought she would be happy for me because at first before the whole pregnancy situation she was singing a different tune, telling me to follow my heart and now a few months later I was suddenly a disappointment. Her words didn't even pierce through my heart, I was doing this for me and I didn't need her approval. I was an adult and capable of making informed decisions. You know when they say ignorance is bliss? Well, ignoring my mother's advice was my downfall. I was 20 years old and fresh into young adulthood. I thought I knew what I was doing. The decision to marrying Lwanda was in vein and I would live to regret it a few years later.

"Are you sure about this?" That was my baby brother walking into my room without knocking.

"For the 100th time, yes I am sure and you can go tell your mother that I am doing this and that there is no turning back. Why can't you guys be happy for me? He makes me happy and that's all the assurance I need. Tomorrow the Maseko's are coming to pay for my bridal price and I expect everyone to do their part."

"Kuhle..." I stopped fiddling with my phone and glanced at him. He was not being himself and he had a concerned look on his face. I walked closer to him and grabbed his hands. Our fingers



intertwined and I looked straight into his eyes.

“I know you feel like I’m making the biggest mistake of my life but if this is a mistake then it is my mistake to make. You used to love Lwanda, what has changed? You used to route for him and at one point you wanted me to marry him, what has changed now? I love him Lu and he loves me, isn’t that enough? Why must we continue to argue about this? I’m going to be Lwanda’s wife and nothing you can say or do will change my mind.” He looked at me for the longest time and heaved a huge sigh and then he let go of my hands.

“You have changed and I’m scared for you but if this is what you want then who are we to stand in your way?” He shrugged his shoulders and walked out. If there was one person who was true to how he felt about this whole marriage was my dad, he was never for it and he was still not for it but he had no choice but to accept my decision and let me go to be someone’s else wife. My mom and Lu on the other hand were being hypocrites and I wasn’t going to dance to their tune. One moment they wanted me to marry him but now that I had accepted his proposal then they turned around and sang a different tune. I let them have their opinions and I stayed true to my feelings.

Morning came sooner than I had anticipated, my home was filled with people I knew and those that I didn’t know, and even Thando was amongst the people who were here to send me off to the Maseko residence. When I woke up my heartbeat had a different rhythm to it. I was anxious and scared at the same time. I had all these questions lingering in my mind and there one I kept repeating was “Are you sure about this?” I was getting cold feet but one thing I was certain of was that by the end of this day I was going to be Mrs Lwanda Maseko. There was no doubt in my mind that everything was going to go according to plan. I was busy getting ready for the day when I heard a soft knock on my door. I was not expecting anyone because everyone was busy preparing for the day ahead and I was advised to stay in my room until I was

told otherwise.

“Yes...” I said as I tied a headscarf around my head. My mom walked in with a faint smile on her face. She was already dressed up in her traditional attire and looking beautiful, like a true Ndlovu wife.

“Ntombi...” She greeted and made herself comfortable on the bed.

“Mama...” I sat on the chair next to the study table and looked at her. She was expressionless but I could tell that a lot weighed heavily in her heart. “Everything okay?” I enquired.

“All is well.” She dropped her eyes to the floor. “Baby girl, please don’t do this-“

“Not this again!” I interjected. I couldn’t believe she was doing it again.

“Listen to me, please just listen to me and I’ll leave you to think about what I am about to say.” She pleaded with me. I knew that she was about to ruin my day but couldn’t she at least wait until the festivities were over and done with?

“I’m listening...” I rested my back and folded my arms across my chest.

“I don’t want you to think that I don’t want this for you but I do. The timing is just not right Okuhle; you’re still young and vibrant and have the entire world at your hands. I’m advising against this marriage because I feel there is more to life than being tied down at such a tender age. Lwanda has his education and you don’t, soon enough he’ll have his Honours in his hands and what will you have? A marriage certificate? This is not a qualification or some superior ranking. That certificate will only mean one thing and one thing only and that is Okuhle is somebody’s wife and she ought to act like it. This is not the life I want for you honey, please hid this advice because once you’re married you will no longer be under my care but your husband’s.” Tears trickled from her eyes.

“This is not a joyful occasion for me because I know how all of this will end, education Kuhle is all you need. Please don’t make the biggest mistake of your life and throw everything away just

because you think you're in love. I'm your mother and I wouldn't be doing you any justice if I let you make this mistake without advising you otherwise. The ball is in your court, only you can make this life changing decision and I hope you're smart enough to make the correct one." She wiped away her tears and stood up. "I'm not being bitter or cursing your marriage, I'm just trying to make you see things from a different perspective." With that said she walked out leaving me with a lot to think about. They say mothers know best but I was in love with my man and I wanted to be his wife. My mom spoke a lot of sense but I chose to follow my heart and my heart was what sent me to the dungeons of hell.

The day went by progressively, the Maseko's came and negotiations we held and after what seemed like forever Enhle came to my room and told me it was time. I'd be lying if I said that mom's words were not hoarding my brain, everything she said was on replay. I was just failing to let what she said to me not to affect me or my mood in anyway but she had done exactly what she intended to do and that was for me to doubt my decision. I went to the lounge with three of my cousins for the big reveal. The Maseko's were requested to point out who their bride was and they pointed at me, which was a relief on my side. 'I hope you're smart enough to make the correct one...' Mom's words echoed as I passed her going back to my room. She didn't look happy and so did my aunts. It hurt that they couldn't put their feelings aside and celebrate this day with me in perfect harmony

33.

LWANDA:

It was the beginning of a New Year, exactly 4 months after I had paid lobola for my beautiful wife. Being married to the woman that I loved dearly was a blessing. When her family delivered her to my home I was at my happiest, she looked beautiful and resembled the perfect bride. My mom was happy that I had taken this step and my dad was proud “He chose well. You have a beautiful bride.” He said. My parents’ approval was a cherry on top because with their support I knew that I was walking in the right path. We made love for the first time the night of the day she was delivered at the Maseko residence and I enjoyed every inch of her body and we were at it until the next day.

We were back in Nelspruit after spending a week in Witbank. Mom showed Kuhle how to take care of me and take care of the house. I was okay with Kuhle being a housewife. My mom was a housewife and dad never struggled a day in his life to provide for his family, he wouldn’t have it any other way. He wanted his wife at home taking care of the house and the kids and that was what I wanted too.

“Are you sure about this?” I swayed my eyes over to where she was standing and smiled.

“Yes, what do I have to lose?” I sealed the remaining boxes with tape.

“Nothing really but you once told me that you wanted to make your own money and build your own empire. What has changed?” I pulled her towards me and sat her on my thigh.

“Dad wants me in the family business and he has been begging for months. He offered a good pay check, not that I need all that money because I still get payments from the trust fund but this would be a start. I am no longer in my dad’s shadow. I am my own person and I can always walk away whenever I want.”

“If you say so...” She stood up and walked to the bedroom.

“I say so.” I yelled out. “And besides, I thought you’d be happy

that we're moving to Pretoria. You never really like this part of Mpumalanga."

"I don't..." She walked back with a box written cosmetics. "I think this is the last one. You can call your guys so that we can get going."

My dad had offered me a job as CFO in his company in Pretoria, which was a high position to start in given the fact that I had no experience in the field but I welcomed the challenge. I would be attending my graduation ceremony in April and I was planning to start with my Master's Degree the following year. The goal was to study towards a PHD. There was a knock on the door and I told Kuhle to see who it was while I called the movers.

OKUHLE:

I walked to the door wondering who it could be. We didn't know that many people from around here and the ones we knew were friends that once stayed in Witbank and had relocated to Nelspruit. I pulled the door handle and opened the door. My eyes landed on what she was wearing and I scanned her from the shoes she had on, those heels were just too high and I moved up to her exposed thighs, the skirt she was wearing was short and skimpy, it actually looked great on her but why was she dressed like that? She was wearing a boob tube that was too tight and seemed uncomfortable, I was wondering how she could breathe in something that tight. My eyes finally moved to her face and I could recognize her, I mean I would recognize this face even in my sleep. Her face was made up, she looked beautiful. The outfit she was wearing was skimpy but it looked good on her nonetheless and I took a glance at what I was wearing, it was a Saturday morning and I hadn't taken a bath so there was nothing wrong with what I was wearing, I tried to convince myself. I should

start dressing up more, even when I'm at home chilling watching TV the whole day.

"Hello..." I finally greeted her after taking my time checking her out, unintentionally so. She smiled at me and scanned me from head to toe.

"Hi, is Lwanda home?" She gave me attitude and my hands were itching for me to slap that smile into a frown.

"Yeah, he is home. Do you need something from him?" I tried to stay calm. Right in front of me stood the woman who was the cause of my miscarriage and the same woman slept with my husband before he became my husband. Excuse me for feeling a little bit insecure, I was wearing leggings with an oversized T-shirt, and my armpits had a funky smell. She was wearing the perfect outfit that would make any man's eyes wander. She smelled good and had the perfect smile with a beautiful denture structure. Her eyes were big and complimented her facial features quite well. I understood why Lwanda fell for her charms.

"I'd like to speak with him." She chuckled. "In P-R-I-V-A-T-E!" She sure dragged the private part and I snickered. Who did she think she was? Wanting to talk to my husband in private?

"Uhm... I'll call him for you." A part of me wanted to curse at her and drag her down the stairs with her fake ass weave but I wasn't about to stoop at her level. I had the ring and his heart and she had nothing.

I walked back to the lounge and Lwanda was concluding his phone call. I waited for him to hang up and then I looked at him and smiled. From where he was sitting, he didn't have the view of the kitchen door and I doubt he had any idea who was standing at the door.

"Someone is here to see you." I said faintly. He looked at me and frowned.

"See me? Who is it?"

"Come to the door and see for yourself." He gave me the 'o-kay' look and stood up, He walked to the door and I followed him. He



froze once his eyes landed on her and I could tell he was checking her out because I moved with his head as it moved from her feet up until it stopped at her face.

“What are you doing here?” There was a hint of anger in his tone. I leaned against the kitchen counter and folded my hands across my chest. I was not going anywhere lest she tried to do something with my man in my absence.

“I had to come say goodbye. They told me that you resigned with immediate effect and you refused a farewell party so here I am.” I could tell she was smiling and that annoyed me. Maybe the annoyance was because she looked prettier than me and the fact that I was dressed up in rags didn’t help the situation.

“I thought I made it clear to you that you must not set foot here or anywhere close to me. Do you want a repeat of last time?” Last time? What was he talking about? There was more to what Lwanda had with this lady than he led on.

“I come in peace. Please walk me to my car? I really want to talk to you.” She begged.

“Precious...” He whispered.

“Please...” He kept quiet and I could feel myself tense up. He wouldn’t, would he?

“Fine!” He would. Tears threatened my eyes, why would he want to walk her to her car and talk to her? I was standing right behind him and he just walked out and closed the door behind him without saying a word to me. I felt betrayed by him but then maybe I was just being insecure.

I ran to go take a quick shower while he was gone, I felt ugly just by standing next to her and now she was with my husband looking like a million rands and I was plain Jane.

I walked out of the bathroom after I was done and applied lotion on my body. I looked for something sexy to wear but I couldn’t find the perfect outfit. Four months with this man and I hadn’t gone to the mall to buy proper clothes. I always played it safe but this Precious girl just showed me flames and she didn’t even try.

She messed up with my head without even noticing it. She sure made me feel small and unattractive. I finally settled for black ripped skinny jeans with a white blouse that defined my neck line. I wasn't anywhere near to what Precious was wearing but I looked clean and stunning. I combed my hair and tied it into a bun; thanks to my mom I had long rich hair with fine sideburns, don't even get me started on the unibrow, Lwanda loved it but I didn't. I did my make up as natural as possible and wore my black sandals. Everything was packed away into the boxes so I had to work with what was left unpacked. I sprayed perfume and walked out of the bedroom.

Getting to the lounge he was still not back and I walked to the balcony to see what was keeping him. I looked over to where they were standing, she was leaning against the car and he was standing in front of her with his hands on her waist. I didn't want to think much of it but once he gave her a hug and they stood in that hugging position for a good five minutes, I couldn't handle the pain I felt on my chest. I walked back inside the apartment and sat down slowly doing breathing exercises. Maybe it was a good thing that we're relocating, that way he would be far away from her and I'll keep my insecurities in check.

34.

THREE DAYS LATER

OKUHLE:

We had settled in, in our new home. This was where we were going to start our lives and build beautiful memories together. There was still a lot of unpacking to do and I was alone with no one to help me. Lwanda had already started in his new position and he seemed to love it. After leaving Nelspruit, I hadn't questioned him about Precious and what the hug was about. I

wanted peace and I saw no need to question him because he was not going to see that snake ever again. I chose to be happy and right in that moment I was happy. He bought us a double storey house in Groenkloof, 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, lounge, dining area, theatre, chilling area with a fireplace, open plan kitchen with granite top counters, a huge back yard with a swimming pool and a Jacuzzi. This was a beautiful house and I wondered when he shopped for it because it was fully furnished with expensive furniture throughout the entire house.

I was obsessed with the master bedroom; this room was bigger than my room and Luthando's room combined. It had a platform king size bed made of faux leather and Astley Pena black nightstands with side lamps on either side of the bed. One side of the room had two singles couches with a coffee table in-between them. There was a walk-in closet for his and hers, my side still needed to be filled with designer garments from shoes to expensive hats. After that little encounter I had with Precious the devil, I made an oath to go shopping and get nothing but the best clothes money can buy. There was a 55" Samsung TV mounted onto the wall opposite the bed and on either side of the wall there were sliding doors that led a way to the balcony which overlooked the back yard and had the perfect view of the neighbourhood.

This room was heaven on earth and I was in love with the high ceilings and the paint work, it also had an en-suite bathroom and please, don't get me started with the bathroom, it had a huge shower that was surrounded by glass doors and had three shower heads and what looked like a bench right inside the shower. In the middle of the bathroom there was a freestanding Vov black bathtub, there was also his and hers basin with their designated cabinets, the bathroom was spacious and majestic. I loved everything about it and it would prove to be my second best place in the house. Never in a millions years did I ever think I would wind up getting married to a rich kid. At 21 I was already drowning in riches, don't get me wrong. I was never poor or anything, my

parents provided for my siblings and I and we never lacked anything but marrying into the Maseko family was a whole new ball game for me and what they had was far greater than what my parents had combined.

My phone rang from on top of the bed while I was busy sorting Lwanda closet, I was far from finishing with the unpacking which I didn't mind doing because I had nothing to do with my time while Lwanda was away during the whole day. I reached for it and took a seat on one of the couches.

"I was wondering when you were going to call me. I thought maybe you had abandoned me too."

"I can never, I miss you sis and it is hard not talking to you. How's marriage life?" I missed hearing his voice. After the lobola celebrations I ceased all contact with my family, especially with mom. She wasn't even there for umembeso and it broke my heart that she chose to stay away when she could have joined in on the celebrations of bringing two families together. Her nonattendance delivered the message to me loud and clear, and from that day onwards I vowed not to be in contact with her in anyway.

"Well! Besides being showered with money and gifts, marriage life is amazing Lu. I know it has only been four months but I love the idea of being a wife and to top it all off, my husband loves me just as much. I'm happy." My eyes filled with tears. I was indeed happy and it was not because I married into money.

"That's good sisi. If you're happy then I'm happy."

"So how are things? Have you decided on which University you're going to go with?" Lu got accepted everywhere and the last time we spoke he was seeking advice from me about which university to go with and as always, I wasn't of much help because he didn't even know what he was going to study.

"I'm still weighing my options between UCT and Harvard University."

"Harvard? You never told me about Harvard Lu, you should go there."

“Yeah but that means I have to leave my life as I know it and go start anew in a different country. It is a great opportunity, yes. But I’m not sure about being that far away from my family.”

“Lu this is a wonderful opportunity for you, you have always wanted to go study abroad so why not Harvard? You will do just fine and since my husband is loaded, I’ll come visit you time and again. I’ll bring South Africa to the USA.” I giggled. I couldn’t believe he was struggling to decide upon which university to go with. I really hoped he wouldn’t let this opportunity to study abroad pass him by.

“You’re crazy big sis. I’ll discuss the logistics with the rents. I just called to check up on you. Greet Lwanda for me and I’ll be waiting for that housewarming invitation.” He laughed.

“You’ll be long gone by the time I throw a housewarming party but you can come and visit before you leave.”

“Cool. I’ll do that. See you around sisi. I love you.”

“I love you too. Bye.” I hung up with a smile on my face. It felt great talking to my brother after such a long time.

“Oh so we’re sharing I love you’s over the phone while hubby is away?” My dear husband walked into the room with a bouquet of red roses in his hands. I giggled looking at him, he looked all types of fine and my heart was beating out of my chest just by looking at him.

“Hey husband...” I stood up and walked towards him.

“How’s the wife doing? I missed you.” He pulled me into his embrace and planted a kiss on my forehead.

“I’m okay, I just spoke to Lu and he says hi.”

“You guys are talking now? That’s good babe.” He smiled.

“Yeah, it was great talking to him.” I pulled away from his embrace and he gave me the flowers.

“These are for you and I have something else to show you.” He grinned.

“Oh yeah?” I gave him a funny look. Lwanda has been showering me with gifts every day and each day he came with something I least expected and on this day it was no different from the other

days. There same old blindfold and “no peeking.” instructions. “What is it this time baby?” I was anxious as he led me down the stairs.

“Patience is virtue my love.” He said as I hung tightly on his arm making sure I didn’t slip and fall.

“This way....” He directed me towards the kitchen door I assumed.

“Lwanda this needs to stop.” I giggled.

“Okay, stand right here. I promise you that this is the last time I spend money this recklessly.” He stood behind me “Are you ready?” He whispered into my ear and I nodded repeatedly. I was so anxious that my voice failed me. He untied the blindfold and dropped it.

“Surprise!!!” He said with excitement. I looked at the baby in front of me and tears graced my cheeks immediately.

“Lwa... Lwa, goodness baby!!!!” I screamed in excitement jumping up and down like a 6 year old in a candy shop. I couldn’t believe he had bought me a car and not just a car. He bought me a BMW M2 convertible, metallic silver with tinted windows.

“This is for you baby. I need you to be mobile and familiarize yourself with Pretoria. I won’t always be around to drive you to places so this would put my heart at ease knowing that you can get to point B in my absence. This is the first of many that I will buy for you. I chose a BMW because I know how much you love anything that is a BMW. Here...” He handed me the key and I looked at him with my eyes filled with love and appreciation. This man loved me and his way of showing it was by showering me with gifts that always came with a declaration of his undying love for me.

I took the key from him and ran over to my new baby. I got in and I had a feel of the soft red leather seats, I loved everything about the interior, it was automatic and also had a steptronic transmission, not that I’ll be using that but it made the steering wheel look sexy nonetheless. He stood in front of the car looking



at me admiring the new addition to our family and I was grateful. I couldn't stop the tears from flowing, this was big. I started the engine and it roared, I kept pressing on the accelerator revving it a bit and he kept cheering me on. He came to the passenger seat and looked at me smiling.

"Let's take her for a spin."

"Babe I don't have a license." I remarked.

"We're just going around the corner. Come on, put your seatbelt on and let's go." He closed the door and put his seatbelt on. I followed suit and slid the gear to reverse and let go of the break as the car slowly drove out of the driveway. I didn't have a license but I knew how to drive and the fact that this baby was an automatic made it a lot easier. I waited for the gate to close before driving off in sheer speed.

35

LWANDA:

Taking the decision to work for my dad in my own capacity was a good decision, besides receiving the benefits of being the boss's son and working on flexi hours, I had grown as an individual. Being a CFO was no child's play and it didn't make it any easier looking at the little experience I had about the corporate world but I was grateful for my studies, especially now that I was a few months away from completing my Master's Degree. What was supposed to be 2 years of studying extended to 3 years because I had to balance work, school and my private life. After getting my MAcc I was planning to sit for my CPA examination. I didn't see myself serving in the CFO position forever.

I was more interested in becoming a Forensic Accountant and I still needed to come up with a stellar speech to get dad to see why being a CFO was not what I aspired to become and hoped he would give me his blessings to pursue my desired career path.

I couldn't believe that three years had already passed and I was still happily married to my beautiful wife, Okuhle. It wasn't an easy three years, we had fights like a normal married couple would and every time we fought I was there one kicked out of the house. Our fights were caused by my constant late nights at the office, not coming home and only showing up the next day, my phone being off for longer periods, just to mention a few. Kuhle and I were madly in love with each other, our love was like a drug. I couldn't survive a day without her, she was my addiction. I couldn't imagine my life without her and I thanked God every day for her presence in my life. She had made a friend who went by the name, Refilwe. She was also married to a guy who I now considered a friend, Sihle.

I remember that fateful day when she met Refilwe, she addressed her as Fifi. That afternoon when I came back home from work, she was sitting out-front and looked like she was waiting for me to get home. As soon as I stepped out of the car she jumped into my arms and yelled at her top of her lungs "I made a friend today." She was all excited and man, I had never seen my wife that excited before. I understood her excitement though because she would get bored staying at home in this big house alone all day. She had time on her hands so what was supposed to be a boring day at home turned into a day of exploring and she made a friend while grocery shopping. I was happy that Fifi would fill the void of Kuhle missing her family. She still refused to talk to her mom, I had tried everything to get her to give her a call but she refused each time I tried and even threatened to leave me if I ever brought up her mom in our conversations.

It was a cold Saturday winter morning and I was in my man cave playing games, FIFA to be exact. Kuhle was busy cleaning the house, she didn't have to but she insisted. I was glad that it was towards the end of July, I was not a fan of this season and to make matters worse I had to spend late nights at the office because we're working towards our Financial Year End. My

phone rang right next to me.

“Siphesihle...” I answered with a grin on my face. He has been a good companion and I was actually grateful to our wives because if it wasn't for them I wasn't going to meet Sihle.

“Dude, don't address me by my full name. How is it brother?”

“Good man, you?”

“Great, where are you? Please tell me you're at home?”

“I'm at home, why?”

“I have people you have to meet. I know it's cold but we'll have a pleasant indoor party type of thing.”

“Party in whose house?” I enquired laughing.

“Dude you will not regret this. I'm coming with my wife and I'm bringing other people.”

“Other people? Do they have names?”

“Stop asking a lot of questions and tell your wife to prepare something scrumptious.” With that said he hung up. I chuckled a bit and ran upstairs to Kuhle. I searched for her in every room and I eventually found her in the theatre room watching The Twilight Saga. The lights were on dime, I walked in slowly and slid next to her and placed my arm around her shoulders.

“Honey...” I said in the sweetest voice ever.

“What do you want Lwa? I'm watching a movie and I'm trying to concentrate.” She didn't like being disturbed when she was in the theatre room.

“Can we talk?” I nibbled on her ear and she pushed me away.

“Lwanda stop it, this is my favourite part.” I looked at her defeated. I didn't have any tricks up my sleeve to get her to snap out of it.

Her:” You don't belong to my world....”

Her:” I belong with you...”

Her:” No you don't...” She had her eyes fixed on the screen and she knew the movie word for word.

“We're about to host people in about an hour or so.” I muttered. I had to find a way to get her out of the theatre room.

Her:” Edward? Edward! Ed... what did you say?” She turned to

face me.

“Yes, Sihle and his wife are coming over and they are bringing other people.” She stared at me without saying anything then she sighed.

“Oh but Lwa... Hosting people in this weather? What am I going to prepare for a group of people I don't even know? We didn't even do groceries this week. You're impossible do you know that?” She stood up and walked up the stairs towards the exit. I ran after her as she walked out.

“Come on baby, we could make new friends and they are all married. Isn't that what you wanted?”

“Yeah but this is short notice.” She walked down the stairs and headed to the kitchen, I followed behind her.

“Yeah but we can make it work. Fifi will be here too.” She opened the fridge and paused blankly staring at it. “There is enough to prepare a scrumptious meal right?” I stood behind her and wrapped my arms around her waist.

“I guess...” She shrugged her shoulders.

“Come on babe, give me a smile already this is good for us.” I tickled her and she burst out in laughter dropping to the floor.

“Okay... Okay... Stop tickling me.” We both laughed.

She stood up and started picking out ingredients. She was in good spirits and I loved us when we were happy and not at each other's throats. I sat on one of the barstools and watched her do her thing. My wife was a good cook, she had mastered her cooking skills through being a housewife and as the years went by she became a regular in the kitchen trying out new recipes and I was always happy to come home to a home cooked meal filled with love. I was anxious about who Sihle was coming with but I welcomed the idea of growing the number of people I would call friends. This was the beginning of something new for Kuhle and I.

OKUHLE:

To say I wasn't excited about hosting people would be a half-truth. I know Lwanda caught me off guard with the whole hosting situation but once I started chopping the beef into strips and peeling the potatoes, let the macaroni boil on the stove I was suddenly in the mood for company. And, what made it more thrilling was the fact that I didn't know the people that were coming through so this felt more like a blind date, except this was not a date at all. I was conflicted on what I would be serving my guests. Firstly, I didn't know whether or not some of the guys are on a special diet, and whether or not I had to look out for allergens. They say first impressions last and I wanted to make a good first impression and what I serve was also supposed to meet the standard of good impressions.

"Mmmm... smells delish!!!!" Lwanda said walking into the kitchen, he had just taken a bath and was looking like the perfect host.

"Don't you think this is too much? Chicken marinara and beef stir fry? I feel like this is too much for a first time hostess like me." I was panicking. I prepared two dishes and I was starting to doubt the direction I took. Beef stir fry was good on its own but I had to include the chicken marinara to complicate things.

"There can never be too much food love. I mean look at this, mashed potatoes infused with mixed veggies, Greek salad, savoury rice, stir fry and chicken marinara. I'm impressed actually." He pecked my lips and pulled me into his embrace.

"Thank you." He said in a low voice.

"For what?" I was a bit confused. It was dinner and not that much of a big deal.

"For being the best wife ever. I mean, you take care of me and the house so well that you deserve to be praised for it. You deserve the world." I took a deep breath and exhaled.

"I love taking care of you and the house; it's no big deal really." I pulled away from him and reduced the heat in the oven to allow

the chicken marinara to simmer. “Now, let me go get ready for our guests.” I kissed him on the cheek and ran upstairs to our bedroom.

LWANDA:

15 minutes after Kuhle rushed off to go get ready, our guests arrived. They drove in in two separate cars, it was Sihle and Fifi driving in a black Mercedes E63 AMG and then they were followed by a Porsche Cayenne GTS, inside the were two couples. I waited by the door as they stepped out of their vehicles. It felt great that after such a long time we finally got to host people in our humble home.

“This is impressive.” Sihle admired the house. “Mr Maseko, where are you hiding your money?” He walked up to me and we exchanged a manly hug.

“The same place where you’re hiding yours.” I responded and he broke out in laughter. Sihle was a free spirited guy and lived life to the fullest.

“Smart I see.” He said. “Any way this is my first lady, Refilwe. Not that you need any introductions but this is Mrs Nkosi.” He smiled.

“Of course, nice to see you again Refilwe.” I shook her hand and she gave me a warm smile.

“Where is the madam?” Fifi asked.

“Upstairs, getting ready for you guys.”

“In that case let me go see how that is coming along.” She walked right past me and ran up the stairs.

“Guys, please come in.” I made way for everyone to walk in. Sihle walked in first, then the guy who was driving the Porsche followed behind him, then another guy who was also in the Porsche followed and then the two ladies walked in last. The light in complexion (Yellow bone) lady caught my eyes. She was beautiful and had the perfect body, flat waist with a round butt.



She looked like she came from a wealthy family, she was dressed well for a cold weather and her weave looked like it was imported, I mean, I've seen synthetic hair and those 100% human hair but that lady's weave screamed expensive, it was worth whatever amount she paid for it. I wouldn't mind paying good money for good hair.

I directed everyone to the lounge where everyone took a seat. The ladies were still chatting among themselves and I couldn't keep my eyes off of the yellow bone but I was careful not to make it obvious that I was checking her out. I didn't want any trouble from her husband, he had an intimidating look and I didn't want to get on his wrong side.

"Okay guys..." Sihle stood up. "This is the Maseko residence and this guy right here is a friend of mine whom I met through his wife who happens to be my wife's friend and yeah, something like that." We all laughed. Goodness, where has this guy been all my life?

"Anyway, this is Lwanda Maseko. He is the son of Michael Maseko." He furrowed his eyebrows.

"What? Small world huh?" The driver of the Porsche said nodding his head. I stared at him and he looked at me and chuckled.

"Yep, thee Mike from you know where." They laughed. I was confused, how did they know my dad?

"Okay moving right along, Lwanda that is Lunga Shezi." Pointed at the driver. "He is the CEO at Imperial Logistics and has other ventures on the side." Mhmm... So we have a CEO in our mist, impressive. "Right next to him is his wife, the lovely Mrs Thobeka Shezi." He pointed at the yellow bone and she looked at me smiling. She had an infectious smile that kept my eyes glued to her radiant beauty. "She owns and runs her company, Logitech. Mrs, when are you hiring a CEO? You need to be a housewife!" She laughed shaking her head slightly. This was getting better, so the beautiful lady owns a company. I couldn't help it but found that super sexy and attractive. "Right over there, we have uZama

Mnguni and honestly, I don't know how he makes his money." We all laughed, Sihle was a joker. "And that is his lovely wife, Mrs Thembeke Mnguni. And she works at PWC." Everyone looked friendly except for this Lunga character, I was not comfortable about how intimidating he looked but otherwise everyone else seemed welcoming and I was happy to be in this circle of friends.

OKUHLE:

"I don't know what to wear Fifi." I bit my lower lip in frustration. Refilwe barged into my room right after I had taken a bath. She looked lovely and beautiful. I was happy to see her. She came in just in time to save me from my dull fashion sense

"You can wear that dress love come on, your house has heated floors so there is no need to worry about getting cold." She was sitting comfortably on one of the single couches flipping through a magazine.

"Don't you think a dress is too simple? I mean, look at you." I frowned. I was really bad at dressing up.

"Okay, let me see what you have in there..." She walked into my closet and I leaned against the door as she picked out clothes for me.

"So who did you come with?" I enquired.

"Sihle and his friends. They dragged their wives along too." She rolled her eyes and continued picking out clothes.

"O-kay, what was that? Why are you rolling your eyes?" There was something about the way she said "their wives too."

"Well..." She turned to face me. "Let's just say they think they are superior to people like us because they are career women." She shrugged her shoulders and continued going through my clothes "Girl, you need to go shopping. What are you doing with all the money kanti?"

"I'll go with you so that you can teach me how to shop."

“Yeah, definitely! I think that dress you had picked out is actually nice. There is no hope in this closet whatsoever.”

“But I’m not looking for nice.” I sulked.

“Well you have to make it work baby girl.” She walked out of the closet and sat back down on the couch. I dropped the towel that I had wrapped around my body and wore the dress I had picked out. It was a long, floral print short sleeve tie waist maxi dress.

“So when you say people like us, what do you mean exactly?” I sat in front of the dresser and combed my hair. She looked at me and laughed.

“Housewives... That’s what I meant.”

“They don’t get along with housewives?” I frowned. How was I supposed to make a good first impression if the people I was about to meet don’t even like housewives? I was disappointed by that small bit of information.

“You’ll see for yourself. I don’t like them, I just tolerate them.” She shrugged her shoulders and focused on the magazine. I looked at her disappointed by what she just said. She ruined my excitement and all that was in my head was, what if they don’t find anything to like about me? I don’t know about Fifi but I’d hate for anyone to tolerate me. It was either you loved me or hated me, there was no in between. I tied my hair into a neat bun; I put on make-up and sprayed a sweet scented perfume. The dress made me look innocent and young and I hoped Lwanda would be approving of this outfit.

“I’m done.” I smiled nervously.

“Look at you. Are you sure you’re 24? Girl, you look 18. I can only dream to look that young.” She stood up and neatly placed the magazine on the coffee table. “Come, it is time for you to meet the grannies of the clique.” She laughed making her way to the door. Fifi was forward in nature and this was the first time I saw that side of her and I was not sure how to feel about it. I mean, yes I wanted to make friends but it wouldn’t be easy with her hating the other ladies that I was yet to meet.

OKUHLE:

We walked down the stairs, through the passage with Fifi leading the way to the lounge. We were talking about her kids, Simphiwe, boy (10) and Kamogelo, girl (5). It was amazing how young she looked, at first glanced I actually thought she was my age. I was surprised when she said that she was 28 years of age and looking forward to throwing a massive 30th birthday party which of course was two years from now. Her exact words were “It is going to be extravagant darling.” Well, I would have to wait 2 full years to witness that party.

Loud laughter filled the lounge as we walked in and judging from the people seated on the couches, I was underdressed, even my husband was dressed well for the occasion.

“Good evening.” I greeted and everyone moved their attention to Fifi and I.

“Ah finally, you have been up there for way to long.” – Lwanda. I looked at him and smiled, I tried to keep calm but my heart was betraying me. I was literally shaking as the nerves got the better of me. I could tell that these people came from the most elite parts of Pretoria. I couldn’t even associate myself with them just by looking at them. I understood why Fifi felt inferior to the ladies seated on the couch. Lwanda introduced me to everyone and their warm reception towards me was what made it easy for me to get over my nerves and actually enjoy the night.

“Uhm... Everyone, please move to the dining area.” I said getting up. Time was not on our side, yes, it was fun sitting here talking to everyone and getting to know them. The conversation that we held was so intriguing that I had forgotten that I had cooked. I excused myself and went to the kitchen while everyone else went to the dining room; thank goodness the table was already set. All I needed to do was to dish up the food into serving bowls and place them on the dining table for everyone to serve themselves.

“Need help?” A low sweet voice said from behind me. I was down

on my knees looking for my serving bowls from the bottom cabinet, I had bought these bowls a few months back and I had forgotten where I stashed them. I looked up and Thobeka was leaning against the wall next to the fridge. I fixed my eyes on her; she had an infectious smile and radiant beauty.

“Oh! It’s fine, I’ll handle everything.” I stood up and fixed my dress.

“Please don’t be silly, I might be a guest but I wasn’t raised that way.” She giggled. She was actually sweet and kind, definitely something I didn’t expect. I pictured her to be boastful and self-absorbed but she was the total opposite.

“Okay then, I was looking for my serving bowls that I had bought from @Home but I can’t seem to find them. I guess I’ll be using these...” I pointed at the grey set of serving bowls that were already on top of the counter.

“These are beautiful, where did you buy them?” She picked one up and looked at it.

“They were a gift from my mother-in-law.” I smiled faintly. Her presence alone made me nervous, I mean, she was her own boss and looked like she was swimming in money. I remembered how once upon a time I also aspired to be an important somebody with a career, making money moves. 4 years later and I had abandoned my dreams and settled for the housewife position.

“Your mother-in-law has got good taste. Come, let me help you dish up.” She wiped the bowls while making small talk. She spoke fluently; she was very articulate and well-spoken. I got jealous just by listening to her talk about her life and how amazing Lunga was as a husband. She spoke highly of him by the way and I found that very attractive. I didn’t measure to her standards but she was the motivation I needed to get my independence back.

We placed the bowls on the dining table and I don’t mean to blow my own horn but the food smelled amazing and the guys couldn’t wait to fill their bellies.

“Dinner is served. Please enjoy.” I said and took a seat next to my husband who was in good spirits.

There was total silence at the table; the room was filled with sounds of the silverware clinking against the crockery. The silence was comforting though; there was no need to have a conversation. Everyone seemed to be enjoying the food but me; I found it weird that they all seemed comfortable eating while lost in their many thoughts about life and adversities that they were faced with or so I assumed that was what they were thinking about.

“This is good!!!!” Lunga said digging into the chicken marinara. This was his second plate already; he started off with the beef stir fry with savoury rice and mashed potatoes, and then when he was done eating that, he asked Thobeka to dish up the chicken marinara and Greek salad for him. Judging from his facial expression, he was really enjoying it.

“Lwanda ushade umfazi la! Ye Okuhle uyapheka jealous down.” – Sihle. Everyone laughed, including me. This was off to a good start. We ate in perfect harmony and eventually a conversation broke out, the topic was about investments, bonds, share options and everything investment. I didn’t bother sharing my 2 cents worth of an opinion because I had no idea what they were talking about. I chose not to make a fool of myself or my husband.

After eating the guys excused themselves, it was about 20:30 PM and it seemed like my guests were not going to leave anytime soon. Thembeke and Thobeka helped clear the table and Fifi placed the dirty dishes into the dishwasher after rinsing them off. We were all in the kitchen conversing; they were drinking dry white champagne which was brought by Thobeka. I think it was an expensive bottle because Thembeke was surprised by the year of the bottle and placed emphasis on how she didn’t mind gifting a bottle that old and matured. I was not a drinker myself so I wouldn’t know what an expensive bottle of champagne looked like. Of course, my husband drank his occasional beer and when



he felt like it, he drank champagne and I always settled for Juice, fizzy drinks, sparkling water, anything really as long as it was non-alcoholic.

“So Kuhle, have you always wanted to be a housewife?” – Thembeke. I choked on my juice and coughed profusely. I did not expect that question so soon. We barely knew each other and already she was asking personal questions.

“Thembeke really? What’s it to you.” – Fifi. I drank a glass of water and did breathing exercises. That question almost sent me to an early grave.

“I’m sorry; I didn’t mean to come off strong. It was just a simple question nje.” Thembeke shrugged her shoulders.

“No...” I said and refilled my glass with water.

“You don’t have to.” – Fifi.

“It’s fine Fifi. Look ladies, I don’t have a problem with being a housewife and my husband sure as hell doesn’t have a problem with it either. I have my reasons why I’m a housewife and that doesn’t make me less of a woman because you guys are professional somebody’s. Not everyone can be an entrepreneur and not everyone gets to climb up the corporate ladder. Success is a gradual process; maybe someday I’ll be part of the corporate world but today is not that day.” I gulped down the water in the glass and kept quiet. There was an awkward silence, there I was thinking I met good people but I guess what I “didn’t” do for a living was going to be a problem.

“Uhm... I think it’s getting late. Let me go get Lunga so that we can get going.” – Thobeka. She walked away leaving the 3 of us. I could feel the tension and I decided right there on the spot that Thembeke and I would never get along, she thought highly of herself and that was going to be a problem.

“Look Okuhle, I’m sorry about that question. I really didn’t mean anything by it.” – Thembeke. I looked at her defeated; what a lousy apology or was she just saying sorry for the sake of saying sorry? Maybe they did perceive themselves superior to us.

“It’s okay but I am glad we addressed the elephant in the room and we can all move on.” I placed the glasses in the sink. Fifi was busy on her phone when the guys came through to the kitchen. “Thank you for having us Mrs Maseko.” –Zama. He came to give me a hug. We walked everyone out, the cold breeze hit me hard the moment I stepped out of the house, I had forgotten it was freezing outside and I was definitely not dressed for the weather. I gave everyone a hug and thanked them for coming through. “Drive safe guys.” – Lwanda. They got into their cars and slowly drove out. Lwanda turned to me and gave me a warm hug. “That was a pleasant night.” He said. “It was pleasant indeed.” I pulled away and walked back inside. My phone beeped from the top of the counter and I walked over to where it was and read the message.

Refilwe: Lunch is on me Monday afternoon. Meet me at the Summit Grill and Skybar, we need to discuss these bitches!

I chuckled reading that message. Refilwe was one crazy mother of two.

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OKUHLE:

A few weeks passed and dinner hosting with the couples became a norm. We would exchange venues and even dined out at the most finest restaurants. Thembeke and I ironed out our differences but I still didn’t like her. I got to know Thobeka at a personal level, and I concluded that she was a reserved person and took care of those that she loved, even got a chance to meet her sister, Zenande. They didn’t look alike but they claimed they were sisters, so who was I to argue with that? Fifi had a mouthful to say about Zenande, I was of the impression that there was a

little bit of a history behind the hostility between the two and I was yet to find out what it was.

I had been feeling tired this past week and spent more time in bed than on my feet, I even suspected that I was coming down with flu. Winter had already passed but somehow my body was responding badly to the change in season.

“You should go see a doctor.” Lwanda said walking into the bedroom. He was getting ready for work and things were a bit different on this particular morning. On a normal day, I would be up preparing breakfast for him and ensuring that he looked presentable for the day ahead but I just didn’t feel like getting out of bed. My body felt heavy and my mood was sour, I was annoyed just by looking at him getting dressed.

“I’m not going to the doctor. It’s just a bug, I’ll be fine.” He looked at me not saying anything and continued getting dressed. I hated it when he did that because he had the ‘I was not asking you.’ look.

“Fine! I’ll go see a doctor if that will make you feel happy.” I rolled my eyes and turned to my other side. I really wanted him gone.

“Good!” He said coldly and walked out. I didn’t know what was going on with me but right after I heard the gate close signalling that he was gone, my mood suddenly changed. I was happy that he was gone and I jumped out of bed in a jolly mood. I made an appointment to go see a doctor at Menlyn Med which was for 14:30 PM that meant I had enough time on my hands to take care of household chores.

**LWANDA:**

I was frustrated with Okuhle. The past few weeks had been amazing from spending time with our newly found friends and being together in general, but the joy and happiness was short lived when this past week she shifted moods. Everything I tried seemed to annoy her, I mean I tried cooking for her last night and

she said that my food tasted awful and that I should stay in the office and not set foot in the kitchen. I was hurt that she didn't even try to sugar coat her rude remarks.

"Sir..." I snapped back to reality and looked at my assistant, Fiona. She stood there with her tablet in hand staring at me and I stared right back at her.

"Is there a reason why you're standing there looking at me?" I asked rudely. I was not in the mood for her or anything that had to do with the company. My mind was with Kuhle and I was hoping that she goes to the doctor so that I could have my wife back.

"I'm sorry sir but you were supposed to be in Durban." I unbelievably looked at her. Did she just say Durban?

"Oh! To do what exactly?" I had no idea what she was talking about. If I was supposed to be in Durban, I'd be the first one to know.

"Well! The brief is in the e-mail that your father sent through yesterday..."

"Brief? Fiona, what are you talking about?" She was getting nervous and I could tell that she was uneasy and didn't know what to say to me. She was about to explain everything to me when my phone rang.

"Please excuse me, I need to take this." It was my dad and I knew what the call was about.

"Of course." She rushed out and I answered my phone.

"Baba..." I rested my back on the chair and kept my eyes on the ceiling.

"Why are you not in Durban? Lwanda, I made it clear in that e-mail that that you make sure you attend this meeting. Now, I had to cancel my meetings for the day and head out there. What is going on?" He sounded mad and displeased with me. I opened my e-mails and read through his e-mail.

"I'm... I'm sorry dad, I... Uhm..." I didn't know how I missed that e-mail. I went through my e-mails every day before I knocked off and I happened to miss this one important e-mail from my dad.

“Is that all you’re going to say? Mr Xavier will not be pleased with me. I gave you this position because I trusted you to see your duties through and it was by merit and not because you’re my son. I don’t care what you’re going through, when you’re at Maseko Industries you’re my employee and not my son and you ought to act like it!” He said with a hint of authority in his voice.

“I know dad, I’m sorry. How do we fix things with Mr Xavier?”

“I suggest you get on the next plane to Durban and meet me at the Hilton Durban. You’re lucky because Mr Xavier pushed the meeting to later this evening.” He still sounded displeased with me and I knew that I had to make it up to him so that I could earn his trust again.

“I’ll get Fiona to book my next flight to Durban.”

“Good!” He hung up without saying goodbye. I guess I was getting too comfortable in this position and being the son of the boss, I neglected my duties and that was about to change.

I got Fiona to cancel all my meetings for the day. The next flight to Durban was at 10:30 AM and I had 1 hour 30 minutes to get to O R Tambo International airport. I packed up my bags and left the building in a haste.

OKUHLE:

I sat in the doctor’s consultation room waiting for him to come back with the results from my urine sample. He suspected that I was pregnant and it was only then that I realized I hadn’t been on my period the previous month. I was scared because if I was indeed pregnant then it meant I was unaware this entire time and I could’ve endangered my unborn baby while I was out partying with the ladies.

“Here we go.” He walked back in with a paper in his hand.

“So am I pregnant doc?” I asked nervously.

“Yes, Mrs Maseko. You are indeed pregnant. 6 Weeks pregnant

to be exact.” He said with a smile plastered across his face. I looked at him in shock. How could I be 6 weeks pregnant and not be aware this entire time? I was almost 2 months pregnant and I hadn’t taken precautionary measures to ensure a smooth pregnancy.

“Uhm... Excuse me for the shock. Did you just say 6 weeks?” I couldn’t believe it. Tears blurred my vision. It was really hard to believe.

“Yes, we’ll do a scan to make sure that everything is fine.”

“Okay...phew!!! Okay, this is good right?” My voice was scratchy and I could feel the lump building up in my throat.

“Of course it’s good ma’am. A baby is always a blessing. Now, please get on the examining table so we can check how the baby is doing.” I nodded slowly and walked over to the bed. I climbed on it shaking. I was scared of the unknown but I knew that, that I wanted this baby more than anything. Especially since my first one was snatched away from me before I could even hold him/her in my arms.

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**OKUHLE:**

I was back at home and still coming to terms with the fact that I was pregnant. I looked at the time again and it was 18:30 PM. I found it odd that Lwanda I was not home by now but I guess he was working late again. I stared at the scan one more time and tears graced my cheeks, this was happening and I was mad because Lwanda was not around for both us to share this moment together. I reached for my phone and dialled his number again and it still took me straight to voicemail. I scrolled through my contacts and stopped over my mom’s number, I looked at the



word 'mom' for a while then I scrolled past to Refilwe's name. I touched on the screen dialling her...

"Calling me at this time? Where is hubby?" She answered which caused me to chuckle.

"Come on Fifi, can't I just call and say hi? I miss you hau."

"Okay, how are you doing love?"

"I'm great. I received some news today..."

"News?" I kept quiet. "Kuhle are you there?"

"Uhm... Yeah, look let me do something real quick. I'll call you tomorrow morning."

"Okay dear. Have a goodnight."

"You too. Bye." I hung up and sank on the couch. Why was Lwanda's phone off? I was getting worried but I had always taught myself to worry less because this was what he did when he was working late.

HILTON DURBAN

LWANDA:

"Okay gentlemen, I'm guessing this concludes our meeting." I stood up. "Mr Xavier, thank you for your time and choosing to do business with us. I'll run everything by our CEO on Thursday and have our legal team go through the paperwork." I shook his hand.

"Thank you Lwanda for dropping everything just to come meet me. Mike, you have a good son here, he will take Maseko Industries to greater heights." Xavier said with a grin on his face.

"Thank you Lwanda and you may be excused. I know your wife is probably worried about you. We'll talk tomorrow." My dad said and I bid them farewell. I made it to my room which Fiona booked for me. I dialled Kuhle immediately after I closed the door behind me. It rang unanswered and I dialled her again. She was probably asleep or watching a movie and has her phone on silent.

“Hello...” Her sweet angelic voice came through from the other side. Hearing her voice made my heart skip a beat. This was her sleepy voice so I guess she was asleep.

“Baby love, Sthandwa sami. You’re already asleep?”

“Mmm... Lwanda?”

“Yes baby, it’s me. Wake up please; I want to talk to you.” I hear her moving around.

“Lwanda where are you? It is already 21:30 are you working late again?” Her voice was so soft and hypnotic.

“I’m in Durban love...”

“Durban?” She interjected.

“I know, I know. I had to leave because there was a meeting with an important client that I didn’t diarize. I’m sorry I left without letting you know. Everything happened so quickly and dad was on my case.” She kept quiet. I was worried that she might not believe me. “Love?”

“Uhm... Okay love, how did the meeting go?”

“It went well. Dad is here too and we just scooped ourselves a lucrative deal.”

“I didn’t think CFO’s attend meetings and seal lucrative deals...”

“Well I’m more than a CFO to dad, so I guess he trusts my judgement.”

“That is great baby. I’m happy for you and that you’re doing well in this position. When are you coming back to Pretoria?”

“Tomorrow morning. I miss you so much, I’m saddened that I’ll be spending the night on my own.”

“I miss you too. Come home soon and please, behave.”

“Don’t I always? Come on now babe, you know my eyes are for you and you alone. I love you.”

“I love you too.” We spoke briefly and she told me about how the visit to the doctor went. Turns out she was coming down with flu and the doctor was unable to explain her mood swings. I was just happy that she was not suffering from anything serious. After our talk I took off my suit and was left in my briefs. I got into bed and sent my lovely wife a goodnight text. I wanted her to know how

much I loved her and reassured her that there will never be anyone else but her.

OKUHLE:

It was already morning when I woke up running to the bathroom, I threw up the contents from last night's meal and I guess those were the symptoms of being pregnant, of course this was nothing new to me. I rinsed my mouth and brushed my teeth after. I took a quick shower then after I was done, I applied lotion on my body and went to get dressed into Nike trackpants with a saggy T-shirt. I was planning to stay in so there was no need to dress up. I made my way downstairs to the kitchen and got started on breakfast. As soon as I broke an egg into the frying pan, I picked up it had a funky smell and I rushed over to the sink where I threw up again. How was I going to hide all these symptoms from Lwanda?

I was planning to tell him about the pregnancy on his birthday which was in two weeks time. This was going to be the perfect birthday gift.

I settled for cereal with warm milk, I could not handle the smell of the eggs or anything that was in the fridge. I sat in front of the TV watching the food channel. I really missed Lwanda and I kept looking through the window to see if his car was parked outside. My phone rang from on top of the table and I reach for it answering it.

"Good Morning..." It was Lwanda's mom. She was a frequent caller lately and I found it heart-warming because she made me feel like her biological daughter. I still didn't have the courage to call my mom so Mel was the perfect substitute.

"Good Morning Kuhle, how are you?"

"I'm good thanks Mel and you?" She insisted that I called her Mel. At first it was awkward considering that she was old enough to be my mom and I found it disrespectful addressing her by her name

but as time went by I got used to it.

“I’m good. How are things going? Hope Lwanda is treating you well?”

“Everything is going well Mel thanks and your son is heaven sent. He never falters; he takes good care of me. I’m truly blessed to have him in my life.” I found myself smiling just by telling Mel how much his son has been good to me.

“That’s good love. I’m happy to hear that you guys are still madly in love with each other. Tell me, when are you guys making me a granny?” She asked laughing and I choked on my saliva.

“Uhm...” I coughed.

“Are you okay my love?”

“[Coughing] I’m fine Mel. [Coughing] I choked on the water I was drinking, sorry.”

“Okay, so when?”

“Soon.” I laughed nervously. My husband was the first person I was planning to break the news to, I knew it was going to be hard withholding all this information from everyone but I wanted everything to be perfect for when I tell Lwanda about the baby and I was not about to risk not being the first person to tell him about the baby news.

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LWANDA:

It has been 2 weeks since I sealed the deal with Xavier and Sons. Our CEO was not happy that he was excluded from the meeting with Xavier but dad found a way to calm him down and made him see why I had to be part of the meeting and not him. In all honesty, dad ran that meeting and I was just sitting there listening to two great men talking about business and finding a way to benefiting both their companies without incurring any losses. The meeting was informative for someone looking into running a

business of their own. I was not an entrepreneur at heart and dad should really try Luyanda and reel him into this business thing, my baby brother was more business minded as compared to me. I was all about crunching numbers and it ended there.

Okuhle has been okay and she looks sicker than she was two weeks ago. She has been trying to hide the vomiting from me but was unsuccessful. I asked her at some point because it was getting out of hand and she blamed the vomiting on the antibiotics that the doctor prescribed for her. I forced her to go see the doctor again and offered to go with her but she blatantly refused and insisted that she would go alone. I was worried that she was suffering from some sort of dread disease and was scared to tell me. She was always in bed and her energy levels were low. I chose to keep to myself until she was ready to tell me what was wrong with her.

It was my birthday and I was offered a day off by the big boss. I didn't plan much because there was no planning needed. I had everything I ever wanted right here with me and I couldn't ask for more. Kuhle rushed out of bed this morning. Just when I was hoping for some happy birthday morning glory she goes and vomits, something she had been doing every day.

"27 years looks good on you..." She walked down the stairs with a smile on her face. She looked better than yesterday.

"You think?" I walked over to her and gave her a hug.

"I know... Happy birthday husband." She gave me a kiss and I forced it into a passionate one. I picked her up and she giggled screaming for me to put her down but I was not having it. She made me miss out on my morning glory, so I was taking matters into my own hands. I gently lay her on the couch and looked at her smiling.

"Is it just me or you're glowing these days?" She looked different and there was this unexplainable glow that she suddenly had. Not that I was complaining, the glow really looked good on her.

"Me? Glowing? Please babe, maybe it's because I'm happy." She

tried to get up but I pinned her back down.

“So are you saying that you’re happy?” I got in between her thigh forcing her legs to part.

“Yes I am and it is thanks to you.” She lightly pressed my nose and blushed.

“What? Why are you blushing?” I lowered my body and pressed it against hers. I slowly kissed her and her breath hitched. I didn’t even get far, she was already moaning in my mouth. I tried to get her out of the dress she was wearing but she stopped me.

“Come on babe, please!!!” I begged because she has been refusing to have sex with me.

“I have something to tell you first.” She pushed me up and I sat up right.

“Can’t it wait? I really want this babe, please!!!” I kneeled before her and buried my head in her thighs. She brushed my head giggling.

“Are you that horny?” She laughed.

“You have no idea.” She stood up and disappeared into the passage. I got up and sat on the couch. I hung my head in disappointment, I felt rejected by own wife on my birthday.

“I have something for you. A perfect birthday gift.” She emerged from the passage holding a square paper. I didn’t pay much attention to what she had, all I wanted was to have sex and we would deal with gifts later. My mood was suddenly sour and I stood up and walked past her.

“Sex! Sex Okuhle, was all I wanted for my birthday. For you to even deny me that is a shocker!” I took my car keys and walked out. I didn’t care what she had in her hand; she was supposed to do what I was yearning for, for the past two weeks. I got into my car dialling Sihle...

“If it isn’t the birthday boy... How are you brother?” He answered cheerful as always.

“Good, I’m in a partying mood. What do you have planned for me?” He broke out in laughter which caused me to laugh too.



“Dude it’s not even 15:00 PM and you already want to go out, really?”

“Yeah, I’m driving out as we speak. Where to? Come on, it’s my birthday I can get away with anything.”

“What about the wife? Aren’t you supposed to be spending time with her?”

“Wife is not feeling well so it is just me, myself and I.”

“Okay cool. I’m currently at work and have a few meetings to attend. We can go out partying with the guys later tonight.”

“That’s what I wanted to hear. See you tonight.” I hung up and drove out headed to the office. I wanted to push time, staying at home was not an option so I settled to get work done at the office while I waited to attend my birthday celebration with the guys.

**OKUHLE:**

I was left heartbroken after he stormed off like that. It didn’t help that my hormones were all over the place that when he left I broke down and cried hysterically. I really wanted to share the baby news before I offered my all to him. Reasons why I was holding off on sex was because I didn’t want him to feel how hard my tummy was amongst other things. I was already having it hard keeping the pregnancy news from him and not having sex with him was the ultimate challenge.

After what seemed like a day spent crying, I walked down the stairs to go prepare him a scrumptious happy birthday meal. This was the first time spending the whole the day without him on his birthday. His phone was off and there was no way of getting hold of him. I understood that he was mad because I refused him to have his way with me but for him to disappear the whole day without calling was childish on his part.

I wanted a candle lit dinner for two and maybe pull out my sexy number to celebrate the day he was born on. The food was ready, I even went out to go buy him cake and came across sexy lingerie to commemorate this day. I wanted to go all out. The pregnancy was the only gift I had for him on top of the stunts I was planning to pull when we devour each other.

I looked at the time and it was almost 20:30 PM. There was still no word from him, I tried calling him again and it took me straight to voicemail. It hurt that he was out and about forgetting that he left without saying goodbye. He left while we were not on speaking terms and it hurt that he managed to go through the whole day without talking to me or checking on me, on his birthday even.

I blew out the candles after another hour of waiting. Tears were already gracing my cheeks as I wept silently. I took the scan with me to the bedroom and I took a picture of it. The harder I tried to suppress my cry, the more painful the lump on my throat. It was his birthday and he chose to spend it without me.

Me: This was the reason why I was holding off on sex. I wanted to surprise you on your birthday. Congratulations, you're going to be a dad! And, Happy Birthday.

I sent him the picture and switched my phone off. In that very moment, I felt alone and had no one to turn to. With Lwanda's disappearing act, I found myself yearning for my mother's love. I prayed for his safety and cried myself to sleep.

LWANDA:

I had been sitting at the VIP area drinking with the guys. They took me to Kong in Rosebank and we had been there since 21:30 PM. I loved the nightlife scene, for a moment there I forgot about my problems, not that I had any but I needed to loosen up and live a little. I think I was on my 5th beer when I noticed this beautiful lady on the dance floor. I couldn't keep my eyes off of her; she was with 3 other females and a guy who looked gay. She had class and her dance moves caught my attention. I had been sitting on this couch with my eyes on her the entire time. Her laughter as loud as it was was mesmerizing or maybe it was the smile that went with the laughter that captured my entire being. Her braids flowed with her body as she popped and locked, I could already see her grind on me.

"Like what you see?" Sihle settled next to me. I had forgotten that I was not alone. Lunga was chilling at the far end of the couch with 2 ladies. I think they went by Felicia and Mpumi if I am not mistaken. They were sipping on some expensive shit, Louis Roederer Champagne. He seemed really cosy with his hand brushing one of the girl's thighs, they were jolly and they brought this celebration thing to life but that was until I saw miss perfect then I zoned out.

"Uhm..." I cleared my throat. "It's not what you think." That was embarrassing.

"There is nothing wrong with admiring beauty when you come across it. She's beautiful, a delicate flower. Go greet her, what do you know? This could be a beginning of a new friendship." I looked at him quizzically.

"Dude I'm married."

"So am I." He stood up and walked away. I didn't know what he meant by that but I felt uneasy. Here I was out clubbing with married men that are entertaining women with their wedding bands on and they were not even ashamed of it. I stared at Lunga

whose tongue was down Felicia's throat and they were in a heated moment. I didn't know where Mpumi disappeared to, I then realized that I had eaten more than I could chew.

I heard the sounds of laughter and my attention moved back to miss perfect, they were sitting at a nearby table and I could finally have a clear view of her. She was caramel in complexion, round face with cheekbones; she had dimples that defined her beautiful smile. The braids really looked good on her; I could tell they were still fresh. She was thick in all the right places; her tummy was flat but not too flat. The shape of her body was that of an hour glass. She was perfect in every sense and there more I stole glances at her, there more I wanted to talk to her. I finally built up the courage to walk over to their table but before I reached the table, I removed my ring. I was not as bold as Lunga and Sihle was.

"Good evening ladies." I said with the broadest smile. The alcohol was already at work but I could still balance on my own two feet. They all turned to look at me and they all smiled at once, thanks to the Maseko genes, I was handsome if I could say so myself. "Hey..." They all said in unison. I locked eyes with miss perfect and she looked down blushing.

"Can I steal your friend for a moment? Just a second please?" I bit my lower lip keeping my eyes on her.

"Of course." One of the girls said.

"Guys, really?" Miss perfect said looking at her friends. They pushed her to get up so she could talk to me and there was no fighting her friends. We walked back to the VIP area, Lunga and his companion had also disappeared. It was just miss perfect and I.

"Would you like anything to drink?" I asked. She looked nervous; I guess I had that effect on her.

"No, I'm good thanks." She flashed me a smile and looked down.

"I'm Lwanda, Lwanda Maseko."

"Anati, Anati Mbobo."

"Anati, beautiful name. It suits you." I lifted her face up with my

index finger so she could face me. "Why are you being shy Anati? I really would love to get to know you better." I put on my charm. "I'm not shy. I'm just not comfortable with this set up. One drink too manly might land me in your bed in some dodgy hotel and then wake up the next morning with regrets." She said with a serious face. She was not an easy catch and I liked that about her.

"So you're insinuating that I'm the type to pick up random girls at nightclubs?" I found that remark really funny.

"I was merely stating the facts." She shrugged her shoulders. I moved closer to her and put my arms around her shoulder. I leaned in and whispered into her ear.

"I don't do one night stands but I would do you for a night or two." She giggled. She was flushed, I could tell.

"Behave Lwanda." I laughed and moved away from her.

"So what do you say? I'd loved to get to know you better." I squinted my eyes and she shook her head.

"You're not going to take no for an answer are you?"

"Nope!!!" I said out loud and she laughed.

"Take my number and if you remember me tomorrow morning, call me with the date and time and I'll be there." She winked. She was playing it smooth and I knew I had to play along.

"It's a deal." We both laughed as I took out my phone switching it on.

A message notification from Kuhle came through and I ignored it. I went to my dial pad and handed her the phone.

"Punch in your numbers my lady and I'll be sure to call you in the morning." I grinned. She punched in her numbers and handed me the phone after. I saved her as Anati and put my phone away.

"Thank you. Do you want to take mine?"

"Not yet, I want to be surprised by your call. It was lovely meeting you Lwanda but now I have to head back to my friends." She stood up and I also stood up.

"Can I get a hug at least?" I opened my arms and she reluctantly

walked into my embrace. She had to balance on her toes because she was a bit short, shorter than my wife. The hug was magical, my hands travelled to her butt and I squeezed it pressing our bodies together and she let me. She pulled away after a while and smiled.

“I’m looking forward to your call.” She walked away and I looked at her smiling. When she got to her friends they started laughing while stealing glances at me. Girls will always be girls and I could only imagine what they were gossiping about.

“That went well.” Sihle emerged out of nowhere and stood next to me.

“Where were you?”

“I was by the bar. I wanted to give you a chance with your girl.” He playfully punched me on the shoulder. I laughed and picked up my bottle of beer and sipped on it. “Word of advice bro...” He sat down.

“Yeah.” I settled next to him.

“Never take off your wedding ring, this is supposed to be casual and your side needs to know that you’re married.” I looked at my ring finger and dropped my eyes to the floor. I had forgotten I took it off.

“She is not my side and she will not be my side.”

“Then why did you take off your ring?” He gulped his drink down. I was guilt stricken that question hit home. I used to be good at this, why then was I feeling guilty?

“I love Kuhle bra, I could never do that to her.”

“And I love my wife. Speaking of wife, I don’t remember you checking in on her.” He furrowed his eyebrows. Shit! How could I forget to call her? I took my phone and went to my messages. I opened the message she sent and guilt consumed me immediately.

“Now it makes sense.” I whispered.

“What?” Sihle looked at me confused.

“How could I have missed it? Shit! I messed up. I need to go.” I



stood up.

“Lwanda bra what are you on about?”

“Sihle I need to go.” I took what was mine and stormed off. She wanted to surprise me but I acted like an ass. I hoped she would forgive me. I got to my car and unlocked it.

“Lwanda...” I stopped what I was doing and looked behind me. I smiled faintly. “So you were going to leave without saying goodbye?” She smiled, like genuinely smiled and I hated myself for approaching her. I loved my wife and this was just my wandering eye trying to get me to cheat on her.

“I’m sorry, I received an important message and I have to rush off but I’ll call you.”

“Alright. Cool. Drive safe then.” She awkwardly stood a few meters away from me.

“Yeah, thanks. Enjoy the rest of your night.” I got into my car and started the engine. What I was feeling moments ago towards Anati vanished into thin air. It was probably the alcohol. I took out my phone and deleted her numbers and then drove off.

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LWANDA:

As drunk as I was I made it home in one piece, of course, I was driving steadily. I was not about to risk my life driving from Joburg to Pretoria speeding on the highway while I had a baby on the way. Upon arrival I took a moment in the car before stepping out, it was way past midnight and I felt bad for arriving home at that time. I stepped out of the car and locked it then made my way to the house. As I walked through the front door the aroma that filled the kitchen hit my nostrils. I staggered and unsteadily made it to the staircase, making it up the stairs was going to be a struggle so

I opted to chill in the lounge and let the alcohol out of my system first.

I kept staring at the picture that Kuhle had sent and I was overwhelmed with excitement. God knows I had been waiting for her to fall pregnant and it was finally happening and what better time than this? I went to the kitchen and drank 4 glasses of water, I chewed on an apple which I did not finish and finally walked up to our bedroom. I slowly opened the door and she was peacefully sleeping on top of the sheets with a throw covering her lower part of her body. The side lamps were still on and I assumed she was waiting for me to get home. I tiptoed over to the bathroom so as to not wake her up. I closed the door behind me and stepped into the shower and took a short cold one just to get rid of the alcohol stench and to also sober up.

After I was done I made my way back to the bedroom and she was up sitting on the edge of the bed with her eyes cast on the floor. I felt bad and had hoped she would allow me to apologize and make things right.

“Baby...” I said just to see if we were on talking terms. I needed to see if she was mild or hot but whatever her mood, I was prepared for the backlash of my immature actions.

“It’s good to see that you made it home safe. At least you know where home is.” She kept her eyes cast on the floor.

“I’m sorry baby, I didn’t mean to-“

“Did you enjoy your birthday?” She cut me short. I looked at her and she still kept her eyes cast to the floor.

“Well yeah but it wasn’t the same without you.” I lied. I did enjoy myself that I even forgot that we had a fight.

“What matters is that you enjoyed yourself.” She stood up and walked over to me. “Congratulations you’re going to be a dad and happy belated birthday.” She pecked my lips and walked out. She killed me with calmness, I didn’t even know how to react to her calm nature. I expected her to shout and curse me out but she gave me the calm treatment and that did not sit well with me. I

wore sweatpants and followed her downstairs. She was not in the lounge so the next place I looked for her in was the theatre room because that was her sacred haven.

She was sitting on the couch closest to the drop down screen watching *The Diary of a Mad Black Woman*. I slowly walked down and settled next to her, she was weeping silently and it broke my heart that she would rather cry in silent than give me the satisfaction to see her cry.

“Kuhle...” I whispered. She kept her eyes fixed on the screen.

“Leave me alone. I don’t want to be close to you right now.” She sniffed wiping her tears away.

“I’m sorry baby, please forgive me.” I begged.

“I forgave you the moment I prayed for you but right now I really wish to be left alone.” She didn’t even look at me. She didn’t even want me to touch her. I was mad that I allowed things to be there way they were, when we could’ve sorted our issues out before I stormed off.

“Will you talk me if I left you alone?”

“Just leave Lwanda. I’ll come to you when I’m ready to talk.” She dismissed me and increased the volume. I knew better than to argue with a pregnant woman. I tried to kiss her on the cheek but she pushed me away, that was a clear message and I didn’t probe any further.

**OKUHLE:**

I loved him so much that I was happy when I heard the water running in the shower. A part of me, more like 75% of me wanted to join him in the shower and give him what he wanted but I chose to listen to the 25% Lwanda disrespected me, he went off and made me feel bad for being a wife who was not dishing it out. I

needed him to know that there were consequences to his actions and he needed to learn the hard way and grovel first before I forgave him.

He was not one to beg for a long time but I appreciated him for following me to the theatre room. I thought that he would just get into bed and sleep but he proved me wrong and that was the reason why I shed a tear or two. I could sense the sincerity in his apology but I was not ready to talk to him or find out where he was that late at night on his day off. I was not insecure or anything like that but a few impure thoughts of him with another woman did pop up in my head and it hurt imagining him with somebody else. I trusted him and I trusted that he would never hurt me like that.

Me: I'm pregnant...

I sent a text to Lu, Enhle and Fifi. I needed to share this news with people who would celebrate with me and not make me feel bad. It was already the wee hours of the morning and I didn't expect them to respond to my text anytime soon. I really missed Lu, he hasn't visited ever since he left to go study at Harvard. He did call and check in on me and honestly, I didn't know what he was doing with his life in the US but I was happy that life turned out great for him. Enhle on the other hand was studying at UJ, first year and she was studying something to do with Geology. Why she went to UJ? I had no idea. She could have applied for any Ivy League Universities in the U.S. just like Lu did.

I still missed my mom and I would debate the thought of calling her on a daily basis. I was mad and hurt but a part of me wanted her in my life especially now that I was pregnant again. I needed her motherly advice on marital issues but sometimes I would discourage myself from asking for advice from her because she was not a fan of my marriage and I didn't want her to think Lwanda was turning out exactly like she thought he would. I was at the crossroads, I didn't know which route to take and I knew that whichever route I took would impact my life in a certain way. My phone beeped and I reached for it.

Fifi: Congratulation!!!!

Me: You're still up?

Fifi: Hubby just got home and we were arguing about it. Sleep is practically out the window now. Why are you up?

Me: Fell out of sleep, pregnancy syndrome.

Fifi: How far along are you?

Me: 8 weeks

Fifi: I bet Lwanda is over the moon.

Me: He is.

I giggled; Fifi was the right person to uplift my mood. She was in an argument with her husband but she put that aside and still congratulated me. She made me feel a lot better and my mood was up again.

Me: Babe we'll talk later. Let me go try and get some sleep.

Fifi: Sleep tight mama.

I switched off the projector and walked out of the theatre room. I was finally ready to sit and talk with my husband but first, I needed to catch up on my sleep.

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OKUHLE:

"Call her already; you have nothing to lose..." Fifi has been pestering me to call my mom. She had made it a norm for her to drop in with her kids and the first thing she would say was "Call her, you have nothing to lose." Each day for the past 2 months she had been doing the same thing, walk in and tell me to call my mom and each time I said no but today she had my phone in her hands and was threatening to dial her.

"Fifi please, not today." I was relaxing on the chaise outside by the pool harnessing the energy of the sun. I was at 16 weeks and my baby bump was starting to show. Simphiwe and Kamo were

having fun in the pool. My eyes were fixed on Simphiwe, there was something about him. He had a strong resemblance of a familiar face.

“Call her or I’m calling her...” She brought me back from my gaze on Simphiwe, I was battling to put a face to the resemblance he embodied. I heaved a huge sigh and I sat upright, I took the phone from her dialling my mom. My heart was beating out of my chest, I didn’t know what to expect and there last thing I was looking for was rejection from my own mother.

“Hello...” She answered in her angelic voice and I froze.

“Hello...” She said again. I looked at Fifi with my mouth wide open, I choked on my words. Hearing her voice brought tears to my eyes, I realized then how much I actually missed her.

“Hi...” I finally said. “It’s me, Kuhle.” It came out as a whisper.

“Baby...” She whispered.

“Hey mom, how are you?” My voice was breaking; I was getting emotional, damn hormones!

“Oh Kuhle honey, I’ve missed you. I wanted to call, God knows I wanted to call but then Lu told me that you changed your numbers and I assumed that you didn’t want to be in contact with me. Oh baby I’m so sorry about everything, please forgive me.” She was crying and going on and on. I was getting overwhelmed too. She was crying, I was crying too. This was some form of a reunion over the phone, if only we were talking in person.

“It’s okay mommy, we can fix this. I called to tell you something, some good news.”

“Okay, what is it love?”

“I am pregnant.” She went silent. All I could hear was her heavy breathing and it was getting awkward. I looked at Fifi and shrugged my shoulders.

“Say something...” Fifi whispered.

“Mom? Are you there?”

“Uhm... yes honey. You’re... You’re pregnant, that’s wonderful news baby.” I could hear her sniffing. Tears welled up in my eyes;



it felt great sharing the pregnancy news with her.

“How far along are you?”

“16 weeks.”

“4 months Kuhle?”

“Yes, 5 more months then I’m popping this baby out of my body.”

She giggled which caused me to laugh slightly.

“I’m sorry you had to bear the good and the bad all on your own, I was wrong to judge Lwanda before I even got to know him. I missed out on 4 years of your life because I chose to feed my ego instead of being there for you. Please forgive me?”

“It’s okay mom, we can always start over and we’ll both make up for the years that have passed.”

“Does that mean I can be part of the baby’s life?” She asked in excitement.

“Of course, you’re going to be a grandmother.” A smile was plastered on my face with my tears uncontrollably flowing down my cheeks.

“Thank you. We’ll meet up soon, I’ll come visit you.”

“Better yet, I’ll come visit for a week.”

“You would do that?” Her voice was breaking.

“Yes, Enhle will be done with her exams soon and as soon as she is done we’ll drive together to Mp”

“I can’t wait but I doubt your sister would want to drive down with you.”

“Why is that?”

“She has a car now remember? She is enjoying her independence.”

“Oh okay then, I’ll drive on my own.”

“I can’t wait to see you baby, your dad will be thrilled.”

“Okay mom, I have to go. It was lovely talking to you.” I smiled.

“Thank you for the call. I love you.”

“I love you too. Bye.” I hung up and looked at Fifi smiling. Talking to my mom after such a long time felt liberating. I could feel the love and my baby felt it too, I had been yearning for motherly love and finally I had fixed things with her.

“And what do you know? The universe is still standing.” Fifi chuckled.

“You were right, thank you.” She stood up and came to give me a hug. I lay my head on her shoulder and wept, she has been a true friend. I was blessed to have her in my life.

LWANDA:

I was wrapping things up at the office and preparing to leave. The past 2 months have been nothing short of amazing and some downhill moments. My woman was pregnant, her cravings kept me on my feet, she was into hot wings dunked in chocolate sauce, disgusting I know but what the Mrs wanted, the Mrs got. She had a lot of weird cravings and I fulfilled each one of them, even when she woke me up in the middle of the night demanding strawberry milkshake from Macdonald, I would wake up with no complaints and drive in the wee hours of the morning to go get her what she wanted. I was actually used to her waking me up at that time, simply because her happiness was my number one priority and to also avoid unnecessary fights which had become a norm. Saying I'm tired would be an understatement but Kuhle's pregnancy hormones are a force to be reckoned with.

“Mr Maseko...” I looked at the door and Fiona was standing there waiting for me to say something and like always I blankly stared at her and shrugged my shoulders. I never had the right expression or response because each time I tried to say yes, how can help you? It came out as some form of annoyance which made her uneasy and stiff around me so the blank stare was our form of communication unless I was the one initiating the conversation.

“A Mr Nkosi is here to see you.”

“You can let him in, thanks Fiona.” I went through my e-mails and responded to each one that required a response from me.

“Baba wasekhaya.” Sihle walked in laughing “That Fiona is goddamn sexy, how you even concentrate baffles me?”

“Hi Siphesihle, how are you?” I continued with what I was doing.

“Okay somebody woke up on the wrong side of the bed, what’s eating you?” He settled in on the chair opposite mine and flipped through a file labelled interim budget.

“Nothing is eating me and stop!” I closed the file and he raised his hands up laughing.

“You need to chill, pregnancy hormones driving you crazy?”

“Sihle what do you want? I need to get home to my pregnant wife.” I closed my laptop and switched off my desktop.

“The boys and I are going out tonight; I came to extend an invite.”

“No thanks, I’ll pass.” I stood up and wore my blazer.

“Come on, just a quick drink with the guys then you can rush home to your pregnant wife.” He raised his eyebrows.

“Siphesihle I still want to stay married to my wife.”

“And I am still married to mine and it has been years so come on, Kuhle will not divorce you for one night out with the guys.” I looked at him and he looked at me which turned into a staring contest. I kept my cool and stared him down but he wouldn’t budge.

“Fine, just one drink!” I took my bag and walked out.

“Don’t be so grumpy about it, we’re going to have fun.” He tapped my shoulder.

“Bye Fiona, enjoy your weekend.” I said walking past her desk.

“Bye boss.”

“So it’s Fiona right?”

“Sihle let’s go!” I got into the elevator and held it waiting for Sihle. I went through my phone and read a message from Kuhle telling me that she had finally made the call and judging from the smiley faces she sent with the text, I concluded that the phone call went well. I responded to her text and also let her know that I would be coming home late. “We can finally go.” Sihle walked into the elevator and I pressed G.

“Sihle stay away from my PA.”

“She’s an adult so I trust her to make her own decisions.”

“Stay away from her Sihle, that’s all I’m going to say.” The elevator doors opened and we both stepped out.

“Where to from here?” I asked.

“Just follow me because if I tell you I know you’re going to change your mind.” He walked to his car not giving me chance to protest. He got in and switched on the ignition. I walked to my car and placed my bag in the boot. I got in and switched on the ignition; I charged my phone and slowly followed Sihle out of the premises.

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LWANDA:

We drove in the direction towards Mamelodi; as soon as we entered the vicinity I received a message from tracker alerting me that I was entering a high risk zone. I became uneasy just by driving around but Sihle drove like he belonged here; he was quick and drove like he lived around the area. We ended up at some ShisaNyama or what looked like a pub, well I didn’t know what to call it but the vibe was amazing. There were cars of all classes, your Gusheshes, VW Golfs, BMW (all models), Mercedes Benz (all models), there were all types of cars, some pimped out, most of which bumped music so loud I felt like I was going to lose my hearing sense. I had to unwind, and what a better place like a night out with the guys ekasi.

I found a perfect parking spot and stepped out. I was overdressed for a night of partying but it was either here or home.

“You look like a pastor; you should start having changing clothes at your office.”- Sihle.

“Great! Like that is supposed to make me feel better. I’ll blend in just fine.”

“I trust you to. Let’s go get some drinks while we wait for Lunga and Zama.” I walked behind him as he led the way. The place was packed and it wasn’t even 19:00 PM yet.

“So you party in the township now?” I asked. He turned around and looked at me funny.

“This is JackBudha if you must know and you have to report back to wifey. Ejo ke mfana wa ko kasi, this is a lifestyle for me and I don’t choose by geographical region where I party. If it is popping you will find me there, leave your cheeseboy tendencies back at Groenkloof and loosen up!” He said all that with a straight face and walked to the bar. I didn’t mean to offend him, this place was actually nice, a little packed but I loved the energy.

“So what are you having?” He asked as soon as I joined him.

“Look Sihle I was not trying to offend you or anything...”

“Let it go dude, we’re here to have fun okay. A bucket of castle lite please, we’ll be at the table over there thanks.” We walked over to the table and sat down. I familiarized myself with the surroundings, I took notice of a few things and I was warming up to the place but being in a suit gave me quite a few stares.

“Gents!” That was Lunga and he was with his entourage; he always partied with these girls.

“Lungs, my man. Howzit?” Sihle got up and greeted him. I just fist bumped him and minded my own business. Lunga was the ultimate player and a ladies man, the fact that he was married didn’t bother him that much. The ladies greeted us and sat on either side of Lunga.

“Where is Zama?” I asked. Sihle would always say that Lunga was on his way with Zama but he never showed up. There only time Zama showed up at anything was at the couples gatherings.

“Zama has issues of his own.” Lunga said.

“Huh?”

“Thembeke is the problem, she controls him too much.” Sihle

interjected. “Be careful Lwanda, I feel you’re going down the same path.” He drank his beer.

“How is the Mrs doing? You must be happy about the pregnancy.” – Lunga.

“She’s doing okay but I can’t keep up with her rage. She is always spitting fire.”

“Just hang in there, that’s what pregnancy does to women.” – Sihle.

As the night progressed, more and more people came through and the DJ started playing house music. The crowd was responding as they should, people were dancing, some were chatting away among themselves. Some were loud, laughing like they didn’t care. People were letting loose including Sihle and Lunga. They were used to this life; partying like they were bachelors and they attracted women with their wedding bands on but the ladies that came to them didn’t seem to care. All they cared about was free alcohol and the attention given to them in that current moment. I was having fun, too much fun that I forgot I had a pregnant wife waiting for me at home.

“Guys, please excuse me for a second, I need to use it.”

“Sure.” – Sihle.

I walked briefly to where I had parked and got behind the car. I was not one to pee behind cars or in the bushes but I had to go and I was not about to use the germ infested urinary in that place. I took my time and I felt pressure being released from my bladder, my mind wondered off and I thought about Kuhle. I really loved her, with my every being but the pregnancy was making it hard for me to love her fully.

“So I waited for that call...” A voice said from behind me.

I jumped and quickly stashed my member back into my pants. I turned around zipping my pants and slowly looked up. There she stood before me, her radiating beauty flourished under the moonlight. I was lost for words and she didn’t seem happy, the word would be displeased.



“Well are you going to answer me?” She opened her eyes wide showing off the beauty they carried. Her ocular was pure white and the pupils of her eyes were pitch black. Just by her staring at me sent shivers down my spine, I just froze and honestly, I didn’t know what to say to her. In a stealth manoeuvre she walked towards me with her eyes fixed on mine. She bit her lower and titled her head to the side.

“So which one is it?” She asked in a low voice. I had my back backed up against the car and she stood right in front me and wrapped her arms around my neck. My heartbeat rose as she breath heavily down my neck. My palms were sweating and I couldn’t control my breathing. ‘This is wrong...’ the words repeated in my head.

“Answer me already then you’ll be free to go.” She nibbled on my ear. I could feel myself getting hard as she kept pressing our bodies together.

“Ahem... Uhm...” I swallowed hard.

“Huh? What was that?” She rubbed her hands on my bulge and I knew it was game over.

“Uhm... Uhm... Look, look...” I gently pushed her away and she snickered. She looked cute trying to hide that smile from me.

“I’m sorry I didn’t call, I lost my phone and all my contacts with it.” I placed my hand in my pocket and held onto my cock to calm him down.

“Please, try another lie.” She folded her arms.

“I’m telling you the truth. I don’t have a reason to lie.” I flashed her a smile.

“Okay, give me your phone.”

“What?” I furrowed my eyebrows.

“Give me your phone.” She giggled. I took it out and looked at it then looked at her.

“Unlock it.” She said. Kuhle was on my lock screen and she was my wallpaper as well. I was between a rock and a hard place but I gave her my phone either way, I had nothing to lose. She took it

and punched in her numbers.

“Here you go, don’t lose it again.” I reached for it with my left hand laughing. Her smile slowly faded as her gaze moved to my ring finger.

“I’ll call you. Can I get your name again?” She kept quiet and I looked at her. “Are you okay?”

“Uhm... yeah, Anati. The name is Anati. I have to go, sorry about that.” She rushed off before I could clear the awkwardness. Her wobbly ass bounced about as she ran off in the heels she was wearing. I kept my eyes on her until she disappeared into the crowd.

45

OKUHLE:

I tossed and I turned as I tried to fall asleep. Lwa was still out partying and I was home alone yet again. Fifi would keep me company when Lwanda did his partying thing especially when he would disappear for the whole night without calling or checking in. I didn’t want to bother Fifi this time around, I was an adult and I was more than capable of taking care of myself. I glared at the ceiling brushing my baby bump, tears trickled from the corners of my eyes. I could feel Lwanda slip away from me and each time I received a text from him telling me that I shouldn’t wait up on him a part of me would die. I got off the bed and put on my satin night robe; I slipped my feet into my morning shoes and made my way downstairs to the kitchen.

I got to the kitchen and switched on the lights, I froze holding my chest.

“Shit! You scared me Luyanda. What are you doing here? And, why are you sitting in the dark drinking?” I looked at him and he just blankly stared at me and continued to gulp down his drink.

“I am talking to you? How did you get in?”

“Where is my brother?” He asked.

“So you’re not going to answer me?”

“I’m off to bed; I’ll see you in the morning.” He discarded the bottle into the trash and walked away staggering all over the place. I looked at him in disbelief and sighed. I opened the fridge and took out strawberry yogurt and chocolate sauce; this had become my personal favourite. I sat on the bar stool and indulged my senses. Each spoon tasted like heaven and the little one seemed to like it too.

“Mhmm...” My eyes were closed as the taste of chocolate infused yogurt melted on my tongue.

“Now this is a beautiful sight...” I slowly opened my eyes and swallowed what was in my mouth.

“So you’re back?” I got off the stool and walked to the lounge.

“Missed me?” He pulled me from behind and nibbled on my ear.

“You need to stop.” I tried to pull away from him but failed.

“I’m sorry I’m late.” His breath smelled of alcohol and it caused the contents in my stomach to turn.

“You’re not sorry Lwanda; did you look at the time? How old are you huh? Partying like a teenager, you need to grow up!” I snapped. We always fought; it just took a little for him to get me worked up.

“That’s unfair Kuhle, I was out with friends. I did send you a text.” He said with a hint of annoyance in his tone.

“Out with friends while I stay at home and carry this baby? I go through emotions on my own while you’re out having fun. I didn’t make this baby on my own just in case you have forgotten.”

“Calm down baby please.” He heaved a huge sigh.

“I will not calm down!!!” I yelled at the top of my lungs. I tried to control my anger but I hated Lwa, just being his presence eek me.

“I’m not doing this with you.” He walked away from me and I followed him yelling behind his back.

“Ye wena!!! Walk away from whom? Me? Walk Maseko, walk away that’s what you do best. You are a coward and you will

always be a coward. Imagine a man your age out partying with kids. I hate you Lwanda, goodness I hate you.” He ignored me as I poked him with my finger repeatedly. He walked passed our bedroom to one of the guest bedrooms. He walked in and as I was about to walk in too he closed the door to my face and locked it.

“Open this door!!!!” I banged on it out of frustration “Open this mother fucken door!!!!” I yelled. I was consumed by emotions and tears descended from my eyes. I was hurt and I didn’t even know why I reacted the way I reacted but there was something about Lwa that made me want to fight him all the time. I gave up the fight after a while and retreated to our room; I slowly got on top of the bed and slowly drifted off to sleep.

LWANDA:

The last thing I wanted was to fight with her; I didn’t pay attention to the time. I guess it was true when they said that time flies when you’re having fun and this time I took it too far. I was wrong to come home at 03:00 AM but Kuhle didn’t have to say all those things especially after I apologized. She disrespected me when I didn’t even put up a fight. She took things far this time around by getting physical, thank goodness I didn’t believe in hitting a woman to shut her up or else we would be talking a different story.

Me: Are you sleeping...?

I sent a text to Anati, I needed an escape and somehow I concluded in my head that she was going to be my great escape. I looked at my phone anxiously waiting for her response. I was taking a chance, and I managed to convince myself that this would be innocent fun just until Kuhle gives birth. It was evident that the pregnancy was driving her crazy.

Nati: Who is this?

Her response came in after an hour of waiting. I looked at the time it was already 05:30 AM. A smile crept upon my face. A response was all I needed.

Me: The man in a suit.

I laughed just by typing that. This could actually work, I thought to myself.

Nati: Man in a suit?

Me: Yeah, the one you left hanging after you got him hard.

Nati: Goodness! Lwanda is this you?

Me: Can we do lunch? I'd really love to get to know you.

Nati: I just got home; I won't be up until late in the afternoon.

Me: Dinner it is then. I'll pick you up at 18:00PM

Nati: No thanks, I'll drive myself. Send me the location and I'll be there.

Me: You're beautiful by the way.

Nati: Flattery huh? Look, I'll see you later. Bye.

She sent smiley faces which made me blush. This was good; Anati was all I needed to survive my wife's pregnancy term. I didn't know when last I was that excited to meet up with a either than my wife.

I jumped out of bed as if I didn't sleep for less than an hour but my energy wouldn't allow me to sleep with all the excitement that consumed me. I walked out of the guest bedroom and walked over to the main bedroom door. I peeked through the door and Kuhle was peacefully sleeping with her right hand on the baby bump. She looked so beautiful when she was asleep and not spitting fire. Dragon lady or not, I loved her still. I gently closed the door and made my way downstairs, there was music playing on the down low, Wale – Lotus Flower Bomb. I would recognize that song in my sleep.

I turned to the lounge and Luyanda was sitting on the couch with his legs on top of the glass table nodding his head to the beat.

“Look at what the cat dragged in.” He turned his head and forced a smile.

“I missed you last night when you got home. What time did you get here?” He asked.

“The question is, what are you doing here?” I settled on the couch next to him.

“I thought I should just pop in and visit the family. I gave Kuhle quite the scare last time.” He chuckled “Pregnancy looks good on her, you did well.” He winked at me.

“When did you get into town? You cannot just waltz in here like you own the place. I gave you that key for emergencies not to scare my wife.”

“I didn’t plan to end up here. You know, I don’t understand women.” He sighed and rested his back.

“Tell me about it, they are the most complicated species.” I got up and walked to the kitchen.

“Too complicated, I think I’m going to join the single guys club.”

“Be my guest. Breakfast?”

“Sure...”

Kuhle walked down the stairs after 30 minutes in a foul mood. She didn’t even greet us and Luyanda was smart enough to keep his mouth shut and stayed out of it. She walked to the fridge and took an apple.

“Morning baby...” I whispered. I didn’t want her shouting at me in the presence of my baby brother. They are the same age if you must know.

“I’m going to Witbank.” She muttered with a straight face.

“What?” I widened my eyes.

“The question you should be asking is when.” She walked away and I followed her.

“Okuhle is this how you talk to your husband?” We walked into our bedroom and I closed the door behind us.

“Lwa I don’t want to fight with you. We really need this time apart. It would actually do us good. These hormones have me all over



the place and the last thing I want is to lose you because I wasn't being myself."

"But babe you know I understand our situation. Maybe this is just a stage, it'll pass."

"Yeah but I don't want to risk it. As soon as I start feeling like myself again I'll come back home." She smiled. I hadn't seen her smile so genuinely for a while, it actually warmed my heart.

"Wait... How long are you planning to be gone for?"

"The whole of December and maybe the first 2 weeks of January." She shrugged her shoulders.

"That long? Angeke Kuhle, when will I get a chance to bond with my baby when you're gone for that long?" I wasn't comfortable with her being gone for that long. Who was going to keep me warm at night?

"I expect you to come visit us. That is how you'll get to spend time with me and the little one." She walked towards me and pecked my lips. "You'll survive, it's only 6 weeks." She disappeared to the bathroom.

Excitement slowly crept in, with her gone for that long; it was going to give me enough time to get to know who Anati was. I would also get the opportunity to lay down the ground rules of our relationship, that was if we would embark on anything romantic between us.

Me: Cancel dinner plans, we're going to Cape Town for a week.

I sent Anati a text. The excitement I felt was undeniable and I couldn't wait for Kuhle to go to Witbank. I knew what I was doing was wrong but there was something about Anati that I wanted to explore, however that did not mean I loved my wife any less.

Lwanda:

“Are you ready?” I looked at her with a broad smile.

“How did I even agree to going to Cape Town with you?” She threw her luggage in the boot and ran to the front passenger seat.

“Because you have the hots for me.” I giggled and got in on the driver’s seat. Kuhle left yesterday but late in the afternoon. As soon as she left I got rid of Luyanda and set my plan in motion. I had a lot of convincing to do; Anati was a hard cookie to crack but nothing like sweet talk to get a woman to dance to a different tune. I pulled some strings at work as well and I managed to get myself a week off.

“So tell me, why drive all the way to Cape Town and not fly instead?” She asked putting her Ray Ban sunglasses on. She had different braids on, blonde in colour. She had them tied up in a bun, her hairline was well defined with small wispy hairs, fine and a bit unruly but she looked beautiful. I was blessed with hairy women just like my Kuhle who had that sexy unibrow and sideburns for days.

“For the hundredth time, I want to get to know you Anati so 14 hours on the road should do the trick.” I started the ignition and slowly drove off.

“We’re going to have pit stops right? 14 hours in a car on the road cannot be healthy for anybody.”

“Of course and we have two designated drivers in the car, this should be a fun filled road trip with a complete stranger.” I laughed. We were driving in the Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT, I didn’t like big cars but I was not about to drive in the A45 for a journey that long.

“Just to put it out there, my mom and close friends know where I am going and with who. I’m just warning you that this can go either way so don’t try anything funny.” She giggled covering her mouth. I stole glances at her; she made it hard for me to keep my eyes on the road.

“I love how you’re of the impression that I’m this guy with sinister motives but you’re right here, in my car travelling with me all the way to Cape Town. Does that make sense to you?”

“If one lives life trying to make sense of everything then they don’t get to live fully because they will question everything. I live in the moment and I trust my gut feeling.”

“Is that so?” I asked with a side smile. She was carefree and her energy towards life rubbed off on me. She lived for the moment and I also wanted to live for the moment too.

“Yep, call it a woman’s intuition.” She grinned.

“What is it telling you now?” I had to know what she thought of my sudden interest in her.

“Well Lwanda, if you must know my gut feeling is telling me to go with it. What have I got to lose? What are your intensions if I may ask?” She turned and looked at me.

“Here, please connect the aux and play Pound Cake...” I handed her my phone simply because I was avoiding her question. I didn’t have an answer to it yet, I didn’t know what my intensions were and whether they were pure or not.

She became silent blankly staring at my lock screen. Kuhle’s face was on it with her beautiful smile, I didn’t remove her from my lock screen because I loved seeing her face first before I opened my phone.

“Are you going to play the song?” I asked paying no mind to why she was suddenly silent.

“It’s locked.” She said. I took the phone and unlocked it then gave it back to her.

“Pound Cake.” I said. She connected the aux and scrolled through my music library and finally played my request.

‘Good God Almighty, like back in the old days

You know, years ago they had the A&R men to tell you what to do  
How to play it and you know...’

That was me lyric by lyric and she just looked out the window and I assumed she was questioning herself who the woman on my lock screen was.

‘Only real music is gonna last  
All the other bullshit is here today  
And gone tomorrow...’

The beat drop came in and she started nodding to the beat and danced on the seat involuntarily.

‘I’m authentic, real name, no gimmicks  
No game, no scrimmage, I ain’t playing with you  
Niggas at all...’

She started rapping with her hands in the air word for word and I was impressed. I hit the nail with this one.

‘Tables burn, bridges burn, you live and learn  
With the ink, I could murder word to my nigga Irv  
Yeah, I swear shit just started clicking dog...’

We both rapped in unison, smiling and giggling throughout, with her throwing her hands in the air. It was like we were one. She understood me and I understood her and it all made sense. The song came to an end we both started laughing. I looked at her and smiled, she looked down blushing and then she looked out the window.

Okuhle:

I lied in my bed lazily with the curtains closed, it was way passed 10:00 AM but I didn’t feel like getting out of bed. It felt great being back at home however, one thing that I didn’t miss were the power cuts. There was no electricity and I was hungry. A soft knock on the door disturbed my thoughts, Lwanda hasn’t called me. It wasn’t 24 hrs since I left Pretoria but I already felt like he was happy that I was gone.

When I got here yesterday, I tried calling but he didn’t answer so I

left him a message instead and all I received as a reply was 'I'm glad love, call you tomorrow.'

"Kuhle..." Mom called from the other side of the door. I was not in the mood for her or anyone for that matter. All I wanted was to hear my husband's voice before talking to everyone else. The door slowly opened and I quickly wiped the tears away from my face.

"Honey, it is not healthy for you or the baby to stay in bed all day. Come on, you need to move and get active. If you laze around you will feel the disadvantages of it when you go into labour. Take it from me, with you I struggled a lot because I slept all day with no care in the world until the day I had to give birth to you. I was in labour for 16 hours because you my dear were asleep when it was time for you to come so, move that ass." She walked to the window and opened the curtains. I sat on my buttocks and looked at her. She turned around and frowned.

"Are you okay?" She asked. I wanted to shout no and cry on her shoulder but I felt it was too early to overwhelm her with my suspicions.

"I'm fine; I just miss Lwa that's all." I faked a smile and got out of bed.

"You should call him after you're done bathing." She got ready to make my bed and I just walked out. I rushed to the bathroom and closed the door behind me locking it. I opened the water in the bathtub and sank on the floor crying.

"God please don't take him away from me." I whispered.

## FIVE MONTHS LATER

OKUHLE:

I bend over shutting my eyes really tight, I was used to my body having a high tolerance for pain but nothing could have prepared me for the contractions I had the moment I got out of bed. I took 2 steps towards the bathroom and froze as I felt a sharp pain hit directly at my abdomen. I looked at the bedroom door and the journey seemed too long.

“Mom!!!! Mel!!!!” I yelled at the top of my lungs and tried to stay calm. I grunted and clenched my jaw as the pain ripped right through me.

“What is it?”

“What’s going on” The grannies rushed into my bedroom alarmed by my gut wrenching scream. I was walking from one end of the room to the next bending, breathing in and out and cursing under my breath.

“Honey I think you should sit down a bit and I’ll rub your back.” Mom said.

“No, no, nooo I’m not sitting down mom. This is Aaaaaahhhhhh!!!” Another contraction hit me and I dropped to the floor immediately. I covered my eyes in disbelief, I didn’t sign up for this. I slowly did breathing exercises that didn’t seem to work. A tear escaped my eye as I shook my head preparing myself mentally for the next hit.

“Okay Kuhle, let’s get you dressed up so that we can go to the hospital.” Mel said. She and mom looked calm, way too calm. They were moving around in the room getting my hospital bag and the baby’s bag. They grounded themselves and kept their emotions in check as to not alarm me. I could see them communicate with their eyes but I was in too much pain to ask why they didn’t speak out loud.

“Lwanda... Mom, please call Lwanda. He promised to be here for the birth of the baby.” I said faintly.



Lwanda had gone to New Zealand on a business trip and he promised to be back before the baby arrived. Ever since I got back from Witbank he seemed different, he was actually a changed man. He was always at home, never went out at odd hours and he would come home directly after work. I was happy when he saw less of Sihle and Lunga but just as I was enjoying having more of him at home, he started going to random business trips.

Some trips lasted a week and some were a weekend thing. I asked him why was it that he travelled more than the CEO? Attending Networking Seminars, Corporate events like Gala Dinners, Leadership Seminars, everything that had nothing to do with being a CFO and each time I questioned him he would respond and say "I don't know, I do whatever my dad tells me to do and I go wherever my dad tells me to go." I gave up on questioning him because he was not doing anything out of the ordinary.

His love for me grew stronger and each time he returned from the said trips he came back a different man. He would be jolly and fun, I would sense the liveliness in his mood and we fought less and less. The love making was on steroids and he was always happy, which meant I was happy too. His time away did more good than bad.

"We'll call him on our way to the hospital. Now come, wear this dress." Mel helped me get into a maternity dress while my mom made the bed. I was trying to be strong but not even Wonder Woman would handle this pain. I could feel myself going crazy and the third contraction hit me so hard I screamed so loud mom looked at me in shock. I felt that pain tear right through my abdomen to my spine; my legs failed me in an instant. I refused to move any further, that was how bad the pain was.

"Baby look at me, we need to move now!" Mel squatted in my front of me as I shook my head refusing to listen to reason. I wept silently biting on my lower lip scared of what might happen next.

“Keletso, I think you should go start the car and we’ll follow you.” Mom rushed off with the keys to the Jeep and I just leaned against the wall swinging my hips from side to side, that motion seemed to help with the pain.

“Okuhle, do you want to give birth in this house? Do you want to push that baby out without an epidural? Do you know how painful natural birth is? You better start moving because time is not on your side.” She shouted at me but I couldn’t careless, her shouts were nothing compared to what I was feeling but I started moving when I started thinking about the possibility of giving birth in the house.

She slowly helped me down the stairs and I grabbed onto her for dear life. I was not a screamer but each time that contraction hit, it was impossible not to shout. We got to the car and Mel gently helped me to get in and as soon as I was comfortable mom drove off.

LWANDA:

After landing and switching my phone on, my mom’s message came through telling me that Kuhle was in labour with a warning that I shouldn’t dare miss the birth of my first born child. My palms started to sweat and so did my forehead.

“Babe, are you okay?” Nati looked at me worried.

“Look, I’ll call you later. I need to rush off somewhere.” I left her with shock written all over her face but I needed to be by my wife’s side when she gave birth. I quickly rushed to AVIS Car Rental and rented out a Golf 6. I drove to Pretoria from the airport like a maniac. I left in such a hurry that I forgot my luggage; luckily I had a small backpack that had all my important documents including cards and money. I switched off my other phone and threw it to the backseat and dialled my mom with the other one.

“Lwanda Maseko, where are you?” She shouted and I could feel my eardrum vibrate.

“I’m passing Allendale Road, I’ll be there soon. How is she?” I asked. Tears were already welled up in my eyes.

“She is at 5 centimetres; if you drive fast enough you might actually make it for your child’s birth.” She clicked her tongue and hung up on me. My mother was not one to take bullshit from anyone, not even my father. She was blunt and called a spade a spade. I could tell by the tone in her voice that she wasn’t pleased with me and I knew I had a lot of explaining to do.

I drove on the N1 at the speed of light praying I make it on time. If anything, I would never forgive myself if I missed my child’s birth. I took exit 12 for M31 Nellmapius Drive towards Centurion. The speed I drove in scared me but I was determined to make it on time and I thanked God that I didn’t encounter any Metro Police as I broke the laws of the highway.

I turned left onto Garsfontein Road then turned left onto Netcare Street and within a few minutes I was entering the gates at Netcare Pretoria East Hospital. I called my mom while parking the car and she said that she would come get me at the reception area. I got off locking the car and rushed to the entrance.

“Just in time, she is about to push.” She said as soon as I got to her. She directed me to the room she was in and I ran like my life depended on it. I got to the delivery room and I just walked in. She turned her head to me and smiled, her face lit up and she stretched her hand out to me.

“I was waiting for you.” Tears graced her cheeks as the doctor commanded her to push. I stood right next to her and held onto her hand. I looked at her pushing and guilt consumed me, I almost didn’t make it all because, Anati.

LWANDA:

“It’s a baby girl. Congratulations Mr and Mrs Maseko.” The doctor announced and my daughter’s loud cries filled the room. I glared at Kuhle smiling, she looked out of it and exhausted but she managed to flash me a faint smile before reaching for the baby after she got cleaned up and wrapped into a receiving blanket. She brought her to her chest and tears trickled from the corners of her eyes.

“Hello you, welcome to the world. We’ve been waiting for you.” She whispered and planted a kiss on her forehead. She turned her head and looked at me.

“Do you want to hold her?” She asked and I froze starring at her. “It’s okay; you just have to be gentle that’s all.” I reached for her and I got scared, she was too tiny and I was scared I was going to drop her but I carried her anyway. I looked her as she pulled all kinds of facial expressions, I didn’t know what it meant until her mouth curved into a frown and she let out a high pitch cry busy moving her head to the side.

“Looks like she wants to eat.” The nurse came and took her from me. “Mommy, I’m going to teach you how to get her to latch onto your nipple. It is going to be difficult at first as there is no milk but as soon as the nipple is stimulated then milk will start to come out. Don’t be scared, here we go...” She put her in Kuhle’s arms and my daughter didn’t cease, she cried like it was the end of the world. I couldn’t help it but smile as tears dropped from my eyes, I had been blessed with a baby girl a true angel sent from above. There way she latched onto that nipple, shame man my baby was hungry.

I excused myself and stood outside the room, I took a moment before walking to the waiting area.

“So, how did it go?” Kuhle’s mom ran towards me as soon as I appeared.

“She is fine and we have a baby girl.” I said with a proud smile.

“Hallelujah!!! Thank you Jesus.” Her mom said.

“Congratulations, you did well.” My mom said. She looked at me with her eyes piercing into my soul, I knew that I was going to have it but she was not going to do it in front of Kuhle’s mom.

“Did you guys decide on a name?” Her mom asked

“Uhm... We agreed on Bontle and we couldn’t come up with a second name.”

“Nthandokazi...” Mom said.

“Nthandokazi, that’s a beautiful name. We should give her that as her second name.” Her mom added. I nodded and walked back to the delivery room and when I got there they had already moved her to a different ward.

A few days passed and Kuhle was back at home with baby Bontle, the grannies were still here and I still had the other phone switched off and tucked underneath the A45 driver’s seat. I was standing by the pool deep in thought, the weather was a bit chilling but I had far better things to worry about than catching a cold...

‘I have to ask you something and I need you to be honest with me.’ It seemed like a lot weighed on her mind and I guess I was waiting for the ‘we need talk...’ moment. We were at the Greenhouse Constantia, a restaurant I had been planning to visit and since I was in Cape Town, I asked Anati to join me.

‘Speak your mind and I promise to be honest.’ I composed myself and fixed my eyes on hers.

‘Okay, I would like to know if you’re married or not. You know, I am anything but a home wrecker.’ She said. She kept eye contact and waited for my response. It was our third day in Cape Town and within those three days she had been a bit off, still fun and lively but she had her moments where she would zone out especially when I excused myself to go make a call.

‘Do I look like a married man? Come on Nati, would I be here if I had a wife? I’m not that guy.’ I lied but I didn’t see it as lying, I was simply buying myself time.

'Explain the ring that you had on the other night at JackBudha...' I chuckled and smiled at her.

'I don't need to explain myself but if you must know then... Uhm the ring is to keep bitches away.'

'Oh?' She looked at me quizzically.

'Yeah, I have a lot of money and my parents have a lot of money too so the ring is there to guide me. I have come across a lot of women who were in it for the money and what I had so I guess I grew tired of that.'

'Yet I'm here, you're basically throwing your money to my face and you say that you don't want to attract a wrong woman.'

'I am not, I simply wanted to get away for a while and I didn't want to be alone.' Once I started lying it became easier to keep the conversation going but nothing could have prepared me for her next question she dropped.

'Who is she?' She muttered. I was willing to lie about the ring, where I stayed my family but not her. I became dizzy just thinking about it.

'Who?' I frowned.

'The lady on your lock screen.' I opened my mouth to speak but what came out was not what I planned as a response.

'She is my baby sister.' She snickered and shook her head in disbelief. 'You can choose to believe me or not but I didn't come here to get interrogated. So decide, are we going to enjoy what's remaining of this week or we should head back to Pretoria?' I kept a straight face waiting for her to decide and that was how I sealed my fate.

"You have been standing out here for a while, are you not cold?" Mom emerged from the house and stood next to me.

"I'm good thanks; the breeze is not that bad." I responded. I shoved my hands into my pockets and heaved a huge sigh.

"Nthando is a beautiful baby and so is Kuhle which is why I'm failing to understand why you would lie to her." I turned slowly to face her.



“Excuse me?”

“Look Lwa, I raised you to be a better man than this. I know your dad removed you from the CFO position because you told him it was not your passion so what are these business trips that you keep going to? Is there another woman?” She asked calmly.

“Another woman ma? Really?” I quickly got into defence mode.

“Well boy, for your sake I hope you know what you’re doing.

Kuhle is a wonderful person and good people don’t keep quiet for too long. One day she’s going to wake up and realize what her true worth is.” She walked away and left me with a lot to think about. I hadn’t called Anati ever since we landed and in all honesty, I missed her.

‘Are you serious, we had a wonderful night surely we can spend it together.’ I begged. We had booked into separate hotel rooms which I found odd but she insisted on having her own room. It was a Friday and we went out painting the night red. We both had a few drinks and they made my blood rush, I was horny and I couldn’t understand why she refused for me to bury myself in between her thighs but that night she said something that sobered me up immediately.

‘I do not partake in coitus act.’ She blurted it out and disappeared into her room. I stood there baffled and the insane thing was that I found that super sexy. My phone rang bringing me back to reality.

“Sihle my guy.” I answered. I hadn’t spent time with him for a while now. We did call each other but it ended there.

“Congratulations boy, Fifi tells me that you welcomed a baby girl to the world. You have a little princess now.”

“Thanks man, she is the apple of my eye. It feels good.” I said.

“As it should, now you need to stop.” I could sense the seriousness in his tone.

“Stop what?”

“This thing you’re doing with that girl, I heard that you have been wining and dining with her, going on vacation with her. Lwanda are you crazy? Didn’t I tell you that you do not treat your side like

your main? She is there for entertainment that's it. Don't ruin the beautiful thing you have with your wife for a moment of fun."

"That's the thing, she is not my side."

"What?"

"Yeah, she's an equal." Sihle laughed.

"Uyahlanya, what in the hell is an equal?"

"You'll never understand even if I tried to explain." I hung up and took my car keys. I needed to clear my head.

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Okuhle:

Bontle was born a week before my birthday and obviously that was the perfect birthday gift to me. She brought nothing but joy in the house, I was attached to her. I would bath for two minutes max and go be beside her. Months went by pretty quick after her birth; Lwanda started a new job at Deloitte as a Forensic Accountant, something he has been talking about all his life. He didn't even tell me when he left Maseko Industries but I was way past the point of asking questions and not receiving answers. It was the second week of October and Bontle was 5 months. I received a call from Lu telling me that he just landed in South Africa and you can imagine the excitement I felt when he told me that he would pass by before going to Witbank.

I was busy in the kitchen preparing lunch; I had a day nanny who would help with Bontle while I did other things. She came in the morning and left in the afternoon, she was a sweet old woman in her mid-fifties and I enjoyed her company, I called her mama T, her full name was Thembisile. A text came through from Fifi telling me that she was at the gate, I pressed the remote to open the gate for her and I stood by the door as she drove up the driveway.

She was with her daughter Kamo who turned 6 years two months ago.

“Hey girl.” She said as soon as she stepped out of the car.

“What a pleasant surprise, where have you been hiding?” I asked. It was always a pleasure being in Fifi presence. Besides the gossiping and hating on other people, she was a good person in her own unique way.

“Fixing my affairs but that’s a story for another day. Where is the beautiful Ntandokazi? You know I’m obsessed with your daughter right?” She walked right passed me with a smile on her.

“She’s with mama T in the nursery...”

... Hey Kamo, look at you with those chubby cheeks. You’re really your mother’s daughter.” I dropped to her level to give her hug.

“Mommy said that I’m Ntando’s big sister and it is my duty to look after her.”

“And mommy is right; Ntando is blessed to have a beautiful sister like you. Are you hungry? I’m preparing Mac ‘n Cheese.” I stood up and pulled her by her hand.

“Yes, that’s my favourite.” She said with a cheerful smile.

“Mine too. You sit right here while I finish up.” I lifted her up and put her on the bar stool. I poured juice for her and we engaged in a pleasant conversation with her asking me a lot of questions, some I didn’t have answers to but I made sure I had a response for each question she asked.

Lwanda:

It was lunch time and I drove quickly to Anati’s apartment. She had sent me a text telling me that she needed to see me urgently but wouldn’t let me know what was so urgent. I tried to stay away from her after Bontle’s birth but after a month of her birth I found myself driving to Nati’s place and wore my heart on my sleeve. She was mad, I mean I left her at the airport with my luggage, no money, no car and to top it all off I switched my phone off, she

didn't hear from me until that night when I drove to her place. It was on that very night that we had sex for the first time; we connected on a spiritual level. She cried the entire time I was buried inside her, the night was magical and the sex didn't stop after that and before I knew it, I saw more of her.

"What seems to be the problem, I drove at the speed of light. Are you okay, is everything okay?" She looked at me and smiled.

"You care too much Lwanda." She giggled. She walked up to me and gave me a hug then rested her head on my chest.

"What's wrong?" I asked calmly brushing her hair. She had left her hair natural and I loved her with the afro more than the braids she usually had on.

"Well, I didn't mean to give you a scare but I have news to share." She grinned and walk over to the couch were she sat down and kept her eyes on me.

"News?" In my head I was praying she doesn't drop the pregnancy bomb.

"Goodness relax, I'm not pregnant." She giggled and I heaved a huge sigh of relief.

"I'm sorry, it's just that having a baby is not what I want at the moment. I want us to plan for a child, I don't want any unexpected surprises." She looked at me laughing, like she genuinely laughed at me and I stood there looking like a fool.

"Don't worry, I also don't want a baby. Remember, I want to be Senior Auditor so having a baby will just ruin my career plans and I'm so close, I wouldn't trade my career for anything. Not even a baby or marriage." She said the last part loosely and it actually hurt me.

"So you don't want to get married?" I asked with a hint of sadness in my tone.

"Nope, maybe after 10 years but not now." She rolled her eyes.

"Why settle down when you haven't established yourself yet? I'm sorry but I am not planning on being dependent on a man for the rest of my life. I have to build my net worth first before I think

about settling down.”

“Oh...” I was disappointed but I loved that she wanted to better herself first before she thought about settling down.

“Can I share my news now?” Her face beamed with excitement.

“Okay, out with it already?” I settled next to her and she handed me an envelope.

“Open it...” She bounced up and down with a grin on her face. I slowly opened the envelope and pulled out what looked like a certificate.

“Read it out loud.” She said.

‘The Institute of Internal Auditors...’ She stood up looking at me.

“Continue...”

‘Be it known that Anati Lumka Mbobo...’

“That’s me...” She said laughing. I smiled at her and continued to read.

‘Has successfully met the prescribed requirements for certification as established by the Institute of Internal Auditors and is hereby awarded the professional designation of Certified Internal Auditor...’

“And blah blah blah, I finally did it babe.” She jumped up and down as tears graced her cheeks. “I can finally serve as a Senior Auditor.” She jumped on top of me and looked straight into my eyes. “I love you...” She smiled. I choked on my words and pulled her closer instead. I kissed her juicy lips nice and slow. I didn’t want to say I loved her, I was not certain of my feelings as of yet so I didn’t want to confuse myself by saying something I didn’t mean. I picked her up and I slowly walked to her bedroom with her in my arms as our kiss deepened. My lunch break was over but there was no way I was heading back to the office with my blood flowing in the opposite direction.

Okuhle:

I ran up to him as soon as he parked next to Fifi’s car. I jumped right into his arms and he caught me just in time.

“Goodness Kuhle, you’re heavy. Easy tiger...” He laughed and

spun me around.

“I missed you baby brother so please, your muscles will cope just fine.” We both laughed and he put me down. I pulled away from him and took a good look at him. Goodness, Lu had grown into a handsome young man, his caramel skin tone had a glow to it. He was really taking good care of himself. He had even bigger muscles now with a neatly trimmed beard, he was also gifted with bushy sideburns but his were neatly shaved and trimmed. He had a fade going on but I still couldn’t get over how big he was.

“How old are you again?” I asked laughing. He looked older than me and man, my brother was handsome.

“Stop it, I came with a friend and I’d like to introduce him.” He revealed his beautiful teeth. It looked like he took care of his teeth as well. I got carried away that I didn’t even realize he was not alone.

“Oh, I’m sorry.” I looked in the car and he instructed him to get off. He also had a well-built body, maybe 2 sizes smaller than Lu. He was a true African American guy, you know that mixed breed type thing. He had greenish striking eyes, pink lips. He was your black coffee with two teaspoons of powder milk complexion type. He dressed well too, black muscle top with blue ripped jeans and he paired the outfit of with red Nike kicks.

“This is my friend Darnell and dude this is my sister Okuhle.”

“Pleased to meet you Okuhle.” He had a baritone and his American accent had me looking at him like I was seeing Jesus in the flesh.

“Oh... Pleased to meet you too Darnell.” He took my hand and planted a kiss on it. I couldn’t help it but blush. He was a true gentleman. I swallowed hard before removing my hand from his, those eyes were just too hypnotizing.

“Uhm... Yeah, please come. I just served lunch.” I led them to the door and I swear I was walking funny because I kept giggling to myself trying to compose myself.

“Babe I have put Nta... Oh Hi...” Fifi’s face lit up as soon as she



saw who I was with.

“Hey...” They both said in unison.

“Guys this is my friend Fifi, Fifi this is my brother Luthando and his friend Darnell.” I said pointing to the guys. Fifi just choked on her words looking at Lu like she was seeing something she could devour. She snapped out of it as soon as Lu offered his hand to shake hers, she kept blushing like a teenage girl in love. She greeted Darnell as well and then they made themselves comfortable.

“Looks like being a housewife is working for you sis.” – Lu. Fifi just stared at him with her chin rested on her fist. I swear she was day dreaming about my brother.

“Uhm... well it’s not going to be forever.” I placed plates on the counter top and dished up for them.

“Where is my niece? I hear she is one beautiful baby girl.” He smiled.

“She is asleep; I’ll wake her up for you after you’re done eating.” He nodded.

“So Fifi what do you do?” He asked.

“I’ll do you any day...” She said biting her lower lip.

“Excuse me?” Lu asked laughing.

“Fifi!” I shouted under my breath and Darnell just giggled looking at me. There was something about the way he looked at me.

“Oh! Sorry, what was the question?” She covered her face in embarrassment.

“Never mind.” Lu continued to laugh. “Oh sis that looks yummy.”

“Dig in guys, we’ll be right back. Fifi, join me outside... Now!” The guys dug in as soon as we disappeared.

LWANDA:

I pulled up next to the Jeep; it looked like Kuhle had went out today because the Jeep was always parked inside the garage. I switched off the phone that I used to contact Anati with and tucked it under the driver's seat and stepped out. I took my laptop bag from the boot and walked to the house. It was hard keeping up with my double life but I was fulfilled by both women in my life. They each played different roles and both brought something different to the table. I walked through the front the door and like always, a warm aroma filled the kitchen, perfect way to be welcomed home after a hard day's work.

I walked to the lounge and Kuhle was on the floor playing with Bontle who was laughing hysterically. I loved how Kuhle bonded with our daughter, it was like they were best friends. I was jealous of their relationship at times but they were bound to be that close because they spent the whole day together.

"Good evening family..." I said with a smile on my face.

"Look who just got home..." She said picking Bontle up "Say hi daddy, we missed you today." She brought her to me and I took her from her arms. I pecked Kuhle's lips and moved my attention to Bontle.

"Hello daddy's little girl, how was your day today?" She looked at me smiling and waving her hands in the air. My daughter was beautiful just like her mom and goodness, she could hold a conversation.

"How was your day?" Kuhle asked from the kitchen whilst she was busy on the stove.

"It was okay, you know different challenges everyday but I love what I do." I tickled Bontle, blowing on her tummy and she laughed in that cute baby laugh that I couldn't get enough of.

"I'm glad that you're doing what you love. Supper is almost ready, you can go shower while I dish up." She said.

"It smells amazing, what's cooking?" I placed Bontle on her play

mat and walked over to Kuhle in the kitchen.

“Oxtail, savoury rice and cream spinach. I was in a cooking mood today.” I held her from behind and we swung our bodies from side-to-side.

“You should be in a cooking mood every day.” I whispered into her ear and nibbled on it.

“[Giggling] Stop it your daughter is in the next room.”

“She won’t see a thing.” I whispered breathing down her neck. I was yearning for my wife’s touch. Yes, I had sex with Anati earlier in the day but sex with her was different as compared to the kind of sex I had with Kuhle. I moved her away from the stove and pinned her chest down on the counter top. I lifted her skirt and dropped her panties to the floor. I unbuckled my belt and dropped my pants to the floor while stroking my dick which was already hard as rock.

“Lwa baby, this is sexy and all but Bon...”

“Shh...” I choked her and penetrated her with full force. She half screamed and I covered her mouth so to not startle baby Bontle. I began slow rotations of my waist as I went in and out of her and she moaned out in pleasure. Bontle was jabbering and blabbering in the background but I was focused on what I was doing. The difference in intimacy from both my worlds was that with Kuhle I was free to do whatever I wanted because she was my wife and with Anati I was free but guilt restricted me at times and I had to be extra careful with her. It was fun eating the forbidden fruit but the guilt was too much to bear.

Kuhle started moving to my rhythm as she called for me to fuck her harder. I didn’t oblige though because I knew that if I went hard on her she would let loose and scream. I couldn’t have her screaming profanity in the presence of my daughter. Our souls merged into one but I knew I couldn’t drag the session any longer because Bontle could cry out for attention at any given moment. I took both her arms and pinned them to her back affording me full control of her body. I thrust her hard and rough and after a few

thrusts I came inside of her and her juices flowed down her legs as she balanced on her toes. I pulled out of her grunting and swearing under my breath.

“That was amazing.” I let go of her and pulled my pants up while she caught her breath. “Did I ever tell you how juicy your pussy has gotten?” I asked biting on my lower lip. She looked at me and blushed. I loved it when I made her smile and it was something I was planning to do to my death.

“You are naughty Mr Maseko, I can’t believe you did all of that in the presence of your daughter.” She lightly smacked my right arm and I laughed.

“What she doesn’t know won’t kill her. She’s just a baby but I promise, I’ll never do that in her presence again.” I pulled her into my arms and wrapped them around her waist. “I love you Mrs Maseko, never doubt my love for you.” Her eyes twinkled with tears as she stared into mine. The love in her eyes was all I needed to keep my guilt at bay.

“I love you too Mr Maseko.” She brought her face closer to mine and we shared a passionate kiss. I could feel myself get hard again and I pulled away.

“To be continued...” I said and walked away.

**OKUHLE:**

He left me breathless after that kiss; I admired him as he ran up the stairs, man my husband was a beast when it came to sex. My panty was still lying on the floor and I had my juices and his come dried out on my legs. I picked my panty up and smiled looking at it. I loved how spontaneous Lwa could get, he enjoyed sex and he enjoyed it more when we did it in random places. I walked over to the lounge and Bontle had already dosed off on the mat with her thumb in her mouth.

“I apologise for what you might have heard.” I whispered. As I was about to climb up the stairs my phone beeped and I looked at it

debating whether I should run and get cleaned up quickly but I found myself walking towards it instead.

'Can I call you?'

The text read.

Me: Who is this?

'Darnell...'

I froze as my heartbeat increased. 'What does he want?' I asked myself.

Me: Not now.

I sent the message and switched my phone off. I ran up the stairs and took a quick shower in one of the guest bathrooms. After I was done, I went to my bedroom to get dressed into my night gown then made my way back downstairs. Lwa was on the couch watching soccer and Bontle was still out on the floor.

"I guess we're eating in front of the TV today." I said walking to the kitchen.

"I don't mind or we can eat in the kitchen. That way, we still get to keep an eye on the princess over here." He responded.

"That's an idea." I began to dish up for the both of us.

"I see your moans managed to put the baby to sleep." He laughed.

"Stop it, that's not funny." I giggled shaking my head. "Come, let's eat."

He walked over and took a seat. I brought his food on a tray and with something to drink. I gave him a dish washing cloth and he wiped his hands. I poured myself a glass of water and settled in on the chair opposite his.

"Thank you baby." He said with a smile before digging in. He always forgot to pray but I prayed anyway and he would stop half way and join me in prayer.

"Amen." I said and dug in.

"I need to get myself used to praying before I eat."

"Hmm... You have been saying that for the past four years now." I

remarked and he chuckled. I had been dreading bringing up my studies as a topic to talk about over supper. I had finally made up my mind to go back to school and I couldn't keep it to myself any longer. I needed to voice my thoughts and what better time than when we were both in cheerful spirits.

"So, I have been thinking..." I said nervous as hell.

"I'm listening." He kept his eyes on the food.

"I want to go back to school." He paused eating and slowly lifted his face to look at me. I couldn't read his facial expression as it was blank.

"You know, I can go back to MEDUNSA and pick up where I left off." My throat dried up. I didn't even know why I was nervous but I was. I gulped down the water in the glass and waited for his response. He had 3 full spoons of his food and after chewing and swallowing he drank the juice I had poured for him.

"I need a beer." He stood up and walked over to the fridge and got a bottle of castle lite and then stood by the fridge and looked at me. He opened the top with his teeth and had his first sip.

"Why?" He asked looking straight at me.

"What do you mean why?" His question took me by surprise.

"Look around, this house, the cars outside, the night gown you're wearing, the ring on your finger. Take a look at everything, go outside and look at the cars. Go in each and every room and come back here and say that bullshit you just said to me." He clicked his tongue.

"What did you just say?" I asked getting off the bar stool." What does the house and everything in it have to do with me going back to school?" I was disappointed by his response.

"Okuhle do you lack anything?" He asked out of anger but he was subtle about it.

"No but I still want to study." I yelled under my breath.

"Your place is in this house. You will take care of it, take care of baby Bontle and take care of me and I will take care of everything." He said it as a command and I was infuriated.



“You are crazy if you think I will live my life as a housewife forever, this was just a hiccup in my plans for the future. Remember when I told you that I wanted to become a qualified doctor? I still want to pursue that, Lwa please.” I begged him with tears in my eyes.

“Listen and listen carefully. I love you and I love that you want to better yourself by going back to school but try a Marketing degree or hospitality, that’s something I’ll pay for but not studying medicine. Kuhle, doctors work odd hours and do you know what it takes for a person to become a qualified doctor? You will have to compromise your family in order to get that qualification and what happens after? You’ll be on call all the damn time, attending patients day-in-day-out, you’ll never have time for us. I will not support this, forget it!” He gulped down his beer and discarded the bottle in the trash. He walked up to me and hugged me.

“You need to take care of the house.” He said then planted a kiss on my forehead and left me standing in middle of the kitchen with tears flowing down my cheeks. I couldn’t believe the nerve of this man, I knew he meant well but what about my dreams now that he has fulfilled his?

FIVE YEARS LATER...

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FIVE YEARS LATER...

OKUHLE:

My alarm went off and I struggled to switch it off. I was in love with the idea of being a housewife and taking care of things but waking up in the morning was always a drag. I would still get out of bed and be positive and pray that my husband would come home and grant me his blessing to study medicine again. Every day I would be hopeful but each night I went to bed disappointed. He still

insisted that I study towards a Marketing degree and each time I would refuse, the education topic became a no go area as it began to threaten our happiness.

I turned to Lwanda's side of the bed and he was sleeping peacefully.

"Babe..." I whispered, lightly shaking him. It was always a workout trying to get him to wake up.

"Mhmm..." He responded keeping his eyes closed.

"Time to get up, remember you have that big meeting today." I said. His career has gone from strength to strength and that meant more money in the bank but he still refused to pay for my fees to study medicine. I was adamant about what I wanted to study so for five years I planned my way around his schedule, something had to give. He pulled me closer to him and smiled.

"They can wait..." He whispered. "Let's deal with this first..." He put my hand on his joystick; I called it that because it brought me nothing but absolute joy. His eyes were still closed and I blushed. I probably sound like I had lost hope of ever going back to school but I was a married woman and my duty was to cater to my husband's needs and wants. I married him knowing very well that control was his character trait. However, I still prayed that this wouldn't be forever.

"You are such a naughty man, you need to be punished." I giggled and he smiled slightly opening his eyes.

"Punish me baby..." He said in a seductive tone. "I'm all yours, whatever pleases you my queen." He said caressing my thighs, which had my blood rushing in an instant. I got on top of him slowly grinding on him.

"Are you sure this is what you want?" I asked swirling my lower body on top of him and squeezing my breasts.

"Oh yes baby, I surrender all unto you. Do what so pleases you." He groaned. There was a river already flowing deep within my quim. This was the best way to start any day of the week. As I positioned myself to get my daily bread, Bontle shouted from the

other side of the bedroom door.

“Mama!!!” She shouted banging the door. I looked at Lwanda and laughed.

“I guess it’s not happening love, sorry.” I got off of him and he grabbed me by the waist.

“Baby just one stroke, please!!!” He begged.

“Mommy...” She said in a low voice.

“You do know that she is going to cry if I don’t open the door for her right?” I said trying to break free from his grip.

“Let her cry, it’s just one stroke Okuhle. Please!” He pleaded, his eyes were red. He must have been really horny.

“Lwanda no, come on she’s just a child. I’ll feed you tonight.” I smiled brushing his chest.

“I guess...” He sighed and let go of me. He sat upright and faced the other way.

“Don’t be mad I’ll take care of this.” I said walking to the door.

“Yeah...” He responded in a low voice. I always felt bad when Bontle interrupted our intimate sessions and it always frustrated him; however I always ensured that I catered to his sexual needs, no matter what, where or how.

“Good morning princess...” I said to Bontle as soon as I opened the door. She pouted her lips and folded her arms; I had myself a drama queen. I squatted to her level and looked at her.

“I’m sorry mom took long to open, I was taking care of mommy business.” I said. “Come on, give mommy a smile. We don’t want daddy seeing that grumpy face now, do we?” She shook her head no. “Good! Now smile for mommy...” Her pout slowly turned into a smile.

“There we go...” I tickled her and she laughed out loud. I picked her up and walked to the bathroom.

Our mornings had become more like a routine, the alarm goes off, I wake Lwa up, he goes to take a shower, I prepare Bontle for day-care, once we’re all done dressing up I prepare breakfast, Lwa leaves first for work then I shortly follow to go drop off Bontle.

I had gotten used to how things went from the moment we wake up and it was like I was programmed to never forget what to do next.

“We’re going to be late...” Bontle huffed.

“Not on my watch, come let’s go prepare breakfast for daddy.” I tied her hair into a neat bun and fixed her dress. She took her bag and we ran downstairs.

“Scrambled eggs, bacon and toasted bread.” I said.

“Yes, don’t forget pancakes.” She yelled out.

“Honey there is no time for pancakes.”

“But mommy I want pancakes.” She frowned. I looked at her and shook my head. We were going to be late if I listened to her.

“Baby we’re going to be late, please make up your mind.” I begged her.

“No, I want pancakes!” Her lips trembled and her eyes twinkled with tears. I lifted my hands up in surrender and just walked to the door. I stood there looking at the A45 parked right at the back of the Jeep.

“Gosh! I don’t need this...” I whispered. I looked at her and sighed, she was already wiping the tears from her face. I ran upstairs to our bedroom and I could hear the water in the shower running. I opened the bathroom door and yelled out.

“I’m quickly taking Bontle to day-care with the Merc, I’ll be quick.” I closed the door, took his car key and rushed out.

“How does Macdonald sound?” I said as soon as I got to the kitchen.

“Yes, Macdonald’s mommy, yes!!!” Her face beamed with excitement. I helped her get off the barstool and we walked to the A45. I opened the back door for her and I got into the driver’s seat. I adjusted the seat for comfortable driving but something was blocking the mat from moving back. I got off and pulled the mat and a phone emerged from under the seat. I looked at it and frowned. What would a phone be doing under a seat in Lwa’s car?

“Mommy we’re going to be late.” Bontle shouted and I snapped back to reality. I took the phone and threw it on the other seat. I started the ignition and slowly drove off.

The drive from the house to Macdonald and from Macdonald to Bontle’s day-care was a drag. I kept stealing glances at the phone and I had a lot of questions popping up in my head. Now, I couldn’t just stop in the middle of the road and feed my curiosity while Bontle was in the car but as soon as I dropped her off I drove to a nearby park and parked under a tree where I switched the phone on.

“No password, good!” I whispered. My heart was beating out of my chest as I went to the contacts list. There were four numbers saved there, Sihle, Lunga, Zama and Anati were the names that appeared on the contacts list. I scrolled to the call log and Anati was the person who was called the most and the last call made to this number was last night at 22:30 PM.

“Don’t do it...” I whispered as my chest tightened. I scrolled past a few apps and stopped on WhatsApp. My palms were sweating and I knew I had to head back home soon.

“Maybe I shouldn’t...” I tapped on the gallery icon instead and it was like my life froze in slow motion. I laughed with tears in my eyes; I literally broke out in laughter as I looked at those pictures, most of which were nudes of him and her in different locations. In the bedroom, in the shower, in the bathtub, in what look like a boardroom. Some were vacation pictures, Zanzibar, Maldives, Mauritius, wow Lwa really had me fooled.

‘My leave just got approved. It’s all systems go for our trip to Singapore.’

A message popped up on the screen and I looked at it as it disappeared. I broke down and cried, I felt as if someone ripped my heart right out of my chest. I gave this man my life and he went and did that to me? I switched the phone off and then I wiped my tears away. With a heavy heart I drove back home.

OKUHLE:

'I hope you're smart enough to make the correct one...' My mom's words played in my head as I drove towards our house.

'Lwanda has his education and you don't, soon enough he'll have his Honours in his hands and what will you have? A marriage certificate? This is not a qualification or some superior ranking...' Her words echoed as more tears blurred my vision. I felt my chest tightened as I coughed hysterically. I should have fed my suspicions when I had the chance to but he was too perfect at what he did that I always second guessed my insecurities.

'This is not a joyful occasion for me because I know how all of these will end, education Kuhle is all you need...' I laughed at myself at how stupid I had been, blinded by love. I stopped at the gate and waited for it to open.

'Education Kuhle is all you need...' I shook my head and wipe away my tears. I drove up the driveway and the devil's son stood by the door looking angry. I quickly tucked the phone under the seat and switched off the engine then stepped out.

"How many times must I tell you not to drive this car Kuhle?" He asked rather annoyed. I tried to keep calm but looking at him just infuriated me and I wanted to chop his head off but I needed to be smart about this.

"You parked me in so I had no time to move the Merc then take the Jeep." My voice was scratchy and I avoided making eye contact with him.

"Out of all the cars here, you chose to drive the Merc? Please don't drive this car. Ever!" He hissed and roughly took the key from me. "I'm late, don't wait up. I have a late meeting today." He kissed me on the cheek and got in his car and reversed out of the driveway. I looked at him as he reversed and I just giggled with tears in my eyes. I couldn't believe it, it was a hard pill to swallow, I was played by a man I loved with all my heart. I would have sacrificed everything for me, heck I would give up my life for him



and he did this to me, me? A whole Okuhle and with so much love to give and he did that to me. I took my phone dialling FNB customer care line.

“Hi, yes, uhm I’d like to open a savings banking account... Yes, no I’m married out of community of property. Yeah, of course. I have my husband’s full consent.... Yes.” I was asked a lot of questions including my ID number, residential address and I used my Witbank home address. I was asked security questions which I answered and my account was set up over the phone. I was told that my card would be delivered within a week at the nearest FNB branch.

“Thank you for your assistance. Bye.” I hung up and smirked. I took my phone and set up schedule payment for my new account from our joint account. A reasonable amount of money would be transferred into my savings account on a monthly basis and I doubt he would pick it up because I was the one who handled the household finances. By the time he noticed irregularities in the money going out of the joint account it would be a little too late for him.

What he didn’t know was that I had gone back to school the previous year and completed my first year at MEDUNSA, it was hard hiding everything from him, things like late night studying, assignments, I was always tired but I never neglected my duties as a wife and as a mom. He was gone most of the time so with him gone I was free to do what I had to do. I was willing to let it all go and not continue with this Medicine thing but the phone showed itself at the right time. There will be hell to pay and I would be damned if I walked out of this marriage with nothing to my name.

I searched for vacant apartments around Pretoria East and there was nothing I liked at that given moment. Registrations for second year of study were now open and I browsed through the MEDUNSA website, it finally dawned on me that my mom was only looking out for me. Had I listened to her, I would be a

qualified doctor right now. Tears flowed down my cheeks as I wept in silence, the pictures I saw on that phone played a slide show in my head, it was hard wrapping my head around this whole ordeal. My phone rang and it was Fifi.

“MaNkosi...” I answered.

“I’m at the gate love, please open for me.” She said

“Okay.” She hung up and I walked to the kitchen and pressed the remote. I never got tired of Fifi’s visits but I was not in the mood for her energy. I wiped my tears and stood by the door waiting for her.

“Hey you, I brought breakfast.” She said stepping out of the car.

“I’m not hungry but thank you.” She walked up to the door and gave me a hug before walking in. I followed behind her and she turned around smiling.

“So Lu hit me up.” She beamed.

“Oh?” I walked passed her to the lounge.

“Babe are you okay?” She could sense that my mood was off and I honestly didn’t want to share the news with her.

“I’m fine, just tired.” I threw myself on the couch and covered my face with the cushion.

“I don’t believe you. Come, talk to me.” She sat next to me and removed the cushion from my face. I sat upright and sighed.

“Babe have you been crying?” She asked with concern in her tone.

“Not really...” I frowned and blinked repeatedly, before I knew it tears burst out of me uncontrollably. She quickly pulled me in and rubbed my back. She allowed me to cry until I had no more tears to shed.

“Baby what’s wrong? What’s happening? Is everything okay?” She asked all these questions at once.

“He is cheating...” I whispered. She gave me the ‘is that all.’ look. I waited for her to say something but she just looked at me. “Are you going to say something?” I asked.

“Tell me he did not see you cry.” She said unexpectedly. I looked at her in shock, here I was crying in her lap and the first thing she said was that?

“Fifi did you hear what I just said?” I asked hoping she would ease my pain by saying the right things and swear at Lwa for his cheating ways. I needed to see her being infuriated by this but she remained calm, unbothered even.

“Yes I did and the world is still standing.” She furrowed her eyebrows. I looked at her disappointed by her remark once again.

“Fifi I just told you that my husband is cheating and you say that? Have you no heart?”

“Oh honey, I do but I will not give him that power and you will not either. He is cheating, so what? Are you out on the street? Does he love you any less? Does he no longer play his role as a husband? Does he beat you up? Come on Kuhle, men cheat and Lwa was stupid enough to get caught.” I looked at her with my mouth agape. Was this woman listening to what she was saying?

“Are you crazy Fifi? Are you telling me to accept my husband’s cheating ways because of all the things I have?”

“I’m not saying accept but I’m simply saying learn to live with it. We’re all dealing with cheating husbands but do you see us walking around with tissues in our hands wiping tears away? Please Kuhle, this is unnecessary stress.”

“Unnecessary stress? You have lost it, I will not stay for this bullshit.” I stood up and walked to the kitchen and she followed me.

“You are so cute shame, don’t give the side chick what she wants. You walk out that door today, she moves in tomorrow. It’ll be like you were never here. Take Thobeka for instance; do think you she is still with Lunga because she wants to? No, she built an empire with that man and she will not give it up for some side bitch. She sure didn’t give it up for me even after I fell pregnant with Simphiwe.” I froze and looked at her in shock.

“You did what?” It finally made sense. I knew Simphiwe strongly resembled somebody but I couldn’t put my finger on it.

“Never mind that, what I’m saying is that don’t leave your throne for a side bitch because your husband will not run after you when you leave.”

“Fifi you expect me to stay in this marriage while my husband wines and dines another woman? I mean, he has taken her to getaways I’ve never been to. They take nude pictures together. She is beautiful and has the perfect ass and figure.” She looked at me and laughed.

“Don’t do that to yourself, if the body is what he is really after then go to gym sweet cakes.”

“Fifi do you understand how hurt I am?” My voice was shaky and tears stung my eyes. She didn’t seem to understand what I was going through.

“Your soft heart is going to be the death of you. Go upstairs, pull out a sexy number and make that hair work. Bring that bank card; we’re going to have fun today.”

“What?” I looked at her defeated.

“Move it, it’s time you lived a little.” She poured herself wine as I headed upstairs.

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LWANDA:

I walked up to her smiling, I was grateful for my aunt for doing this for me. She has been doing it for a while now and she only said yes to this little arrangement because I paid her good money for it.

“Carol...” I laughed giving her a hug.

“It’s Aunt Carol to you, how are you my boy?” She asked smiling.

She planted a kiss on my cheek then wiped away the lipstick mark she left.

“I’m good, thank you again for this.” I gave her another hug. “You know there isn’t anything I wouldn’t do for you and your brother, though I don’t condone what you’re doing but who am I to judge you? I do hope your wife will look past everything and support you getting a second wife.”

“Kuhle is an understanding person and I know she cares about my happiness. This will hurt her but eventually she will see that I never planned to fall for another woman.”

“Of course, no need to explain yourself to me. I’m here for my pay check then go about my boring life. I have to say though that you have spiced up my life young man.” She giggled “And also, your parents are not going to be pleased and I might lose my sister’s trust because of this.” She sighed looking down. “Let’s go inside and wait there.” She walked towards the entrance and I followed behind her. We were at Baobab Café & Grill for another dinner date with my supposed parent which was set up by Anati herself.

See, 2 years into our relationship and after a few trips around South Africa Anati asked to meet my parents. I didn’t plan that far ahead because I thought she would never ask to meet my parents. I told her stories on how they travelled a lot and that they were rarely in town so in telling her that, I had hoped she would never bring up meeting them but I was wrong. She woke up one morning and sent a text asking to meet my parents and hopefully my siblings too.

At first I made excuses because there was no way I was going to introduce her to my parents, for if I did they were going to have a fit and not to mention that my lies were just going to mess up everything for me. One thing led to another then Aunt Carol popped up in my head, she was notorious for her lying skills. She knew how to spin a story and make one believe something that was a total lie. Of course, her acting and lying skills came at a hefty price but I didn’t mind paying.

“Is Uncle Reggie joining us today?” I asked after getting a table for 4.

“Your Uncle is unreliable, for all I know he can just appear without letting me know. That man will be the death of me I tell you but I love him still.” She said that with a smile.

“Thanks again for doing this.” I was really grateful for what she was doing. She didn’t have to do it but she did it for me.

“No need to thank me boy, I’m basically your mother and I do things for family all the time but I have to warn you though, do not drag this any longer than you have because one of these good days your lies are going to catch up with you. How you even manage to be with two women in the same city baffles me. It’s either your women are too trusting or they are plain stupid for not seeing the signs.” She shrugged her shoulders and asked for the waiter’s assistance.

After 15 minutes Anati arrived and she looked breathtakingly beautiful. I loved how she put in an effort in what she wore when meeting up with me and my fake parents. She was wearing a full V-neck sleeveless mermaid dress with a slit just above the knee. The dress showed off her curves and beautiful cleavage not forgetting her sexy shaved legs. She tied her afro into a neat bun and had a bit of make-up. She looked flawless and I felt myself fall in love with her.

“Good evening, sorry I’m late.” She said with a smile. I got her chair for her and she sat down.

“You look amazing; I just want to rip that dress off of you.” I whispered into her ear and she giggled.

“Mama, unjani?” She greeted Aunt Carol.

“I’m good child and you?”

“I’m great thanks. And, is Mr Maseko joining us tonight?” She asked

“My husband is taking care of business like always but I do hope he joins us soon.”

“Okay, have you guys ordered anything yet? I’m famished.”



“No babe, we were waiting for you.” I put my hand on her exposed thigh and brushed it. She was used to my hands being on her all the time, she no longer fought me when I got all touchy feely with her.

“Okay, let’s see what I’m going to eat.” She browsed through the Menu and so did we (Aunt Carol and I). After a while we placed our orders and engaged in a light conversation while we waited for our order.

OKUHLE:

I looked around me and I felt like I was out of place, this was not my scene and I was definitely dressed like I wanted to catch a man for the night. We had been here for a while now and Fifi was mingling with everyone. I was wearing a black lace short dress with spaghetti straps and matching heels, way out of my comfortable zone. Fifi said that I looked gorge but I felt naked and exposed. I was used to covering up and I was regretting wearing something that short which exposed my thighs for the world to see.

“Honey come on, stand up and dance a little.” Fifi came up to me. She drove us all the way to Cubana in Sunnyside. This place was filled with students and people who were looking for a good time and I was anything but looking for a good time. Who celebrates their husband’s cheating ways? I wanted to be home with my daughter and drown my pain eating ice cream over an interesting romcom.

“Fifi this is not my scene, I want to go home. I had fun shopping with you but partying?” She looked at me and frowned.

“He sucked the life out of you.” She sat next to me. “Okuhle, if you don’t live for yourself then you will die a bitter old woman. Look at how you’re sitting, trying to cover up those thighs. You need to

own that dress, forget how short it is and embrace how sexy you look in it.”

“Fifi you don’t understand, I just found out my husband is with another woman and you expect me to dance and have fun with students and people who don’t have a life?” Tears twinkled in my eyes.

“You say these people don’t have a life? Look at them; take a good look at them. These people are living their best lives and they are definitely not allowing their problems to stop them from living. I will not force you stay, take my keys and drive back home and for your sake I hope you find your excuse of a husband home with your daughter.” She left me with her keys and disappeared into the crowd. I felt bad but partying and drinking was not going to change my situation. I took my bag and walked out.

I walked towards Fifi’s car with my mind far away. I knew I was not going to find Lwanda at home. He said that he had a late night meeting but with the sudden revelation, it was evident that he was with her and only God knew if he was coming home tonight or not. ‘He sucked the life out of you...’ Fifi’s words echoed in my head. I stood next to the car and looked at my reflection on the window. I couldn’t recognize myself. A tear dropped from my right eye, for all I knew Fifi was right. I lived my life for Lwanda and not for me.

“Okuhle Ndlovu...” I slowly turned around and I laughed in between the tears that were already gracing my cheeks.

“Lifa..?” I whispered.

**LWANDA:**

Uncle Reggie joined us after an hour into dinner and we were already having desert. I stan Aunt Carol’s acting skills but Uncle Reggie was the ultimate actor and he took his role serious. I mean, he dressed well like a true businessman. I had to buy him a new phone because he wanted to look the part and man, the

guy had jokes for days and Anati enjoyed his company. I felt bad that I sold her a picture of what my parents could be like but I had to do what I had to do.

“So Anati my girl, when are you making us grandparents?” I stopped eating and looked at Uncle Reggie. He was way off the script, why was he bringing up kids into this whole thing?

“Uhm...” Nati choked on her words and looked at me.

“Dad you know, we’re not even married yet.” I said saving Nati from answering that odd question.

“But you guys have been together for what? 5, 6 years? You guys are practically married.”

“Come on Reg, you had too much to drink.” Aunt Carol interjected.

“Easy woman, the kids need to answer this. And Okuhle, where does that put her?” I froze looking at him. Oh goodness, he did not. I buried my face into the palms of my hands waiting for him to drop the bomb.

“Well I’ll be damned.” I lifted my head looking up. Could this night get any worse?

“Hau Luyanda ndodana...” Uncle Reggie said getting up to give him a hand shake.

Luyanda looked confused by the set up as he awkwardly shook Uncle Reg’s hand with his eyes fixed on me. I quickly stole a glance at Anati and she had a smile on her face. She already knew who he was; Luyanda was the only person I didn’t lie about.

LWANDA:

“Please excuse us...” I got up and pulled Luyanda’s hand.

”Please bro, let’s talk outside.” I pointed my head towards the door and he reluctantly followed me. I untied the buttons to my blazer and heaved a huge sigh; if anything I didn’t want this ending with tears for anyone.

“We’re far enough, what’s going?” He asked looking rather displeased. I scratched my head in frustration looking at him. I didn’t know where to start and lying to him was not an option because he was one person who could see right through me.

“Why do you have a habit of popping up? You were in Eastern Cape the last time I checked.” I said trying to steer the conversation to a different direction.

“I’m a traveller; you should know that I don’t stay in one place for too long. I came back to Pta because dad begged me to.”

“Does that mean you’ll take the job offer?” Dad has been begging Luyanda to take the CEO position at Maseko Industries but he has been refusing, talking about how he was against being confined in an office for 8 hours a day. An office job was too much of a commitment for him.

“This is not about me. What’s with you and what I just saw? The girl? What’s her story? At this time, you should be at home with your wife and kid.” He looked at me confused.

“Bro, I need a favour and please, don’t overreact. What I’m about to say might sound bad but it’s actually not...”

“I’ll be the judge of that.” He cut me short then folded his arms.

“Okay well, the story is that I’m seeing someone and I want more...” I shrugged my shoulders. That sounded pathetic even for me.

“Okay, so that lady is your mistress? And, what is Aunt Carol and Uncle Reggie’s role in this whole thing?”

“Well at the moment they are posing as mom and dad.” He looked at me and chuckled.

“Tell me you’re joking?” He looked at me straight in the eyes. I wanted to lie and say indeed I am joking but I wasn’t and that was what made it so hard.

“I wish I was but I want to marry her man. Don’t get me wrong, I love Okuhle with all my being but I love Anati as well. I could make it work you know.”

“Wow!” He shook his head and chucked his hands into his back pockets.

“I know how this sounds but it’s not that bad.”

“All along I thought I was the black sheep of the family. The rules breaker, non-conformer, rebel but here you are deceiving everyone, including your wife, that woman loves you Lwanda. She sacrificed a lot for you, her life, and her ambitions. She even turned her back on her family once upon a time and she did all that for you and what do you do? Not only are you lying to her, you’re also lying to that poor lady sitting with your aunt and uncle, well to her she thinks they are your parents. At what cost? And, at whose expense? Lwanda, this will not end well for you and you’re crazy if you think either woman will stay with you after this whole thing comes to light.”

“Luyanda, you don’t understand. I didn’t plan for this to happen. It was innocent fun that turned into this; it was never my plan for things to get out of hand.” Tears threatened my eyes.

“Why didn’t you walk away? And, why did you go out looking for fun in the first place? If things were boring at home, why didn’t you spice them up? Did your wife know that you were bored? Did you afford her the opportunity to redeem herself? You’re going to lose a good woman and I hope this Anati woman is worth it all.”

“What are you saying?”

“I’m saying it’s time you tell everyone the truth or I will.” He walked back to the restaurant leaving me in shock. I immediately got into panic mode and rushed after him.

He stood by the table looking at everyone without saying a word. He looked displeased with everyone and I knew my brother very

well. If he was disgusted by something, he told it like it is.

“Luyanda please, give me a month.” I begged. I had to do it in front of everyone and Anati looked confused by this whole thing.

“Carol... Reggie...” He snickered.

“Ye wena mfana! Who are you calling Reggie?” Uncle Reg roared.

“Luyanda lalela, this can be explained.” Aunt Carol intervened. I just stood there praying nobody said anything about me having a wife and a kid.

“I’m disappointed in all of you, like how do you live with yourselves?” He yelled through his teeth.

“Luyanda, you’re way out of line.” Aunt Carol huffed. “You will respect us as your elders!!!” She shouted under her breath while on her feet pointing her finger at Luyanda.

“Talk about respect huh? I’ll be calling my mom, they’ll be hearing about this and wena Lwanda you’ll get what’s coming to you.” He stopped to walk away but he turned his attention to Anati and looked down at her. Poor Anati, she stood there shocked by everything, I could see tears in her eyes.

“I feel sorry for you. You’re beautiful and you don’t deserve the amount of heartache that’s about to hit you.” He held her by the cheek and wiped away the tear that was already rolling down her face. “You deserve better than my brother, my advice to you is that ask the right questions.” With that said he walked away without saying goodbye.

“Uyadelela lomfama, uMike is not doing a good job with these boys.” Uncle Reg got up. “Lwanda mfana wami, ngifuna imali yami. I played my part.” He walked away after pointing a finger at me. Aunt Carol walked up to me and gave me a hug.

“I’m sorry.” She whispered into my ear and left. I looked at Anati and she hung her head starring down at the table.

Me: I’m calling in that favour, it’s rather urgent.

I sent Max a text, he owed me a favour and I was collecting.



Max: Not tonight bra, my girlfriend is coming over.

Me: I don't care; I'll be there in an hour. Clean out that house and make it look like mine.

I switched off my phone and sat next to her.

"Babe..." I whispered.

"Lwanda what's going on?" She asked in a shaky voice.

"I'll explain everything. Let's pay the bill and go to my house." She raised her head and looked at me in shock.

"You never want to go to your house, why now?" She was already in tears and that broke me and somehow I saw Okuhle's hurt as well and that broke me even further.

"I'm serious about us and it's time you saw where I stayed. Can we do that?"

"Yeah, I guess but I have a lot of questions. Like what just happened."

"I'll answer everything, I promise." I kissed her on the cheek and asked the waiter to bring the bill.

OKUHLE:

We drove in silence; I couldn't stop the tears from descending from my eyes. I kept sniffing and he was sweet enough not to ask. I looked out the window and counted the street lights as they passed disappearing to the rear of the car, never to be seen again.

"Do you think I'm beautiful?" I asked him but I kept my eyes on the road as I counted away.

"What do you mean?" I slowly turned and faced him.

"Do you find me sexy? That's what I mean." I didn't even know why I was seeking validation from him, we had been estranged for over 15 years and here I was asking stupid questions.

"Well yeah, you're even sexier when you cry. You're beautiful

Okuhle and you will always be beautiful in my eyes.” He smiled and turned his focus on the road.

‘At the roundabout take the second exit.’ Google maps said.

We were two streets away from my house and I prayed deep down that I would find Lwanda at home. He pulled up at the gate and I opened it. We sat in silence as it slowly slid open. My heart was beating out of my chest as I noticed that the A45 was not in the driveway. ‘It’s probably in the garage.’ I thought to myself. He drove up and parked next to the Jeep.

“Here we are, home safe and sound.” He switched off the engine and gave me the car keys.

“Thank you.” My voice was breaking. I kept swallowing spit to numb the pain in my throat. We both got off and went around the car.

“Looks like my friends are already here, are you going to be okay?” He looked concerned but he wouldn’t bring himself to ask me what was wrong.

After seeing me in that state he insisted to drive me home, I refused but he wouldn’t take no for an answer. I was grateful that he offered because I would’ve ended up committing suicide by driving into a truck or something. I was in too much pain to think rationally. He had his friends follow us behind with his car; the drive was comforting simply because I was not behind the steering wheel.

“I’ll be fine. Thank you.” I whispered looking at the ground. He lifted my head up with his index finger and I looked straight into his eyes. I found comfort by staring in his eyes and he just looked at me and smiled.

“Stop crying okay? I mean, look at this...” He looked around the yard. “You did well for yourself; I guess being a doctor really pays well. So why the tears?”

“Uhm...” I dropped my head in shame. If only he knew that all this was Lwanda and his money.

“It’s okay; you don’t have to tell me now. I’ll be in Pta for the next

6 weeks, call me and we'll talk." He gave me his business card and slowly walked away. I watched him as he disappeared into the darkness. A part of me wanted to scream for him to come back but that was just wishful thinking. I could hear them laugh and talking out loud, before I knew it they drove off. I sighed looking at his business card before putting it into my handbag. I locked the car and slowly walked towards the door.

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LWANDA:

I watched her look so peacefully in her sleep. We didn't do much talking last night, we got here and the first thing I thought of was to rip her out of the dress she was wearing and before we knew it we both in heat and our clothes came off flying. I reached for my pants and pulled out the ring; it was a 32-carat rectangular cut diamond ring, cost me an arm and a leg but honestly, I didn't mind spending that much on her. I slid the ring onto her finger and smiled because it fit perfectly, just like I had imagined it would. She slowly opened her eyes and looked at me.

"What?" She frowned.

"Nothing, get up we need to go get breakfast and we're already running late for work." I said getting up from the bed. She pulled herself up and yawned stretching her arms. She looked up while her hands were in the air and she looked at the ring on her finger. She paused while making sense of it then she slowly brought her hand to her face.

"Lwanda..." She whispered looking at the ring.

"Babe..."

"What is this? We still have to talk about last night."

"And we can still talk, but right now I want to know if you would." I sat next to her and held both her hands "Anati Mbobo, would you

please marry me?" I asked and she looked at me defeated.

"I... I... This is big." She pulled her hands from mine. "This is beautiful and I'm flattered but marriage? Lwanda your brother had a lot to say last night and I still have questions."

"Okay, ask me anything but please say you'll marry me? I love you." I said with pleading eyes.

"Okay, so uhm... I want the truth Lwanda. Just tell me the truth."

"Uhm..." I scratched my head. "Carol and Reggie are not my parents. Carol is my mother's older sister and Reggie is her husband. I'm sorry..." Her eyes were already twinkling with tears.

"You lied about your parents?" She asked in disbelief.

"Unintentionally so, I'm sorry. My parents are really uptight and old fashioned. I tried to explain to them why you had to meet them and they insisted that the only meeting they'll go to is if they're going to your parents to ask for your hand in marriage. I'm sorry baby, please you have to believe me."

"You could've told me the truth Lwanda. How do I trust you after this? What else are you lying about? Your brother was too mad; there is more to him reacting the way he did. What are you not telling me?" I looked down and debated the thought of coming clean to her.

"This is not my house..." I whispered.

"What? Wow!!! Whose bed is this then?" She got out of bed fuming.

"The bed is mine but the house is not."

"What are you saying Lwanda?" She clapped her hands with each word she uttered.

"The house belongs to my friend and I stay with him. That is why I didn't want you to see where I stayed. I was ashamed that you'd think less of me." I went to the other side of the bed and dropped to my knees. "Please you have to believe me, we can call him now. I lied about my parents and the house, I'm sorry baby but please don't leave me." I wrapped my arms around her knees and begged.

“I still don’t believe you. Lwanda your brother was mad last night, should I ask him instead? And, what did he mean when he said that your parents would be hearing about what happened last night? Please, you need to be honest with me.” I looked up at her with teary eyes.

“My brother hates me; we have always been in competition. In his eyes my father seemed like he favoured me more than him. All his life he has been trying to discredit me to my parents and last night I gave him the ammunition he needed. I’m almost certain that I’ll receive a call from my father today telling me how disappointed he is in me for having my aunt and uncle pose as them.” I stood up and sat on the bed. “You can call Luyanda and ask him whatever, I won’t stop you. I’m the victim in all of this, victim of circumstances. Yes, I have all the money in the world and what has that done for me? I’m tired of lying; this is all I have in my closet. Family drama and an angry brother.” I sighed.

“I don’t know Lwanda. I need to think about this. You lied about something so big and this ring, I can’t accept it.”

“Okay but please keep it on and think about your answer. I love you and I want to marry you. I’d never lie about that.”

“Fine, I’ll keep it on and I’ll think about us. Don’t call me, I’ll call you.” She changed into her dress then took her things and left. I buried myself with the pillows and cursed at myself.

OKUHLE:

He slowly caressed my thighs, planting kisses all over my body. His touch sent electric waves down my spine and I bit my lower lip looking at him. He was so handsome and I wondered why I never saw his handsomeness before. He sucked on my nipples as I arched my back, moaning in pleasure. He pulled my hand and placed it on my nuna. He helped me gently rub on my clit as he bit each nipple which brought some foreign pleasure to my senses. “Gosh you’re so wet.” He muttered. He pushed my middle finger

into my honeypot and made me fuck myself and he seemed to be enjoying the pleasure of it all. He moved his lips to mine and we passionately kissed. He inserted his middle finger with mine already in my honeypot and I felt immense pleasure, foreign but sensational. He moved both our hands at a steady pace and I could feel myself get wetter and wetter.

“Please, fuck me already.” I cried out. I was so horny I couldn’t handle the need of wanting his dick inside of me.

“Sssh... There is no need to rush, you’re not there yet.” He whispered. He squeezed my breast while we passionately kissed then I felt my hole widen, he inserted two more of his fingers into my honeypot and I felt myself shutter from underneath him. I spread my legs wider for easy penetration, I enjoyed what he was doing with his fingers, and I moved my lower body to the rhythm of his hand as he fucked me hard with his fingers...

“Mommy...”

“Mhmm...” Tiny hands landed on my face and I thought it was him.

“Mommy...” She pinched my cheeks and I opened my eyes looking at her. My hands quickly travelled to my nuna and I was dripping wet.

“I want breakfast and we’re going to be late.” She said with a frown.

“I’m sorry honey, give mommy a moment. Go watch cartoons downstairs I’ll be right there...”

“Okay...” She ran out and I sat on my buttocks rubbing my eyes. I checked the time and we only had 30 minutes left on the clock. I dragged myself out of bed and went to take a quick shower. I tried really hard not to think about the dream I just had but I couldn’t. After taking a shower I brushed my teeth and walked back to the room.

“Oh you’re back.” He was changing into his pyjamas and he looked stressed about something.

“What happened to greeting?” I looked at him and he looked at



me.

“I have to take Bontle to day-care.” I walked into my closet and took out something to wear. He stood at the door and looked at me as I got dressed. I wore my best underwear, then I put on black ripped skinny jeans and a white blouse that showed off my cleavage. I put on make-up and wore my favourite heels. I packed my handbag and walked out.

“You look beautiful, are you heading somewhere after dropping Bontle off?”

“No, I just feel like dressing up.” I took the keys to the Jeep and headed to the door.

“You should dress up more often, you look sexy.” He smiled.

“Okay love. Thank you.” I walked out and closed the door behind me. I exhaled as tears threatened my eyes. It took all of me not to show any sign of hurt and weakness. I rushed downstairs, thanks to mama T, Bontle was already dressed. We had cereal for breakfast and before we knew it, we were on the road.

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TWO WEEKS LATER

OKUHLE:

I parked next to the Merc and checked myself out on the mirror before stepping out. My phone rang as I put my feet on the ground...

“MaNkosi, yaz your car is gathering dust in my garage?” I laughed.

“[Laughing] weOkuhle, I didn’t lend you that car for it to gather dust in your garage. Kanti what deals vele?” She laughed out loud.

“You sound happy, what’s up?”

“Well, I have a reason to be happy. Have you heard about the warm invite to the Shezi residence?” I could tell she was smiling. Refilwe loved Lunga, more than she loved her husband. It was sad because she spoke badly of Thobeka every chance she got simply because she didn’t get the guy she wanted. She was bitter but I never entertained her bitter rants about the Shezi family. It was her fight and not mine.

“No, I just came back from the salon. I had to take care of my hair, it was getting out of hand.”

“It’s about damn time. Tell me you got those Malaysian curls we were talking about the other day?”

“I’m not at that stage yet, you know how I feel about weaves. Cornrows and braids will do for now.”

“Bummer but I bet you look sexy with cornrows and that unibrow, not forgetting those sideburns. Girl, I’m jealous of your hairiness sometimes.”

“Please, you don’t know the struggles of being hairy dear. Let me see what my lying husband is up to and I’ll see you at the Shezi’s.” We both shared a laughed and she hung up. I took my handbag from the boot and made my way to the door. I was wearing a white Juliet spliced lace maxi dress with brown gladiator sandals.

The past two weeks had been the hardest, though Lwa had been around more often as opposed to other times. Singapore didn’t happen, I was tempted to ask but I chose not to because that was going to raise suspicions. There were times were I would look at him and tears would just roll down my cheeks because it was hard keeping quiet about what I already knew. As if I didn’t torture myself enough, I went and stalked the girl on Facebook and all her other social media pages, most of which were private but I got enough information to know that she was a Senior Auditor at KPMG.

The shock that I got when I found out she was educated was beyond any human comprehension. My husband wanted me to

take care of the house while he enjoyed life with his career driven mistress. That alone was a spit to my face.

“Penny for your thoughts?” He was standing right before me in the middle of the kitchen and I didn’t even see him approach. I had been doing this a lot, I get lost in my thoughts and not be aware of my surroundings. This other time I did it while grocery shopping, I was at the till and I zoned out. The cashier had to snap her fingers a few times before I snapped back to reality. The burden I was carrying was slowly eating away at me and I had even shed weight because of what I had been holding in.

“Oh! Hi, I didn’t see you there...” I faked a smile and moved away from him.

“I love what you did with your hair and I love the dress too. If I didn’t know any better, I’d say you’re cheating on me.” He said laughing.

“That’s rich coming from you.” I answered with a straight face. I didn’t mean to say that though.

“I’m just kidding Kuhle, come on babe.” He hugged me from behind and planted a kiss on my cheek. “I love you Okuhle, never doubt my love for you.” He said then let me go. I took a deep breath and exhaled as I fought back tears.

“Are you okay?” He was still standing behind me.

“Yeah... I’m fine, just tired.” My eyes moved to the other end of the counter and both his phones were on there.

“Pity, we have been invited...”

“You bought a new phone?” I cut him short and turned to face.

“New phone?” He raised his eyebrow.

“Yeah, whose phone is that?” I pointed at the phones and he had the ‘Oh shit look.’ I smirked.

“I didn’t get a new phone, it would be dump because it is exactly the same like the other one.” He looked nervous.

“Oh! Yeah it would be dump unless you have something to hide or have the need to keep up with appearances.” I folded my arms. Anger was already brewing inside of me, I couldn’t understand

how easy it was for him to lie to my face like that.

“What’s that supposed to mean? That is a work phone, which I use for work related things but I wouldn’t expect you to understand because all you do is sit around the house all day and spend my money, which I work hard for but no, you have the audacity to stand here and accuse me of things that I know nothing about. You know what Okuhle? A little appreciation could go a long way!” He yelled. It was like I pushed the wrong button and he just went off on me.

I just looked at him in disbelief, he sure took the trophy for this one. I didn’t even know what to say to him because I was still digesting what he just said to me. I guess I was the useless housewife after all.

“Lwa you know...” His phone rang and we both turned our attention to it. The name Anati flashed on the phone as it rang and he looked at me. I looked at him, I did the one thing I prayed I would never do in his presence and that was to shed a tear. They rolled down my face and he frowned. It stopped ringing then it rang again.

“You should get that, it’s probably work but what do I know right?” I shrugged my shoulders and walked away.

‘Hey...’ I heard him answer as I ascended up the stairs.

**LWANDA:**

My phone rang right after I had said some painful things to Kuhle, I didn’t mean to say all those things I said but I found myself saying them and I once I started I couldn’t stop. I was frustrated with Anati because she put me on probation for two weeks, no visits and no calls, and that got to me. When Kuhle noticed the phones, how I recklessly left there for her to see was beyond me and I said things that I shouldn’t have said.

Seeing her tears roll down her face like that broke me, she would never handle the truth and I wished there was a way I could explain myself without hurting her any further than I had already have. I was guilt stricken when Anati called again and what she said next made me hate myself.

“Hey...” I answered my phone and walked outside.

“Just to be clear, I’m still mad at you and what I’m about to say doesn’t change the fact that I’m mad.” She said.

“Okay, uhm... I’m a little busy right now. Can I call you back?”

“There is no need, I won’t take too much of your time. My answer is yes...” She kept quiet.

“Yes?” I frowned. “Yes to what?” My head was with Okuhle, I needed to apologize before we left for dinner to the Shezi’s.

“How does one forget that they proposed? Lwanda are you okay?”

“Oh!” I paused. I didn’t know whether I should leap for joy or just hang up on her and call her later. I was confused because both women at that current moment yearned for my attention.

“Oh? Is that all you’re going to say? I just accepted your proposal, what is your deal?” She was getting agitated and I knew I had to cut this phone call short.

“Look, I have to call you back.”

“Lwa... wait...” I hung up and sighed. It was good to know that things with Anati were now back to normal now I had to fix things with my wife.

I walked back inside the house and headed to our bedroom.

Bontle left with mama T, as my wife called her. She took her to her home town in Matatiele for the week. We agreed for her to go with Bontle because we trusted mama T, she was like family to us. I slowly opened the door to our bedroom and walked in. She was in her closet and I stood by the entrance looking at her going through her clothes. I could tell her mind was far away and I felt bad for what I said.

“Mama wasekhaya...” I whispered. “Mama wezingane zami.” I said a little bit louder and she ignored me.

“Kuhle...” I walked in and sat on the couch. “Babe please talk to me...” I begged. She turned and looked at me.

“Is this dress appropriate for dinner with the couples?” She was holding a dress up to her chest while blankly staring at me.

“You can wear whatever you want to wear my love.” I replied.

“Sleeveless lace chiffon dress it is.” She whispered and turned to the shoes section of the closet.

“Can we talk about what just happened?” She was blatantly ignoring me but I wasn’t going to give up.

“Do you think I should put on make-up? Or not neh?” She looked at me and frowned. “Make-up would be too much with that dress, so I will stick to no make-up. Gosh! You’re so much help.” She picked her shoes and walked out.

“Do you know what time we should be at the Shezi residence?” She asked looking straight into my eyes. I couldn’t read her facial expression. I couldn’t tell whether she was mad, sad or hurt, she was just neutral.

“We can leave at six.” I responded.

“Good, at least I have enough time for some me time in the bathtub.” She turned to walk away but I grabbed her and pulled her towards me.

“Babe please don’t do this, I’m sorry.” I tried to kiss her but she turned her face away. “Please forgive me?” She just stared at me.

I leaned in for a kiss and she kissed me back. She wrapped her arms around me and I picked her up and gently lay her on the bed. She moaned and sniffed in my mouth, I tried to pull away but she held on tight to me. She pulled my top and helped me get out of my sweatpants. She looked at me with hunger and I couldn’t get over the sadness that her eyes carried.

“Maybe we shouldn’t.” I whispered.

“I want to, please make love to me.” She said in a low voice. She



pulled out her dress and took off her panty and bra. She moved up the bed and gently lay on her back while spreading her legs. I crawled up to her and I got in between her thighs kissing her. We both moaned and groaned in each other's mouth then she reached for my dick and pushed it into her honeypot. She pulled me, pressing our bodies together. With slow sensual thrusts, I made love to her. I went deeper and deeper into the depth of her vagina and her vaginal walls allowed me to go deeper and they stretched wider for better penetration. She moaned and breathe heavily with tears rolling down her face. I kept my eyes on her but hers were shut. Our fingers intertwined as tears suddenly rolled down my face too. It was like we were in a different space in time where we were strangers making love for the first time.

She moved her body in such a sexy manner that our motion became one, our bodies communicated with each other and so did our souls. "Yes... Yes... Oh yes..." She moaned. "Right there... mhmm yes..." She bit her lower lip. I sucked on her neck as she continued to moan. "I'm coming..." She pointed out. "I'm coming with you..." I increased my thrusts and she grabbed onto me as her nails dug into my back. I felt the pain but it was pleasurable. She rolled her eyes back and screamed as I felt our juices collide, I curled my toes as a wave of pleasure swept through me and I felt her vibrate from underneath me. I grunted and cursed until I was done. I dropped to her side breathing heavily and she just turned and looked at me. She brushed my cheek and whispered...

"You don't love me." She got up and left me with a lot of questions.

LWANDA:

We drove in complete silence to Lunga's house. Now that the cat was out of the bag, I saw no need to hide the other phone but I made sure it was switched off whenever I was with Okuhle. We drove in the Jeep and what a gut-wrenching journey it was. I pulled up at the gate and buzzed Lunga, he opened for us and we waited for the gate to slide open. I had never spent a moment in a car with my wife and her being silent the entire journey, she was talkative by nature and I managed to change that too. I parked next to Zama's Polo Vivo and switched off the ignition.

"Can we try and be civil in front of our friends?" She was still mad but I didn't want the others to pick up on her mood that things were off between us.

"Don't worry about me, I'm a great pretender." She reached for the bottle of champagne from the backseat and got off. I followed behind her and we walked to the door hand-in-hand. I knocked first before opening the door and Thembeke was in the kitchen with Fifi and Zenande.

"Good evening ladies." I greeted with a smile.

"Hey..." They all responded cheerful as ever.

"How are you guys?" Fifi came to us and gave both of us a hug.

"Good babe, we're good." Kuhle smiled and I was happy to see that smile.

"The guys are in the lounge, you may excuse us Lwanda."

Zenande said pushing me towards the exit.

"Baby uzoba'right?" I asked Kuhle with a smile and she nodded.

I walked down the passage and I could hear the loud laughter coming from the lounge. I walked in and greeted everyone.

"Ya wena nja." Sihle said. They all laughed and I laughed along with them. I sat next to Sihle who was happy to see me.

"Where have you been? It's like you disappeared off of the face of the earth." He said nudging my arm.

"Work man, you know. I've been way too busy."

“Not forgetting your new flame huh? She’s been keeping you busy neh?” Sihle remarked.

“Not today bra please.” I said. Lunga looked at me and shook his head.

“Guys let me go get my wife so that we can get this dinner going.” Lunga stood up and walked away.

“Ey Zama my guy, I saw the new car. Congrats boy.” I shook his hand and he just nodded. Zama didn’t talk much and I often wondered why but I was never brave enough to ask why.

OKUHLE:

The girls spoke out loud laughing and I just stood there looking at them being cheerful and merry. Fifi was actually getting along with Zenande which I found odd because she didn’t like her that much. Thembeke was busy with something, it smelled nice but I was not hungry for anything. They went on and on, they tried to bring me in on the conversation but failed. For the first time in my life, I was anti-social. My phone rang and I excused myself to go answer it outside. I looked at the number before answering it, it was an international number.

“Okuhle, hello?” I didn’t know why I was surprised to receive a call from an international number because I received calls from Lu all the time.

“Okuhle, hi, it’s Darnell.” I found myself laughing, he was bad at pronouncing my name but I found it sexy somehow.

“Darnell, wow! Uhm... Hi, how are you?” I was surprised. I hadn’t heard from him ever since that time he tried to text me and I ignored him.

“I’m good now that I’m talking to you. I thought I should check in on you, the line might cut us off but I’d be happy to know that my friend’s sister is doing okay.” I giggled.

“Oh! I’m fine Darnell, how are you guys doing? When are you guys coming to South Africa?” I asked. I was all smiles and blushing, his baritone sounded amazing over the phone.

“Luthendo...”

“Luthando...” I laughed correcting him and he laughed too.

“Yeah, him... He told me that he is coming that side next month, unfortunately I have things to take care of so I won’t be coming with him. He has big news by the way...”

“Big news?”

“Yeah! But that’s not the reason for my call, I wanted let you to know that you have someone waiting for you in the US once you get tired of your life in SA.” I laughed, I was speechless. He was being sweet.

“Okay, that’s good to know.” I bit my lower lip, he was giving me butterflies in my stomach. “You’ll be the first person I’ll reach out to the moment I get tired of my life in SA.”

“That would make me happy. I have to go, enjoy the rest of your day.”

“Night you mean...”

“Oh yeah, what time is it over there?”

“19:45...” I said.

“Oh okay, glad I didn’t call late in the night.”

“What time is it that side?”

“13:45...”

“Oh okay, enjoy your day then.” I said.

“You too, bye.” He hung up and I looked at my phone smiling. I was grateful for that phone call, it managed to uplift my mood.

I walked back inside the house and the girls had moved to the lounge with the guys. Everyone was conversing and laughing and I just kept to myself thinking about the call I just received.

“Evening to those I have not seen.” Thobeka walked in greeting everyone. She looked amazing but she was one to dress up well.

“Mrs Shezi, it’s always an honour to be in your beautiful home.” Sihle said cheerful as ever. He took her hand and planted a kiss

on it. I looked at Fifi and she was fuming.

“Hi Fifi.” She greeted her out of spite and Fifi flashed her a fake smile. These two needed to address whatever issues they had, it was getting out of hand.

“I’m sorry to keep you guys waiting but I didn’t get a chance to plan properly. I can assure you though that we’ll have a pleasant night.” She said and Lunga smiled at her. The guys got up and excused themselves and it was just me, Fifi, Zenande, and Thobeka left in the lounge.

Thobeka started conversing with Zenande and Fifi started talking to me, I was not even listening but I did flash a fake smile here and there as not to appear rude or anything.

“Okuhle hun, please join me in the kitchen?” Thobeka turned her attention to me and Fifi gave her the evil eye, I was over these two really. She got up and walked to the kitchen and I followed her.

“MaMnguni, you didn’t have to cook the entire dinner.” Thobeka laughed as she entered the kitchen and so did Thembeke. They seemed to have a stable friendship, one I could never have with Fifi.

“Thobeka yaz you forget that our men don’t like being hungry, I mean uZama was just complaining so I figured why not.” They both smiled at each other and then shared a laugh.

“Thank you dear, I don’t know what I could’ve done if you were not around. Phela ku nabo Madam la.” They laughed yet again and I joined in. I didn’t know what she meant by “abo madam.” but I was not about to hold a grudge. I had far more important things to worry about than what Thobeka thought of me or Fifi.

She started helping out with the cooking and once she realized that the meat was not going to cook in time she ordered two full chickens from Nando’s.

“Kuhle dear, why the silence?” She asked out of the blue. See, I was helping out where I could but I was not engaging in any conversation held.

“Aw it’s nothing to worry yourself with. A girl is allowed to be quiet every once in a while right?” I said faking a smile. I was happy she noticed that I was too quiet but I was not about to share my marital problems with them.

“Love, keeping things to yourself can be draining. We’re all ladies here and nothing is more liberating than knowing you have people to turn to when things are looking down.” Arg Thobeka was trying too hard. I just blankly stared at her. Honestly, I had nothing to say to her or her fake friend.

“Let her be.” Thembeke said rolling her eyes, she didn’t like me that much and I’m afraid but the feeling was mutual. Thobeka shrugged her shoulders looking at me, she looked concerned but I wasn’t moved. Her delivery arrived, she paid for the chicken and tipped the driver. She then placed the chicken pieces into serving bowls and excused herself to go set up the dinner table.

I continued with what I was doing as I kept re-playing the conversation I had with Darnell in my head. Thembeke took two bowls with her to the dining area and I shortly followed. I found everyone awkwardly staring at each other. Did I miss something?

“Nande, Thobeka ran upstairs complaining about a headache. Please go check up on her and I’ll go get the guys.” Thembeke said. They both walked away leaving Fifi and me.

“And then? What just happened?” I asked.

“You know Thobeka, she likes being a drama queen.” She rolled her eyes and took a seat.

“You need to stop this drama Fifi, really it’s getting tiring.” I said and took a seat at the far end of the table and we waited for a while before everyone joined us.

“Where is my wife?” Lunga asked directing his question to Zenande. We all turned our attention to Nande.

“Uhm... She’ll be with us in a minute.” She responded. We sat and waited for the queen to come back. Lwanda tried holding my hand from underneath the table and I just pushed his hand away. I was not in the mood for him or being at that table.



After two minutes Mrs Shezi emerged wearing a fake smile. Her eyes landed on Lunga and he didn't look too happy with her, he was clenching his jaw and getting all worked up. The queen ambled to the seat next to her husband and sat down slowly. I made sure to keep my eyes on them from where I was sitting it looked like Lunga was doing something to his wife as he angrily whispered into her ear. I was shocked, I didn't take Lunga to be the abusive type but then maybe it was just my imagination.

"Ladies and gentle guys, thank you for coming through to share dinner with us. My wife and I haven't been much of your friends lately because we're both busy at work but I figured why not invite you over for dinner. My wife was more than happy to have you guys over so please, let us enjoy this meal because we don't know when we'll be able to do this again." Lunga said with a smile.

Sihle:" Thank you mfethu, I was beginning to think you have forgotten about us."

Lwanda:" The truth is uLunga has forgotten about us. Is wifey putting a tight leash on you?" Everyone laughed except for me and Thobeka didn't quite get the joke as well. Lwanda was full jokes, he was being disrespectful and I didn't like what he said. Everyone began dishing up and I was sitting there like can this night end already? My mind was not even at the table, I was sitting there thinking of ways to kill the bastard sitting next to me.

Fifi:" So Thobeka when are you guys filling this lovely house with babies? It is so lonely."

Sihle choked on his food and I slowly turned to Fifi with my mouth hanging wide, like my jaw literally dropped. Lunga looked at her slightly shaking his head, it was about to go down. In my head I was like popcorn please... Fifi had a sneaky smile on her face and I could tell Thobeka was fuming inside.

Nande:" Why rush into having kids? Thobeka has all the time in the world to have kids. Right now she has a business to take care of. Not everyone aspires to be a housewife and take care of kids

all day every day like you Fifi.” She rolled her eyes and I was like yes girrrl!!! Thobeka smiled at her. These girls had each other’s backs, maybe it wouldn’t hurt to build that kind of relationship with my sister too.

Lunga:” And besides Refilwe, that is something my wife and I talk about privately. This is dinner with friends, can we please move away from discussing private matters?” He asked calmly.

Thobeka was not having it, she was clenching her jaws and she looked like she was about to explode. In my head I’m screaming ‘Please explode, please explode...’ I needed this drama right now.

Sihle:” I apologize on my wife’s behalf. That was totally uncalled for Fifi.”

Fifi:” I’m sorry if I was out of line. I didn’t think this was a sensitive subject. It was a simple question nje.” She shrugged her shoulders. I wanted to laugh, Fifi was the G. lyadelela le ngane period.

“Maybe you’re fishing for new gossip?” Thobeka said sternly folding her arms. I was anxious for a cat fight, I had been crying for too long, I needed this...

Lunga:” Babe, not now.”

Fifi:” Oh honey I don’t gossip, I have facts!” She smirked. This was getting out of hand.

Sihle:” Refilwe Nkosi! You shut your mouth!” He snapped.

Me:” Okay you guys, can we please calm down. This is supposed to be a pleasant dinner among friends. What’s with the fighting?” I had to say something.

Fifi:” No, I need to address this...” I just buried my face into the palms of my hands. I wished she could just stop with her bitterness, it was getting unattractive.

Sihle:” Refilwe..!”

Fifi:” No Mntungwa, this needs to be said.”

Lwanda:” Fifi this is not the time nor the place.” I clicked my tongue looking at him, well in my head I clicked it.

Fifi:” Lwanda you need to mind your business or I’ll drag your business in this issue as well.” She muttered.

Lunga:” Fifi!” He yelled.

Me: Fifi no!” I said under my breath.

Sihle stood up. “It’s time for us to go.” He said looking at Fifi.

Fifi:” But I’m still eating.”

Sihle:” Now!!!” He said sternly.

I looked at Fifi as she got up so quickly. Surely she had a lot to say but phew! I was glad she was leaving lest she started talking about my business too. Lunga walked them to the door and I was still in shock. I looked at Thobeka and she was just as shocked as I was.

Nande:” Are you okay babe?”

“I’ll be fine.” She said.

Thembeke:” I didn’t know Fifi holds so many grudges?” She clapped once. I had forgotten she was at the table. She didn’t even stand up for her friend, fake I tell you.

Zama:” You ladies need to sort your issues out, look now dinner has been ruined.”

“She’s a house wife, she is expected to act like that.” Thobeka remarked. I looked at her shocked by what she said.

”Come on Thobeka, that’s really mean.” I said. I took offense because I was a housewife as well.

“I don’t care Kuhle. She’s your friend, yes. But she was out of line. Now you can go and tell her what I just said.” She clicked her tongue. That was my cue to shut the fuck up, anyway I had my own issues to deal with.

Lunga:” I’m sorry about that, can we get back to dinner and try and forget about what just happened?” He sat back down. He was crazy to think this evening was going to carry on as if nothing happened.

Nande:” Yeah! Can we?”

Everyone nodded and I looked at them like you people are crazy.

I was forced to sit and enjoy the food that had gotten cold after that uproar.

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TWO MONTHS LATER

LWANDA:

It was a Saturday morning and I was sitting out back enjoying the morning breeze. My life had been a mess the past two months, I had a close call with Anati and Kuhle but I was happy that I managed to carry on with my lies. Luyanda was still at it, threatening to tell my dad about this whole thing but I managed to buy myself time with him. Luckily for me he has been in Tanzania and was not throwing threats every chance he got, he has been gone for 3 weeks now and before he left he gave me quite the lecture. 'The moment I get back to SA I'm telling mom and dad.' He said. I was so used to that song, it didn't scare me anymore.

"Good morning..." Kuhle greeted and stood behind me.

Something was going on with my wife, she has completely changed from the Okuhle I know. She paid attention to what she wore and paid more attention to the underwear she put on. She did her hair every second week and put on make-up every chance she got. She jogged every morning before sunrise and every afternoon at sunset. She had been paying close attention to her diet as well and I hardly saw her when she came to bed, she woke super early and went to bed late at night even after Bontle had been put to bed.

"Good morning my beautiful wife." I got up and pulled her into my embrace. She hasn't been the happiest person lately, she thinks she is hiding it but I see right through her fake smiles and fake moans when we have sex. I stopped having sex with her two

weeks back when she just blankly stared at me while I was humping away, it was like she was doing me a favour and was not really into it. After I came, she got up and walked to the bathroom where she cleaned herself up and came back into bed then slept like nothing happened. That killed me so to save myself the stress I stopped trying anything intimate with her ever since then.

“We need to talk...” She muttered then sat down. She was wearing a floral maxi dress with spaghetti straps, it looked really good on her.

“Okay...” I sat down and glared at her. She seemed rehearsed and I was prepared for anything. The line ‘we need to talk...’ didn’t scare me as much as it used to before. I was used to lying myself out of situations so I was always prepared to give my best speech.

“I want Bontle to go stay in Witbank...” She said nervously. I gave her a stern look, she was crazy if she thought I would agree to that bullshit.

“And why would you want something like that?” I raised my eyebrow.

“I’m tired, I need a break.” I chuckled. Okuhle was losing it and now she wanted to take my daughter all the way to Witbank because yena she was tired.

“Who needs a break from being a mother? Okuhle that won’t happen, not on my watch!” I huffed. She was making me mad. I mean, all she did was stay at home and be a mother to my child.

“Okay, I want a full time nanny. It is time we put that cottage to good use.” I looked at her and smiled, and believe me it was not a genuine smile.

“Full time nanny for what? Kahle, kahle what’s going on Okuhle? You have changed and believe me, it is not for the best.” I was getting worked up. I didn’t know what her problem was.

“There only person who has changed here is you. Why do you think I try so hard?” Her voice got shaky and tears twinkled in her eyes.

“Don’t you get tired of crying? Most of the time you don’t even know why you’re crying. Are you pregnant or something? Because I am tired of your newly found attitude. You know what?” I paused and looked at her. “Man, I can’t do this. I’m going out, I’ll see you later.” I stood up and walked up to the door. “Where are you going? We’re still talking?” She yelled. “I’m done talking and I hope when I get back you’ll be the Okuhle I fell in love with.” I clicked my tongue then walked inside the house, took keys to the M2 and left.

OKUHLE:

I dropped my head as tears just welled up in my eyes. I thought I was strong but it was hard having to pretend I was okay with everything when I wasn’t. He disappeared into the house, his words carried venom and I wasn’t sure if my heart could take it any longer. I heard the car drive off and like any woman being cheated on, I already played the scenario of him and her laughing at my misfortune. ‘How could any woman be happy with another woman’s husband?’ The question never ceased, at times I would want to call her and ask her why but my pride would never allow me to press dial.

“Mommy... Why are you crying?” Bontle’s sweet voice interrupted my thoughts. I looked at her and smiled faintly. She looked at me concerned and she frowned as her eyes welled up with tears as well.

“Oh I’m sorry honey, mommy is not crying...” I wiped the tears away and picked her up.

“But I can see tears in your eyes mommy.” Her tears rolled down her cheeks. My chest got heavy and a painful lump built up in my throat.

“Yes... Uhm... I’m preparing for an audition where I’m expected to



cry. So mommy is practising.” She tilted her head to the side and put her hands on my cheeks. With a smile on her face she said... “Mommy is good at crying, I see her cry every day in the bedroom, in the car, when she’s cooking, when watching a movie and especially when daddy leaves. Mommy cries all the time and I cry too when she’s not watching.” She frowned. I swallowed hard after she said all that. I hadn’t realized that she saw me cry so many times and to make matters worse, it has impacted her too. “Mommy is going to be a wonderful actress.” I faked a smile and fought back tears. “I don’t think that’s a good job to take. I don’t like it when mommy cries.” She pulled me close and gave me a hug. I gave her tight squeeze and she got off of me. “Mommy will stop crying, I promise.” I said. “Pinkie promise.” She raised her pinkie and I smiled at her. “Pinkie promise.” We did a pinkie promise and she ran off. I broke down as soon as she was out of sight. This was not my fight and if I stayed any longer I was going to lose what was left of my identity.

LWANDA:

I drove straight to Sihle’s house. I could’ve went to Anati but she was out of town, she had gone to do some audit work in Durban. I missed her so much but she was coming back on Monday so I was merely counting down hours until she was back in town.

“Hau ndoda, it’s not even twelve yet and you’re already drunk.” He was sitting on the couch blankly staring at the TV. Judging from the number of bottles on the table, he had been drinking for a while.

“Lwanda Maseko... Hmm...” He sipped from his bottle then burped. “Beer?” He asked.

“I’m good, I still have to drive back home.” I settled down and he just nodded then drank some more.

“Are you good my guy?” I asked. He was not his usual self and he was not one to drink that much.

“What can I say, money has been loyal to me but not life.” He chuckled. “Can you believe I bought this house for her? One point three fucken million, bought it cash. All in the name of love.” He said then shook his head and drank some more.

“You did well, it’s a beautiful house. I love the neighbourhood too.” I remarked.

“Yeah, people here are pleasant. Lwanda my guy, do you know what the 10th commandment says?” He looked at me. I was confused by the way he was talking, something was definitely not okay with him.

“I don’t but you can tell me.”

“It says you shall not covet your neighbour’s wife, well that’s the part of it.” He turned his focus back on the TV and I was just looking at him confused. He gulped his drink down and stood up.

“Sihle, are you okay bra?” I asked. He pulled out a gun and I jumped out of my seat. “What’s the gun for?” He looked at me and laughed.

“Well this...” He waved the gun in the air. “Is to teach somebody a lesson. Go home to your wife Lwanda or come with me if you’re an adrenaline junkie.” He put the gun away and staggered to the kitchen.

“Maybe you should go lie down.” I suggested.

“Maybe you should mind your own business.” He took his car keys and walked out.

“Where are you going drunk like that?” I asked out of concern.

“To go deal with my skank of a wife...” He clicked his tongue

“What?” I looked at him confused.

“Can you believe Simphiwe is not my son, 16 full years and I was lied to? I took care of another man’s seed for 16 years. Now that’s fucked up. I’m going to kill her then Kill Lunga too.” I was shocked

by the revelation. “But before I kill him, I’m going to have sex with his wife first.” He smirked and got into his car.

“Sihle man come on, I’m sure there is a better way to deal with this. I’m begging you man, let’s go out and have fun. Forget about this, it’s not worth it.” I tried to reason with him. He sat in the car not saying anything. He looked broken but most of all he was angry.

“Fine, we’ll go to Moloko later.” He said then got out of the car. He stopped and looked at me then walked back inside the house.

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OKUHLE:

I stood in the middle of the bedroom staring at my phone, I wanted to yet I didn’t want to. It was past 20:00 PM and for some reason was not bothered that Lwanda was not back. I paced up and down the room weighing the odds in my head. I was scared but I had to, I needed someone to talk to and my mom was my only option. I tapped my foot biting on my lower lip as my armpits got sweaty. I looked at phone for the longest time possible, I was a nervous wreck but it had to be done.

I settled on the edge of the bed and took my phone, I was scared of the infamous words ‘I told you so’ but my mother was the only person I could turn to with what I was going through. Bontle was already asleep, she had an active day hence the exhaustion and I was glad that she wasn’t going to see me cry as I opened up to my mom. After some time, I dialled my mom’s number praying she was not asleep. It rang for a while and as I was about to hang up she answered.

“Honey, believe it or not. I was about to call.” She said. I could always tell that she was smiling. Growing up I always wished to

end up with half the man my dad was to my mother but I guess we do not always get what we wish for.

“Mother, how are you?” I asked after heaving a heavy sigh.

“I’m good; actually I’m in my best of moods. It’s a good thing that you called; I have news to share...” She said excitedly. My mission got even more impossible.

“Oh! What news?” I asked in a low voice. I was sad that she couldn’t pick up on my tone that I was not fine.

“Enhle is getting married. Imagine, my last born is getting married. Who would’ve thought?” She started sniffing and my heart just broke. She was never this excited when I shared my news about Lwanda’s intention to marry me.

“Oh! That’s great news mother. I guess things are quite serious between her and Nathan.” I exhaled and dropped my head. I was beginning to think that the call was a terrible mistake.

“Nathan is such a wonderful, respectful young man. You should be here for your sister during the lobola negotiations.” She said.

“Of course, I wouldn’t miss it for the world. Please, let me know about the date and I’ll come a week before.”

“I will. Anyway, did you have something to tell me?” I rolled my eyes.

“No, I just wanted to say hi.” I lied. I didn’t have the heart to get her in a foul mood when she was that happy about Enhle’s union.

“You’re sweet. Do call your sister when you get the chance, she’ll be happy to hear from you.”

“I will, look mom I have to go, greet dad for me.”

“Okay honey, bye.” I hung up disappointed. I had no one to turn to, it dawned on me that I was all alone on this God forsaken world.

I walked to my closet and took my Gucci handbag, I needed sleeping pills. Deep slumber was all I needed just to take timeout from the nightmare of a life I was living. I emptied the contents in the bag on the couch and looked for the box of sleeping pills, Lifa’s business card caught my attention and I paused looking at

it.

“Maybe I should call you...” I whispered. I walked out of the closet with the card in my hand. I reached for my phone and as I held it, it rang.

“Fifi?” I answered walking out of my bedroom.

“Oh thank goodness you answered; he is going to kill me.” She sounded hysterical and I got worried.

“Hey, calm down and tell me what’s happening.” I said.

“Oh gosh Kuhle, he suspects something. I think he knows. Fuck! Like I got home and there were bottles everywhere, his gun is not in the safe... Oh my I should run away...”

“Refilwe!!!!” I yelled. She stopped talking and I could hear her breathing heavily. “Babe who are you talking about?” I was getting worried.

“Sihle, I think he knows about Simphiwe. You know what? I’m going to Lunga and we’re going to resolve this.” She said.

“Babe are you certain he knows about Simphiwe?” This was big and if Sihle knew about the paternity of Simphiwe, there would be hell to pay. I was told that Sihle was ruthless and impulsive so Fifi’s life could be in danger.

“I’m not but he’s been acting indifferent towards the boy. He speaks to him roughly and he looks at him with hate. What other reason is there for him to be acting like this towards his son?” She took a deep breath and exhaled.

“Okay, uhm... Try and act normal. If he asks you about it deny it until you have a plan. Do you think Lunga will be able to help you?” This circle of friends was full of drama and I was getting tired of it. I should have stayed in Witbank, at least in my home town you didn’t get sucked in such a life.

“I don’t know but it’s worth the try right? I mean, Simphiwe is his son so he should do something to protect his one and only heir.”

“Except he is married and I doubt he would want risk his marriage in that manner.”

“Okuhle I don’t a choice right now.” She started crying. It was a

messy situation to be in and I was scared for her.

“Okay love, do what you have to do to save yourself from that man.” I advised.

“Okay, bye.” She hung up and I just sat at the top of the stairs.

I sat there and reflected on my life, I remembered the first time I walked in in this house and how happy I was. The love we shared was beautiful; I actually thought it was going to last forever. It was hard to believe that the guy who spent his whole teenage life and young adult life pursuing me had finally fallen out of love with me. I found myself laughing as I thought of all the gifts I received, every day I got something but lately I didn't even get a simple single red rose.

I took my phone and went to my browser history 'Properties24' there was an apartment that I kept viewing; it was situated in Menlo Park. It was a two bedroom apartment with two baths and an open plan kitchen and it went for R 1 850 000, money I didn't have but it was money I knew Lwanda had.

LWANDA:

We were sitting and drinking, well Sihle was there one doing most of the drinking. I was willing to do anything just to keep his mind off trying to kill anyone. I didn't know what else to do but stood by his side and listened to him whine.

“And you know what hurts?” He asked. The alcohol was getting to him.

“What hurts?” It was loud so we had to speak up in order to hear each other.

“I knew she wanted him, more than she wanted me but I married her anyway. I loved her, still do but Fifi can be a bitch sometimes.” He shook his head.

“Does Lunga know about Simphiwe?” I was curious to know.



“I asked him once and he denied it to my face. I’m waiting for the DNA test results and when they come back proving my suspicious, they’ll be hell to pay!” He sipped from his bottle and stood up. “I’ve had too much to drink, take me home.” I carried him on my shoulder and we walked to the car with him singing Hunter Hayes – Somebody’s heartbreak. I didn’t know how heartbreak felt like and I wouldn’t want Okuhle or Anati to go through what Sihle was going through, he was losing his mind because he was deceived. What is love if it is stained by deception? As I got him in the backseat, I decided on the spot that I was going to come clean to both women.

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Lwanda:

I got up at the sound of my alarm, it was Monday and that meant that Anati was coming back. I spoke to her last night and she didn’t say what time she would be here but I was happy nonetheless. I was supposed to get ready for work but I decided that I was going to call in sick; I needed to fix things with my wife and hopefully get the opportunity to sit her down and talk about what I had been hiding from her for almost 6 years. She was still peacefully sleeping next to me and I shook her lightly.

“Baby, it’s almost sunrise. Let’s go, I want to jog with you today.” I whispered into her ear.

“Not today...” She mumbled and pulled the covers over her head.

“Come on baby, please. I beg...” I pulled the covers off and she squinted her eyes looking at me.

“Not today Lwanda please...” She sighed.

“I know we’re not best of companions right now but can we at least try?” I asked. She got up and sat on her buttocks.

“What are you talking about?” She yawned.

“I am sorry Okuhle, for not being the ideal husband. I have my flaws, many flaws that is but one thing I am sure of is that I love you. It might not be enough but it’s there...”

“You think you love me Lwanda but you don’t and it’s okay, people fall out of love all the time.” She cut me short.

“But I haven’t fallen out of love with you, that’s the truth.”

“What is it then? I have lost myself trying to please you and to keep this marriage from falling apart. I have reached my limit and I can’t anymore...”

“Don’t say it please. Don’t say it.” I cut her short and pulled her to rest her head on my chest. “We’re going to fix us. Things will work out, you’ll see.” I said brushing her back.

“How I wish that were true.” She whispered.

“Can I jog with you today?” I asked. She nodded and we sat in that position not saying anything to each other. Believe it or not, I loved my wife and I would do anything for her but I was in love with Anati. I didn’t want to lose either woman because I wanted both of them in my life. Coming clean to them was going to be hard but it was something I had to do if I ever wanted to salvage what was left of my marriage with Okuhle.

“Let’s get ready.” She got out of bed and walked to the closet. Within 15 minutes we were out the door and jogging down the block. We jogged side to side and it felt amazing. I hadn’t done something that was so refreshing for a while and I was grateful she allowed me to come along with her. We jogged in complete silence; our heavy breathing was all I could hear. We did two rounds and then headed back home.

“Woo that was amazing...” I said walking to the door.

“Yep, it’s refreshing to the mind and soul.” She smiled and winked at me.

“I want to do this every day and with you.” I said with a broad smile.

“Hmm...” She passed me and walked through the door. “Dibs on the shower.” She playfully punched my shoulder and ran towards

the stairs. I ran after her as she laughed out loud sprinting up the stairs.

Our day went by pretty quick after that and both my phones were off. I wanted to spend this day with my family and things were going well. I watched cartoons with Bontle, had a deep father daughter talk with her then chilled by the pool with my wife. We were having fun and even talked about how bleak the future seemed. I was tempted to tell her everything right there and then but the time was not right. For the first time since forever she was laughing and I didn't want to ruin that.

"Daddy I'm hungry." My princess walked up to me with her lips pouted.

"The little one is hungry huh?" I picked her up and started tickling her. She laughed trying to break free from my grip and her mom looked at us smiling.

"Enough, you're going to give her a tummy ache." Kuhle said laughing.

"Saved by mommy. So what do you want to eat Princess?" I put her on my lap and smiled at her.

"Well I want a burger but not from MacDonald or Steers, I want something new." I looked at Kuhle clearly shocked by her response.

"How old are you again?" I asked her laughing.

"I'm five..." She raised her hand up showing me five with her fingers.

"You're too smart for a five year old." I remarked.

"Tell daddy that you're genius." Kuhle said.

"Daddy I'm a denius..." She grinned.

"Of course you're a D-enius my princess." I said laughing.

"Stop laughing at the child, you're such a bad father." Kuhle shook her head and got up. "Let's go to Rocco Mamas, they have the best burgers in town." She walked towards the door.

"Heard what mommy said? We're getting the best burgers in

town.” I kissed her on the cheek and lifted her up.  
“Yippee!!!” She yelled.

We got ready, we wore matching clothes blue ripped jeans, she wore an off the shoulder black top and I wore a black T-shirt. Bontle was wearing blue jeans and a black blouse. We all wore red Nike kicks; we looked like your modern day happy family. We got into the Jeep and made our way to Rocco Mamas in Brooklyn. The drive was short but fun, Kuhle was talking to me and I couldn't have it any other way. She was herself again and if it was all an act I was grateful that she played along for the sake of our daughter.

“Here we are, are you ready to have one of the best burgers in town?” I asked Bontle and she nodded excitedly.

“Can we sit in mommy?” She asked with a grin on her face.

“Of course love, there is no rush.” Kuhle responded with a smile.

“Okay family, let's go.” I got off the car first.

“We'll be right behind you.” Kuhle said. I left the car key with them and went ahead of them while busy on my phone.

**OKUHLE:**

Our day started out not so promising because I had decided I was going to pack my bags together with Bontle's and leave but then my plans changed all because Lwanda woke up on the right side of the bed and decided to be a sweetheart, I didn't want to buy into his act but once he started acting like the old Lwanda, memories just came flooding in. I needed a good memory to hold onto and this day was going to be exactly that. I wanted to leave with a smile on my face and not with tears in my eyes.

“Hurry baby, daddy is already inside.” I stretched out my hand to her and we rushed to the entrance.

“Mrs Maseko...” I stopped on my tracks, almost tripped because

Thobeka emerged out of nowhere and blocked my way.

“Thobeka hey...” I looked at her quizzically and faked a smile.

She looked nervous about something.

“What are you doing here?” She asked. She looked uneasy and I thought maybe she was in trouble.

“Uhm... I’m here to get something to eat. Why would I be here if it wasn’t for that?” I rolled my eyes. That was a stupid question on her part.

“Hi Bontle...” She squatted to her level.

“Say hi auntie Thobeka.” I said in a slow manner as my worst nightmare unveiled itself right in front of me. Thobeka got up and that giggle sent me over the edge. She was all over him and he was trying to look normal and not give anything away but little did he know that I already knew who she was.

“I think I’m going to wait in the car.” I said. Thobeka looked at me and frowned. Tears welled up in my eyes as I tried to move but my legs failed me.

“Mommy, who is that with daddy?” Bontle pointed at the counter and my chest just tightened.

“Uhm... It is daddy’s friend. Let’s go wait in the car.” I pulled Bontle’s arm and rushed to the door. I stormed off dragging my poor baby along as I swallowed my cries.

“Okuhle wait!” Thobeka yelled out and I stopped. “Are you okay?” She had the nerve to even ask.

“Yeah... I’m fine.” A tear escaped my eye.

“No you’re not. What’s wrong? Do you know that girl?” She looked concerned but I didn’t buy into her fake act.

“Yeah, I even have pictures of her and my husband in my phone and I also know that she is your friend. Thanks for looking out for me.” I wiped the tear that had already graced my cheek and slowly walked away pulling Bontle along.

LWANDA:

I moved my eyes to the door and I saw Kuhle rushing off.

“Babe can you please excuse me for a bit.” Anati was excited to see me. She tried to kiss me but I pushed her away, I mean Kuhle was right behind us. I had no way of lying myself out of this one and had to figure something out fast.

“Come on Lwa, I missed you.” She tried to hug me but I gently pushed her away.

“Anati awume toe!” I left her at the counter and rushed towards the exit. I bumped into Thobeka as I was about to walk out.

“What did you say to her?” I asked angrily. She looked like she was crying but I didn’t care.

“Please excuse me.” She pushed me to the side without responding to my question and I just ran to the car. Once the car was on sight I stopped running and walked towards it slowly. Kuhle was standing outside with her hands on her head, tears streaming down her cheeks and she was breathing heavily.

“Okuhle... Baby...” I called out to her and she just looked at me shaking her head.

“Lwanda...” Shit! I closed my eyes, this was just a mess. Anati walked to where I was standing and stood next to me. My whole world came crushing down.

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OKUHLE:

She stopped and stood right next to Lwanda and I kept my eyes on her as she looked at me confused. Lwanda just closed his eyes and shook his in frustration, I wanted to smile but I couldn’t. My daughter was in the car and I bet she was probably wondering what was happening, in her head we were supposed to get the best burgers in town but instead she was back in the car and we were standing next to the car with no one saying one simple word.



“Is it true?” The lady asked folding her arms. She looked beautiful and had the perfect body but I was not sure her brains were working.

“I can explain...” Lwanda said with his eyes cast on the ground.

“Explain what exactly? Lwanda, look at me.” She said sternly. She didn’t look happy at all. For an auditor she was very dumb. Aren’t auditors supposed to pay attention to detail? Are they not programmed to detect a lie from afar? I may not have been an auditor but I knew how they operated.

“Look Anati, uhm... I’ve been meaning to tell you...”

“Tell me what? That your sister is your wife?” She snapped.

“Sister? Wow!” I held my chest in shock. “Is that what you told her Lwa?” I asked. I couldn’t believe he went that far to cover his deceptive ways.

“Listen...”

“No! I’m done listening!” I stopped him. “You’re going to listen to me....”

“Okuhle please...” He looked at me with pleading eyes.

“No! I refuse to listen to your lies. What do you take me for? The uneducated house wife huh? Is that what I am to you? Telling her that I’m your sister? How far were you willing to go? And, at whose expense?” I was mad and I didn’t care that people were looking at us but he was going have a piece of my mind.

“You’re causing a scene, please calm down.” I looked at him and laughed, I was not laughing because he said something funny but I was laughing at how stupid and naïve I had been.

“Causing a scene huh? Is that what you’re worried about? Nigga you’re about to lose your wife.” His phone rang and he rejected the call.

“So you’re really married to her?” She asked with a hint of disappointment in her tone.

“Yes he is married to me, is that a problem?” I asked angrily. I couldn’t fathom the rage that was consuming me.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t know.” She said looking at me.

“Please, you’re not sorry. Where did you think he slept every night? When his phone was off and you would only get hold of him during the day? Where did you think he was? You never asked why? Did you ever think to use your investigative skills as an auditor? Did you pay attention to the red flags? Or, you were too busy enjoying his money to notice?” I went off on her. I didn’t want to because she was not at fault; she was deceived just like I was. Lwa’s phone kept on ringing until he excused himself to go answer it.

“Uhm... I’m Anati.” She stretched out her left hand to me. I didn’t know whether she did it on purpose or subconsciously but my eyes landed on the big stone on her finger.

“He proposed?” I asked in a scratchy voice. I told myself I was not going to cry but seeing that ring threw me off.

“Uhm...” She retracted her hand and looked at me speechless.

“He wants to marry you?” I swallowed a painful lump. “Oh God... He loves you.” I whispered. Tears slowly rolled down my face and I covered my mouth suppressing my cries.

“I didn’t know...” Tears descended from her eyes too. She moved closer to me and I moved away. The pain was just too much to bear. I ran over to the driver’s seat and started the car. There was no way I was going to set myself up for heartache.

LWANDA:

My father kept on calling and I rejected his calls until I couldn’t reject them anymore. I moved away from Kuhle and Anati to answer my phone. I didn’t want to because I had bigger things to deal with but after the 4th call I knew I had to hear what he wanted to say because it could have been an emergency.

“Baba now is not a good time.” I answered. I was standing next to a tree slightly hidden from Okuhle and Nati.

“I don’t care whether it’s a good time or not. I want you in Witbank before sunset, understand?” He sounded angry but my father

needed to stop.

“No!” I said sternly. “Firstly, I’m not a child anymore so you have no right to command me around as you please....”

“Secondly?” He said before I could finish my sentence.

“Secondly, I will not drop my life and come running to Witbank just because you said so.” I was pissed and I knew I was risking it all by talking to my dad like that but he was just being difficult.

“Are you done?” He asked.

“Yeah, matter of fact I’m going to hang up.” I clicked my tongue.

“Before you hang up, my advice to you would be, be mindful of the choices that you make in life because for every choice you make there is a consequence.”

“Dad what are you talking about?” I asked.

“Luyanda told me what you have been doing. I’m disappointed in you. Come clean to your wife because your mom and I are on our way to Pretoria.” He hung up.

I just dropped to the ground. I held my chest in pain as I felt my heartbeat losing its tempo

“Excuse me sir, are you okay?” I looked up as I slowly got disorientated.

“Somebody help!!!” She yelled out. I lay flat on the ground as I struggled to breath, my chest was closing in and I saw my life flesh right before my eyes.

Okuhle:

I pulled up on the driveway speedily. I was mad, I was angry and I wanted to strangle someone.

“Mommy what’s going on? Why did you leave daddy?” Bontle asked, she looked scared but it was like I lost it. I looked at her through the rear-view mirror and faked a smile.

“Mama T is going to take you out for ice-cream and then you’re going to go to the mall and you can buy anything you want.” I said getting off. I opened the back door and waited for her to climb down.

“But I don’t want to go to the mall, I want daddy.” Her lips

trembled and I just laughed. I was losing my mind.

“Daddy will get you from the mall.” I walked up to the door and opened it with anger.

“Mama T!!!!” I yelled at the top of my lungs. She came to the kitchen running.

“Ntombi, u-right?” She was startled.

“Please take Bontle out for some ice-cream after that take her to the mall. Don’t come back until I tell you to.” She looked at me confused.

“Kuhle sekuyisikhathi sokuba ngiye ekhaya.” [It’s time for me to go home.] She looked at her wrist watch.

“I know but please mama, I need to do something and Bontle cannot be here.” I took out my bankcard and gave it to her. “The pin is 3425, go crazy if you have to but please don’t come back until I tell you to. Check into a hotel if you have to.” I walked towards the lounge.

“Ingabe ulungile Okuhle? Khuluma nami.” [Are you okay Okuhle? Talk to me.] I turned and looked at her. A tear dropped down my cheeks and I smiled.

“The Uber driver is here.” I walked away and went straight to the laundry room.

I took the Wood golf club and dragged it on the floor. My loco just kicked in; when I got to the kitchen Bontle and Mama T were already gone. I walked outside and opened the garage door. I looked at the A45 and I started laughing then I smashed the windscreen numerous times until I penetrated through the smash and grab then I smashed the door windows one-by-one and the sound of breaking glass brought some sense of fulfilment. With tears rolling down my face I hit the car hard, denting it until the golf club broke.

“Fuck!!! Fuck!!! Fuck!!!” I punched the bonnet frustrated then I dropped to the floor and cried hysterically. My phone rang from my pocket and I pulled it out sniffing...

“Hello?” I answered in a husky voice.

“Hello, is this Okuhle Maseko?”

“Yes, who is this?”

“Hi ma’am you’re speaking to Nosipho from Life Groenkloof Hospital, do you know a Lwanda Maseko?” She asked. I got scared as I slowly got up from the floor.

“Yes, he is my husband. What happened?”

“Ma’am we will need you to come to the hospital the doctor will explain everything to you.”

“Uhm... Okay. Thank you.” She hung up and blood started rolling down my face.

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OKUHLE:

I took a nice long deserved shower and I managed to stop the blood that was pouring like water running from a tap, turned out when I was busy smashing the car windows a glass managed to cut my forehead. I was caught up in the adrenaline rush of it all that I didn’t even feel the pain when the glass sliced through my forehead. Physical pain was better than emotional pain so I told myself that I will get over the scar that the glass left on my forehead; it was my own doing anyway.

I went to my closet and sat on the couch staring at all the clothes that I had managed to buy, all in the name of I wanted to please my husband then maybe he was not going to have a wandering eye. I had failed at my marriage, at making my husband happy and at making myself happy. Once upon a time I thought that all the material things were going to make up for the void I felt inside but here I was, wanted to burn everything to ashes.

I wore my robe and slippers then went down stairs with my laptop, cellphone and Lifa's business card. I went and placed everything in the dining area then went to the kitchen and took a bottle of sweet red wine and a glass. I walked back to the dining area and sat down. I poured myself a glass and rested my back as I tasted wine for the first time. As soon as it touched my tongue the bitter sweet taste made me cringe but I soldiered on. I reached for the laptop then switched it on dialling Penelope from Realty1, she was a property agent.

"Penelope, hello?" She answered.

"Hi Penelope, how are you?"

"I'm good thanks and yourself ma'am?"

"I'm great thanks, you're speaking to Okuhle. We spoke last week, I don't know if you still remember me." I said.

"Oh yes, of course. I've been waiting for your call. Somebody has made a deposit offer on that apartment and I was planning to call you tomorrow so that we could discuss a way forward."

"Oh, there is an offer already?" I asked disappointed.

"Yes ma'am, they want to put down a deposit of 750K. I wanted to close the deal but I wanted to discuss this with you first and see if you'd make a counteroffer."

"Uhm... Okay, can we meet tomorrow? I definitely have a counteroffer of a million." I said boldly.

"Of course, that would be awesome. Let's meet at Rhapsody's Lynnwood?"

"I'll be there, is 13:00 PM okay?" I asked.

"Yes, I'll avail myself for 13:00 PM tomorrow."

"Great thanks! See you tomorrow. Bye." I hung up and smiled. I took another sip of the wine and I was getting the hang of it. I reached for Lifa's business card and as I was about to dial his number Melanie's phone call came through. I sighed before answering it, I wondered what she wanted.

"Hi, Mel." I answered rolling my eyes.

"Kuhle, hi. Are you home? I've been trying to call Lwanda but he



is not answering his phone.” She said.

“Uhm... Yes, I’m at home. Why?”

“We’re at the gate; would you please open for us?” I opened my eyes wide.

“What? Why?” I asked out loud. I panicked.

“What do you mean why?” She sounded surprised.

“Uhm, never mind. I’ll open the gate.” I rushed to the kitchen pressed the remote to close the garage door first then as soon as it closed I opened the gate then ran upstairs to go put on some clothes.

## LIFE GROENKLOOF HOSPITAL

### LWANDA:

I had been lying in the bed praying Okuhle would come rushing through the door worried about me. Each time the door opened my eyes beamed but slowly sunk down when it was someone either than Kuhle. The doctor told me that I had a panic attack and that it was something I shouldn’t worry about. I put my phone on silent because my mom has been calling me nonstop and I was not in the mood to talk to her. Everything was just spiralling out of control, I had a master plan in my head and it was planned out so well, it just needed proper execution. With my plan, no one was going to get hurt like everybody was hurting at that moment. I was lost in my thoughts when the door swung open. I slowly moved my head to face the door and she stood there with hurt clearly evident on her face. My intention was never to hurt anyone.

She slowly approached my bedside and took a seat then crossed her legs and pinned her elbows on the bed. She rested her chin on her fisted hands then looked at me. Her eyes were filled with tears and I was hurt for her.

“Anati...” She raised her hand up stopping me and I kept quiet.

“Why?” She managed to ask after a while.

“I didn’t mean to, I promise I didn’t mean to.” She looked at me and chuckled.

“What exactly didn’t you mean to do? You have a wife Lwanda and a kid then you turn around and say that you didn’t mean to? You’re delusional and you need help.” She said angrily.

“I am a victim of circumstances Anati.” I pointed out.

“Circumstances? What circumstances Lwanda? Are you blaming circumstances for your foolishness?” She was on her feet shouting at me.

“Calm down please, this is a hospital.” I said calmly. She looked at me and her stare felt like she was throwing daggers at me.

“You’re not even remorseful; do you understand how hurt your wife was when she drove away after seeing the ring on my finger? How hurt I am because I chose to believe your lies over the numerous warnings I got from Thobeka?” Tears descended from her eyes as her heavy breathing escalated.

“I’m sorry Anati; I wanted to tell you but was scared you’d leave me.”

“Damn right I would have left you!” She snapped. “I can’t believe I fell for this trap again.” She heaved a huge sigh and walked towards the door.

“I love you Anati.” I whispered. She stopped on her tracks and slowly turned to look at me.

“You have a wife Lwanda, do you love her?” She wiped the tears from her face.

“Yes but I’m in love with you.” I sighed. “It wasn’t my intention to hurt anyone.” I dropped my head.

“Well you hurt us, how do you hurt the ones you love?”

“I’m sorry...”

“Your sorry is not enough. I wasted 6 years of my life for an illusion. I honestly thought I finally found my soulmate but you were never mine to begin with...”

“What are you saying...?” I asked looking at her. She took off the ring on her finger and walked towards me.

“I didn’t sign up for this and I will not build sand castles on another woman’s tears. Keep your ring and keep your love, I don’t need it.” She placed the ring in my hand and walked away crying. I looked at the door as it closed behind her. Tears involuntarily dropped from my eyes, the hurt I felt was so heavy I wanted to kill myself.

OKUHLE:

I was now wearing a long sleeveless dress and I sat next to Mel and Mr Maseko sat on the couch adjacent to ours. We’ve been sitting in silence with no one saying a word. I offered them a drink and they refused saying that they were waiting for Lwanda to get here; little did they know that their beloved son was lying on a hospital bed paying for his sins but I didn’t even say anything because I was mad.

“So Okuhle where did Lwanda say he was going?” Mike asked and I just shrugged my shoulders.

“I’ll try his phone again...” Mel said. I stood up and went to the kitchen. She dialled her son’s number and put her phone on her ear. I looked at her from the kitchen and shook my head. I didn’t know what they were doing in my house to begin with and I wanted them gone.

“Goodness Lwanda, I’ve been calling you. Why haven’t you been answering your phone?” She yelled at him and I just poured myself another glass of wine.

“What?” She said and turned to look at me. The shock on her face made me want to laugh. I shrugged my shoulders and gulped down my drink.

“Which hospital? Are you okay?” Mothers are the sweetest

shame. She went from being angry to this caring person in under a second, shocking I tell you. I poured myself another glass and waited for her to conclude the call.

“Okay, we’ll be right there. Do you need a change of clothes?”

She asked. Mike looked at me and he looked concerned about something but I didn’t care, I wanted them out of my house.

“Okay son, bye.” She hung up and looked at me speechlessly.

“Hmm... I was hoping he was dead.” I muttered.

“What?” Mel asked holding her chest in shock. I took my bottle of wine and glass then ascended up the stairs leaving them to run to their son’s rescue. I couldn’t care less what happened to him, right now I just needed to be alone and get what was mine.

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LWANDA:

I must have fallen asleep because when I woke up I found my parents staring at me with a lot running through their minds. This day took longer to come to end as opposed to other days of the week. I was used to Monday being the quickest day of the week but somehow this Monday felt a lot more like Tuesday. With my parents already at my bedside, I couldn’t help but wonder where Okuhle was.

“Good, you’re up. We don’t have much time. Visiting hours are almost over.” My mom said. She didn’t look worried about my health whatsoever, she just looked normal.

“When did you guys get here?” I asked getting myself comfortable.

“A few minutes ago, I was about to wake you up.” She said and I nodded. My father was silently looking at me, it felt like he was scrutinizing my entire existence from a single stare.

“Uhm... Lwanda?” My father said folding his arms to his chest.

“Baba...” I glanced at him. I was scared to make eye contact with him.

“What happened to Okuhle? You’re in hospital and she has a cut on her forehead. Did you guys fight?” He asked sternly. I instantly got worried, did Kuhle get into a physical altercation with Anati? But Nati would’ve told me that something happened between the two of them when she came to visit me earlier.

“We didn’t get into fight, is she okay?” I asked worried about her wellbeing.

“I think she has lost her mind.” My mom remarked. “Can you believe she wishes death upon you? Does she know about your duplicity?” She asked.

“I was planning to tell her, it happened so fast...” I shook my head.

“And you hit her?” My dad asked angrily.

“I can never...” I looked at him. “I’m anything but a woman beater. I swear, the last time I saw Kuhle we were fine, then Anati appeared and she started crying, Bontle was in the car. It all happened so fast.” I heaved a sad sigh.

“Anati is your mistress? The very same person you had my sister act out as me for?” – Mom.

“Yes...” I dropped my head in shame.

“So you went through all that trouble for your mistress?” – Dad. He looked disappointed but that was the last thing I wanted to achieve.

“She is an amazing person, full of life and ambitious. She brought meaning to my life, well it was supposed to be fun and entertainment for me but I fell for her.” Mom looked at me slightly shaking her head. She was disapproving of this, I could tell.

“Okay, the first time I met Okuhle she was ambitious and full of life. She was beautiful and took care of herself. She didn’t even want to settle down because she wanted her education first but then you came along and whispered sweet nothings into her ear and she forgot about the dream. Somehow, you managed to

convince her that she didn't need the education because you have all the money. Did you stop to think how she would feel if ever she were to find out that you were cheating on her with a career orientated woman?" My dad asked. I looked at him speechless, I had no answer for his question. I understood what picture he was trying to paint for me and it was then I understood Kuhle's pain.

"You say she brings meaning to your life? That's a heavy statement to make for someone who has a wife and kid. Lwanda, who is this woman and where did you meet her?" – Mom.

"It doesn't matter where I met her it won't change anything. She wants nothing to do with me..." I inhaled then exhaled fighting back tears from flooding my cheeks.

"Does it matter that she walked away?" - Mom.

"I think so, I want her in my life mom." She stared at me, tears were building up in her eyes. I think she understood my pain.

"Will it matter if Okuhle walks away?" Dad asked. He waited for my response and I opened my mouth to answer him then the nurse walked in.

"I'm sorry but visiting hours are over, I'll give you a moment to say goodbye." She waited at the door.

"Thank you nurse." Mom said with a smile. My dad stood up and walked away without saying goodbye, he was angry with me but wouldn't allow himself to show it.

"Mama, I'm sorry..." I whispered. She stood up and brushed my head.

"It'll be okay my boy, I'll talk to your dad and tomorrow when you get discharged will talk about this as a family. Uncle Reg and Aunt Carol will be at the discussion too. They seem to know more about this Anati than we do so it's only fair they be part of this too." She said.

"Can Anati be part of the discus...?"

"You will do no such thing!" She interjected. "She is just a nyatsi, she has no place or say in this matter. Gosh! You can be selfish, I



wonder who raised you!” She clicked her tongue and walked out. “You!” I muttered as soon as the door closed behind her.

OKUHLE:

I was lying on my bed going through pictures of Lwanda and me on my phone. Beautiful pictures we took, most of which were random pictures and in each frame we looked happy. He was handsome in all the pictures but my beauty and smile faded as the years went by and we took less and less pictures together. “Where did it all go wrong?” I whispered. I got up and walked over to the dresser. I sat on the chair and looked at myself on the mirror.

I stared at myself without blinking hoping a tear would at least grace my cheeks. After crying in the garage I couldn’t bring myself to shed a tear anymore. I was all cried out.

“I can do this... Yiiii....” I tried but nothing. Even squinted my eyes and blinked repeatedly but there was nothing. I reached for a tissue from the drawer and pretended to wipe away imaginary tears.

“Why would you do this to me Lwanda?” I faked a sniff while looking at myself in the mirror. I continued to wipe away imaginary tears.

“You broke me, you took my soul and crashed it, you played ball with my heart, you threw my love for you and flushed it down the toilet like a used up toilet paper... Mmmm... yiii...” I tried even harder to shed a tear but there was nothing.

“Fuck!!!” I banged the dresser with my fists. “I can’t even cry for you!!!!” I yelled out in anger. I stood up and walked to the closet then stood in front of the full length mirror. I tilted my head to the side and looked at my body. I took off the dress I was wearing including my underwear and I was left naked, exposed to myself.

“Saggy boobs not so attractive huh Lwanda?” I said. They were not that saggy but after breastfeeding they were not perky either. “Did losing my flat tummy mean losing you too Lwanda fucken Maseko?” I said clenching my teeth. I was breathing heavily and I got consumed by anger.

“Oh those hips, not wide enough for you? What about the ass? Is it not round enough for you? You are crazy if you think I’ll lose myself for you because I am done trying to keep up with you!” I started laughing.

“Look at me going crazy, Haahhaahha!!!!” I laughed looking at my reflection on the mirror. I laughed hysterically until tears dropped from the corners of my eyes. I bend over holding my tummy as I laughed some more, oh how I couldn’t stop myself from laughing it was hilarious.

“Mommy, are you okay?” I turned around slowly then my laugh slowly faded. She stood by the entrance of the closet holding her sleeping bunny looking at me like she has seen a ghost. I reached for my robe wearing it.

“I’m fine honey. Did mommy wake you up?” I squatted to her level and she nodded repeatedly.

“I’m sorry, come. You’ll sleep with me tonight.” We walked to the bed and I picked her up then tucked her in.

“What about daddy?” She asked in a sleepy voice.

“He’ll sleep in the guestroom.” I said.

“Okay...” She cuddled her bunny then turned onto her side.

“Goodnight mommy.” She whispered.

“Goodnight my love.” I planted a kiss on her cheek then walked out to get myself a bottle of water.

OKUHLE:

I woke up super early the next morning and got Bontle ready for day-care. After dropping her off, I did a quick jog around the block then came back and took a long warm bath. I was meeting up with Penelope later today so I needed to be in the right minds for that meeting. I wrapped myself with a towel after I was done bathing then picked a dress and matching heels to wear for the meeting. I sat on the bed and took my phone dialling Lifa's number. Life has been getting in the way of me making the call but I finally had the opportunity to call him with no disruptions, his phone rang three times before he answered.

"Lifa. Hello?" I smiled. Not because it was him but because his voice sounded different.

"Hey Lifa, its Okuhle." I said.

"Okuhle Ndlovu, well I would address you by your husband's surname but I don't know it." He chuckled.

"It doesn't matter, how are you?"

"I'm good thanks. I guess you're also doing okay because I never received that call?"

"I'm fine, tell me... When will you be in Pretoria again?" I asked.

"Eish! I don't know hey, I don't have much business that side. Why?" His response disappointed me.

"Uhm... It doesn't matter anymore. Enjoy the rest of your day Lifa." I said.

"Are you okay MaNdlovu?" I picked up the concern in his tone.

"I'm fine, I just needed to catch up with an old friend." I faked a giggle.

"Friend you say?" He laughed "I'll make an exception..." He said.

"What do you mean? And, yes we were friends before you started asking me out." I pointed out.

"Okay friend, what I mean by exception is that I'll fly up to Gauteng just because I have a soft spot for you but first, you must allow me to take you out for lunch."

“You sneaky bastard...” I laughed. “I can do lunch.” I said with a smile.

“Hubby won’t mind me taking out his queen for lunch?” He asked as a joke.

“Let me worry about him, he is not that uptight.”

“Okay, I’ll see you on Friday.” He said putting a smile on my face.

“Friday it is, bye Lifa Mkhize.” I bit my lower lip.

“I like the sound of that.” He laughed. “Bye MaNdlovu.” I hung up and smiled.

I wore a robe then rushed down stairs. Mama T was already cleaning upstairs so I started cleaning downstairs, time was moving at a slow pace, I was getting anxious because I was eager to hear what Penelope had to say. My phone beeped and I rushed over to the kitchen counter to read the text that had come through.

-Hey, it’s Anati. Can we meet for lunch?

The message read. I paused looking at my phone screen for a while then locked it without responding. The nerve she had to even ask to meet with me was beyond me.

After a while I was done cleaning, I was surprised that Lwanda hasn’t even attempted to call me or check up on me. He was up so he had the means to get hold of me but then what was I expecting because he clearly didn’t care about me. I rushed upstairs and got the keys to the Merc then went to the garage. I drove the car out of the garage and parked it in the driveway. I left the key in the ignition then went back upstairs to get dressed.

It was exactly 12:30 PM when I was driving out of the yard, as I passed the gate Mike was driving in. I locked eyes with him then he instructed me to open the window, which I did.

“Okuhle, how are you my daughter.” I noticed Lwanda was sitting at the backseat then a smile slowly crept up on my face. Damn! I was going to miss out on the drama.

“I’m good baba and you?” I asked with my eyes completely fixed

on Lwanda. Oh how I wished to see the look on his face when he sets his eyes on his beloved baby, I did a number on that A45.

“We would like to sit down and talk with you and Lwanda, his uncle and aunt are on their way. Can I please steal a few minutes of your time?” Lwanda’s dad was the most humble man I had ever come across. I didn’t want to say no but the meeting with Penelope was of importance.

“I have a meeting I’m rushing off to baba, can we talk when I get back?” I asked with the warmest smile ever. Lwanda looked at me, I could only imagine what was going through his mind seeing me dressed up like that, make-up on point and wearing a smile on my face. It felt good that he saw me like that. Had he saw me last night, he was probably going to celebrate seeing me broken like that.

“Of course, we’ll wait for you.” He smiled.

“Okay, I’m already running late. Bye.” I drove off smiling from ear-to-ear.

LWANDA:

She drove off and my heart shattered. Who could she be meeting up with looking like that? She looked happy for somebody who just found out that their husband has been cheating. Not that I didn’t want to see her smiling but it really hurt seeing her happy and smiling like that.

“Oh... my... word....” My mom said. I looked up and immediately got in-between the driver’s seat and the passenger’s seat looking out the windscreen.

“The Fuck!” I said. I jumped out of the car immediately after dad stopped and I looked at my car. A wave of shock came over me, I couldn’t believe my eyes.

“Jaaaa.... I’ve seen it all.” My mom said from behind me. The car was in the middle of the driveway, it was as if it was on display. I walked around it thinking maybe I’m dreaming but I wasn’t it.

“So she smashed the car I bought for you.” My dad said with a smirk on his face. “Impressive.” He said and walked to the door.

“Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.” Mom remarked and walked past me. I stood in front of the Merc with my hands on my waist staring at it. I loved this car, when dad bought it for me I was over the moon because I had been asking him for a long time to get it for me. It was of sentimental value and she ruined it like it was nothing. After taking a moment staring at what was left of my car I wiped away the tears on my face and walked to the door.

“Lwanda, are you sure Okuhle only found out yesterday about your mistress?” Mom asked as I walked in.

“Why do you ask?” I said walking past her to the lounge.

“Shouldn’t she be mad and angry at the world that you’re a cheater for a husband? I mean, she is too calm for somebody who just found out about your infidelity.” She got busy in the kitchen and I just sunk on the couch and thought about what my mom said. She had a point, something has been off with Kuhle for a long time now and now that my mom mentioned it, it was possible that she has known for a while but kept it to herself.

“I don’t think she’d still want to stay with you.” My dad interrupted my thoughts. I slowly looked at him then sighed.

“It’s okay, I was suffocating anyway.” I lied. My throat dried up, I’d be hurt if Kuhle chose to walk away than fix us. I believed I still loved her because the fear of losing her made my heart skip a beat. We just needed to find ourselves again then take it from there.

“If that’s how you feel, why didn’t you leave her and go about your life? It’s okay to fall out of love but you have to communicate this with your partner then find a way forward but no you chose to choose your path and cheat your way out of your marriage. For an educated person you’re very stupid.” Dad said shaking his



head.

“I’ll accept whatever punishment you have for me.” I shrugged my shoulders. My mind was with Okuhle and where she was headed and who she was meeting up with, I was getting worked up just thinking about.

“I’m going to take a nap, wake me up once my wife gets home.” My mom laughed from the kitchen.

“Did you see that car? I doubt you still have a wife. Lwanda le rata delo maan!” I looked at her in disbelief. I really thought she of all people would be on my side but I guess I was alone and with that I was expected to clean up my own mess.

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OKUHLE:

RHAPSODY’S LYNNWOOD:

I drank my last glass of sweet red wine and packed my things away preparing to leave.

“Okay Mrs Maseko, we will need the deposit to reflect in our bank account before we can start with the transfer of ownership amongst other things.” She said.

“And how long will that take Penelope?”

“Well, we still have to agree on how you’re going to pay the remaining R 850 000, are you going to apply for a bond? Or, you have other means?”

“Let me worry about the settlement of the remaining amount. I am currently unemployed so a bond is definitely out of the question but I will contact you earliest tomorrow on this regard.” I said with a smile.

“Okay no problem, on average, the process takes around three months from the date of sale until the property is registered in your name. It is quite a lengthy process, every step has to be followed from registering at the Deeds office to paying transfer

duties. Once the full amount of R 1 850 000 is paid I'll explain further to you what the process entails." She said.

"Three months is quite a long time but I'll be patient. I really want that property in my name and as soon as it is mine the sooner I can move in."

"Of course, I have to get going. Please forward me the proof of payment and call me tomorrow about the remaining amount." She got up and I followed suit.

"Thank you for your time Penelope." We exchanged a hand shake.

"No, thank you." She took her bags and said goodbye.

"I'll be in touch." I said. She nodded and walked away.

It was already heading towards 16:00 PM, I rushed over to FNB and made an electronic funds transfer inside the branch of R 1 000 000.00 from our joint account to Realty1 then made another transfer of R750 000 to my savings account. I went over to the bank consultant and then took a seat.

"Good day ma'am, how you are?" He asked with a smile.

"I'm good thanks and yourself?" I smiled.

"Good, so how can I be of service to you?" He asked. I sat back, relaxed and smiled at him.

"I want to freeze an account but not indefinitely." I crossed my legs.

"Okay, that won't be a problem at all. May I please have your ID?"

I handed him my ID and he typed on his keyboard with his eyes fixed on the monitor. "Which account do you want to freeze?" He asked.

"The Private wealth account." I said. He nodded and continued to type on his keyboard.

"I have a question, maybe a few." He looked up at and smiled.

"You may ask me anything and I'll be happy to answer all your questions." He said.

"This account I want to freeze, is a joint account. Can I freeze it without my husband's consent?" I asked.

“With regards to a joint account any person who is a member of the joint bank account can deposit or withdraw money so the same applies when it comes to closing the account or freezing it. You can do it without the permission of the other joint account holder.”

“Okay, so it is not illegal to close off or freeze an account without the consent of another party?”

“Not at all. You are the rightful holder of this account thus you have equal control of it. So, no action can be taken against you.” He focused his attention back on his computer screen. I got lost in my thoughts briefly when he snapped his fingers at me bringing me back to reality.

“Oh, sorry you were saying?” I tilted my head to the side and focused my attention on him.

“I asked, for how long do you want this account to be frozen?”

“Uhm... I don't know at the moment.” I responded.

“Okay, when you want to unfreeze your account. You must send a request to unfreeze your account to the bank in writing.” He explained.

“Okay, will I be able to do anything when it comes to this account in particular?”

“Once frozen you will only have limited access to your account. You can deposit money into the account but you will not be able to do any withdrawals or transfers.” I looked at him nodding. This should do the trick. He finalized everything and by 17:30 I was on the road back home. It felt good taking back my power and what better way than having total control of what happens with his money?

Lwanda:

I sat with my family in the lounge with them constantly asking me whether or not I had any idea if Kuhle would return home. For every question they asked, I had no answer. I had my own questions, she said that she was going to a meeting but she took half the day it was nearing 18:00 PM and she wasn't at home. I

tried calling her but she didn't take my calls. My mom tried calling her, she didn't take her calls either. Bontle was already home and she too was busy asking about the whereabouts of Kuhle.

"Aw madoda, Lwanda uphi umfazi wakho?" Uncle Reg asked. He was getting agitated. I was about to respond to his question when the kitchen door opened. She walked in and her heels echoed with every step she took.

"Mommy!!!" Bontle yelled getting off my mother's lap running over to Kuhle.

"Hi baby girl. Sorry I'm late, how are you?" She squatted at Bontle's height talking to her.

"I'm good, I have a letter to give to you that you have to sign." Bontle said. She was happy to see her mother, with her finally here Bontle's mood switched from sour to joyful.

"Okay baby. We'll read the letter later." She rose up then walked over to the lounge. That bandage dress looked so good on her and there way she walked in those heels, she just demanded attention with every step. We looked at her until she stopped and greeted everyone.

"I'm sorry I'm late. The meeting took longer than I expected." She said. Aunt Carol clicked her tongue and Uncle Reg groaned in anger.

"It's okay my daughter. What matters is that you're finally here so we can get started." My dad said.

"Of course, let me go get changed quickly then I'll join you." She excused herself then walked up the stairs.

"Why is she even dressed like that? She looks cheap in that dress." Aunt Carol remarked.

"Didn't she know that her elders would be here? Walking in here dressed like that? Flaunting her assets all over the place, such disrespect. Angeke bafo umakoti wakho!" – Reg. He shook his head then rested his back on the couch. I excused myself then ran upstairs to our bedroom. I slowly opened the door and Bontle was sitting on the bed talking to her mother who was in the closet.

“Yes, and then she said that I’m a star.” She said then giggled. I stood by the door looking at her, she didn’t see me come in. I had never seen my daughter cheerful like that before in my presence. Seeing her smile like that when talking to her mom made me smile.

“That’s because you are a star honey. I told you that you’re a genius.” Kuhle said from the closet. “So what do you think?” She walked out looking at Bontle.

“You look pretty mommy, just like Princess Fiona. Daddy what do you think?” Bontle asked looking at me, I jumped a bit because I didn’t think she saw me. I slowly walked towards them awkwardly staring at Kuhle.

“You look beautiful, I love this dress on you.” I said.

“Thank you, I need to respect my in-laws after all.” She walked to the bathroom.

“Bontle, can you give daddy and mommy a moment?” I asked politely.

“Okay daddy, tell mommy I’ll be in the playroom.” She slid off the bed then ran to the door. I sat down then Kuhle walked back into the room.

“Where did she disappear to?” She asked with a smile. How was she even smiling after what happened yesterday?

“Playroom...” I responded with my eyes completely fixed on her. I was trying to read her mood but I failed, she was too calm and I was scared.

“Okay...” She giggled. “Let’s go hear what the elders have to say.” She winked at me then walked towards the door.

“Kuhle, wait...” I stood up. She turned around and looked at me.

“What?” She asked calmly.

“I’m sorry, please forgive me. This... This was...” My words failed me. She walked towards me smiling.

“It’s okay, I understand what you did and your actions. I hope you will understand what I did and my actions.” I looked at her confused. She gave me a warm hug then pulled away. I wanted to

ask what she meant by that but kept the question to myself. She walked briefly towards the door then stopped.

“You know...” She turned and I looked at her. “I have to give it to you though, it has been six years after all.” She giggled shaking her head.

“You knew all along?” I felt the walls of the room closing in.

“Are you coming?” she asked then turned and walked away. I took a moment then followed shortly.

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OKUHLE:

I walked downstairs and ambled my way to a single couch then I respectfully took a seat staring at my in-laws. I guess they were here to address their son’s shenanigans but what I wanted to know more than anything was, how did they know? Or, did they know all along and they were only addressing it now that his dirty laundry was out in the open? They looked too calm for my liking but I had to wait until somebody said something. Lwanda came down after a while, he took a good look at me first before settling down next to his dad.

“Good. Now that we’re all here can we deal with the issue at hand?” Mike was the first to say something.

“Issue?” I asked. I was confused, there was no introduction whatsoever.

“Yes, issue young lady!” Carol said clicking her tongue. What was her problem?

“Carol please, can you calm down?” Mel said sweet as ever.

“No, I have a household to run. Look at the time, this girl doesn’t respect us whatsoever.” Carol huffed.

“Tell them!” Reggie exclaimed. I was shocked to say the least. I had only seen these people thrice in my life and never had they



ever been this mean towards me.

“Carol please, can we discuss this in a matured manner? You and your husband are part of this mess.” Mike said sternly.

“Okay wait...” They all looked at me. “Uhm... baba by discuss, what do you mean exactly?” I respectfully asked.

“Hhee! Aw uyadelela shem! Wee Okuhle, you will respect my brother-in-law, who do you think you are?”

“Carol!” Mel yelled through her teeth.

“Sbari ngiyaxolisa kodwa ke le ngane ayina’hlonipho.” [Brother-in-law, I apologize but this child has no respect] Reg said. I was shocked and surprised at the same time, how was I being disrespectful when all I did was ask a simple question.

“Everyone just calm down.” Lwa said. Finally he had a voice. He kept his eyes on me and I just sat there with a faint smile on my face.

“I’m giving you 30 minutes then my husband and I are leaving.”- Carol.

“Okay, we all know why we are here so...”

“I don’t...” I interjected totally interrupting Mike from completing his sentence. I refused to be taken for a ride.

“Ai! You’re full of jokes yaz. Reggie let’s go.” Carol stood up and I blankly stared at her. She was being dramatic, too dramatic and it was unattractive for a woman her age.

“Carol sit your ass down!” Mel said and Carol sat down immediately folding her arms.

“Okay my daughter, let me start off by apologizing to you” Mike said and I nodded. “Lwanda’s infidelity was brought to our attention by his younger brother Luyanda, and we would like to sit and talk with you about this sensitive issue and hopefully reach a consensus.” He looked at me and I shrugged my shoulders.

“Yes Kuhle, I’m ashamed to even call Lwanda my son after this was brought to light. I cannot imagine how you feel...” – Mel

“Exactly, you will never feel what I feel or felt seeing that I have known for a while now....” I paused. “Actually let me rephrase

that, I have known for almost six years now so no, you will never understand what I am going through.” They all looked at me in shock. Mike dropped his head shaking it.

“Usahlaleni pho?” Reggie asked clearly annoyed by what I have said. I looked down and chuckled.

“I will not discuss anything with you unless my parents are part of these discussions.” I said.

“Okuhle, I beg you. Please my daughter, we can fix this.” – Mike.

“With all due respect baba. We are way past fixing anything. Your son knew what he was doing when he approached this lady, he knew what he was doing when he bought a new phone and hid it in his car, he definitely knew what he was doing when he flew his mistress all around the world in the name of business trips and gala dinners...”

“So ukhalela ama trip?” Carol asked rudely interrupting me.

“No but...”

“Yini ke Okuhle? What do you bring in this marriage except kuku and spending money?” I opened my eyes wide. I must have done something to this man because the way he spoke to me was sickening.

“Uncle Reggie please, respect my wife.” Lwanda said in a low voice.

“Lwanda ndodana umfazi unaye and that is Anati, I might not have liked her at first but ai I would cheat too if my wife sat at home all day spending money that I worked hard for. Hamba uye ku Anati, at least yena she has her own money.” – Reg. Mel covered her mouth clearly shocked by what Reggie just said. Mike just sat there and looked at everyone, he must have thought that calling this meeting was a bad idea.

“I would choose Anati over Okuhle any day. That girl is humble, sweet and respectful. She makes Lwanda happy, each time we had dinner dates together I’d see the look in his eyes, when he spoke to her, it was in a loving manner. They compliment each other and she insisted on taking care of the bill. She took me out

shopping once and that's when I saw how generous she was and that very same day she told me how much she loves Lwanda but was scared to be hurt again. She opened up to me..."

"Okay we get it." Mel stopped her. I swallowed a painful lump in my throat, I tried with every fibre in my body not to shed a tear.

Lwanda looked at with remorse and I just dropped my head. I didn't know what to say and it was no use defending myself to these people. Carol and Reggie made up their minds and there was no changing how they felt about me.

"Nkosikazi asambe, udoti lento ebasibizele yona la!" [Let's go my wife, they called us here for rubbish!] Reggie clicked his tongue and stood up. Carol stood up and went over to Lwa then she pulled him up.

"Walk us out my boy." She said pulling him by the hand. They walked out and I just sat there thinking about everything that Carol said, it hurt that Lwanda didn't even try to stop her. I saw him smile when she kept talking about her but that smile quickly faded when he saw that I was looking at him.

"I'm sorry Okuhle, I didn't know." Mel said. She was being genuine and I appreciated that.

"It's okay. These things happen." I faked a smile then stood up.

"There is no point in trying to fix us, Lwanda is in love with Anati and I wouldn't hold it against you if you were to support him. My mother once told me that God will always find a way to move you from a position that was never rightfully yours. If Lwanda loved me he could have stopped at cheating but he went beyond that. He was never mine to keep and I am taking this conscious decision to leave him, all the pain I endured thinking he'll snap out of it took a toll on me and I just can't anymore. I'm choosing me, don't try and convince me please." I stood up and walked towards the stairs, Mel was already in tears. I guess she was just as heartbroken as I was but it was no use crying over spilled milk.

Lwanda:

I walked my uncle and aunt to their car. Uncle Reg was mad, he

kept mumbling pointing into the darkness, stomping on the ground as if it did something to him. I didn't like the way they spoke to Okuhle, she never asked to be a housewife, I was the one who put her there but they would never understand even if I tried to explain it to them.

"Aunt Carol, please you need to apologize to Kuhle."

"I am not apologizing to anyone and you shouldn't either. I know you think you love her but you don't, I have seen you with both woman and I can safely say that you come to life when you're with your mistress. Give her what is rightfully hers and let her go."

"I can't, I love her."

"You don't Lwanda!" She said sternly.

"I do."

"Mfazi, uyeza noma?" Reggie shouted from the car.

"I'm coming." She brushed my cheek then smiled. "Go after Anati and fix things with her but before you do that tie up this loose end first. I have nothing against your wife but she is not the right one for you. You married young anyway that is why it is hard to let go but please, let go because things will never be the same again. I love you okay?"

"I love you too." She gave me a hug then ran over to the car. I waved goodbye as they slowly drove out the drive way. I knew my aunt meant well but she didn't understand the war that was happening deep within me.

I walked back to the house and as soon as I closed the door behind me a hot slap landed on my cheek and I held it shocked. "You are no son of mine!" Mom said. "Mike let's go!" She walked out. My dad slowly approached the kitchen then he stood in front of me.

"I'm disappointed in you. For six years you did that to a woman who would do anything for you? Over what? A career driven woman? Besides her money and sex which of course you also get from your wife, what else is she bringing to the table?" He asked. I didn't respond instead I dropped my head in shame.

“Your independence is driving you crazy. I will be stopping any payments made from the Trust to you and I’ll be placing Okuhle in your place.”

“Baba?” I looked at him with pleading eyes.

“You have damaged that girl and now she has to start her life from scratch. Where do you think she’ll get the money to go back to school and build a life for herself now that your heart is elsewhere?” He shook his head. “You are a weakling and no son of mine is a weakling. You were supposed to be smart during your cheating phase but you fell hard for your mistress, I hope she is worth it. We will talk as soon as your brother is back in South Africa. No wrong deed goes unpunished especially when the tears of a heartbroken woman are involved.” He opened the door and walked out. I dropped to the floor and buried my face into the palm of hands. My life was spiralling out of control all because I fell in love with my mistress.

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ONE YEAR LATER

OKUHLE:

I was rudely awakened by my morning alarm; I didn’t even realize it was morning already. I spent the whole of last night going through my notes for preliminary concepts in medical science and life on the streets. When you think textbooks and being in the classroom was hectic wait until you get to third year, I was taking my first steps into clinical medicine and man it was more challenging than I had anticipated. The transition from classroom years to clinical years was proving to be a force to be reckoned with. My mentor said that students are not just learning medicine in third year of medical school but they were learning how to be doctors. I welcomed the challenge more than anything because I was doing what I was passionate about.

The past year was a mess and full of tears, from meeting my husband's mistress to being told that I was an uneducated brat that was chowing his money, how I even passed was something I could never understand. After that meeting with Lwanda's family I walked away from all of it and never looked back, that meeting forced me to realize my true worth and removing Okuhle from that situation was the best thing that I ever did for myself. Lwanda didn't take the news of me wanting a divorce very well; he lost his mind and was institutionalized for 3 months. I was told that he got released last month but I hadn't heard anything from him.

Our joint account was still frozen and I was not planning to unfreeze it anytime soon. I was receiving payments from the Maseko Family Trust, something I didn't expect Mike to do but he did. I rejected the offer for him to help but he wouldn't take no for an answer, he was even paying for my studies. I hadn't even touch most of the money in my savings account because I was already receiving payments from the Trust. Also, Mel was the one who paid the remaining amount of R 850 000,00 for the apartment. Their generosity amazed me and for that I will forever be indebted to them.

Life as I knew it was slowly falling back to place, I went to gym 3 times a week but in the mornings because I spent most of my days at Steve Biko Academic Hospital doing residency and I would usually leave the hospital late at night. Bontle stayed with my mom but she would occasionally visit Melanie when my mom got tired of her talkativeness and never ending questions.

My phone rang from the nightstand and I rolled over to the other side of the bed to get it. I looked at the caller ID and smiled. "Dude, you need to get a girlfriend, you can't be calling me so early in the morning." I said giggling. Lifa had become an important part of my healing process, turned out he was also going through a nasty breakup when I was going through my own nightmare from hell.

"You are my girl-friend so please let me be." He laughed.



“How are you Mr Mkhize?” I got up and walked to the bathroom.

“Good, how are you doing birthday girl?”

“Shit! It’s my birthday today...?” I laughed out loud.

“You forgot? Really Okuhle?” He chuckled.

“Eish bra how can one pay attention to birthday dates when you’re busy learning about drug interactions, patient idiosyncrasies and medical errors? It totally skipped my mind.” I sat on the toilet seat and released pressure from my bladder.

“Are you peeing right now?” He asked out of disgust.

“You’re the one who called me before my morning rituals so deal with it.” I rolled my eyes.

“How is your day looking?”

“Uhm...” I finished peeing then wiped my nuna and flushed the toilet. “Residency...” I responded. I balanced my phone with my shoulder then washed my hands.

“You do residency every day? I want to take you out, come on skip it this once. I’m begging you.” He said.

“Not happening brother, we’ll meet over the weekend okay?” He sulked. Honestly, I was done compromising my studies for a male species.

“I guess, well enjoy your day Okuhle Maseko.” He laughed. He knew I hated it when he called me by Lwanda’s surname; I wanted nothing linking me to him not even his surname.

“Not for long, that bastard needs to sign those divorce papers if he knows what’s good for him.” I clicked my tongue.

“Fact remains that you love that bastard.”

“Bye Lifa.” I hung up and walked to the kitchen. He annoyed me; he has been preaching the same thing saying that I loved Lwanda but I didn’t, yes love for him was still there but not the romantic kind of love.

I made cereal then sat in front of the TV going through my e-mails and birthday messages from everyone that knew me including family and friends. One message caught my attention and it was from Darnell, it read....

-I hope this is a pleasant surprise but I was waiting for your birthday before I could tell you. Luthando and I are coming to SA next month, I'm anxious to spend the day with you and hopefully I'll get more than a hug this time around. Happy Birthday beautiful.

My cheek bones got tired from the amount of blushing was I doing. I was flushed and Darnell had that effect on me. I was not in a hurry to get into another relationship but nobody said it was wrong to flirt. After getting my apartment and moving in, I hit him up and we had been flirting for a while now.

Me: Something more than a hug can be arranged.

I sent my response with a lot of smiley faces including a wink. I looked at the time and I was running late for my gym session. I rushed to the shower after cleaning up the lounge and the kitchen, I took a quick one and before I knew it I was in the garage about to drive out. I sold the M2 that Lwanda had bought for me then I bought myself an Audi RS 3. I was not an Audi fan but I didn't want a BMW 1, 2 or 3 series because I was already used to the M-Power, I didn't want anything below that so I went for an RS3.

I was about to drive through the gate but then a car blocked me, I hooted for the driver to move but he didn't, instead he step out of the car holding a bouquet of red roses.

"Unbelievable!" I whispered looking around trying to see who those roses were for. I was surprised when the driver walked towards my car; the flowers were hiding his face so I just stared at him as he walked towards my window. He stopped next to my door and knock on the window. I rolled it down totally annoyed by him.

"Excuse me; I'm in a rush so please move your car." I said.

"Hi Okuhle..." He lowered the flowers and I just froze, he looked so different. I could have mistaken him for somebody else.

"Lwanda..." I said.

OKUHLE:

I speechlessly looked at him wearing a faint smile, he had lost a lot of weight and had his beard shaved. He looked like he was sick; he had sunken eyes and dry lips. His skin was dry and he had gotten a little darker too. I felt uncomfortable just by looking at him.

“Can I steal a moment of your time?” He asked after a while. At least his eyes were still beautiful and not forgetting his smile, it always melted my heart but I was not there anymore.

“Can you please move your car?” I asked then looked straight ahead; I simply refused to look at him.

“Kuhle please, I bought these for you...” His voice got scratchy. I swallowed spit and licked my lips.

“Lwanda please, don't make this any harder than it already is. Just go.” I didn't make any eye contact lest I felt sorry for him.

“Okay, no problem. Happy Birthday by the way.” He said.

“Thank you.” I said dismissively then closed the window. He slowly walked away with the bouquet of red roses in his hand. He waved at me before getting into his car; he was driving Golf 6 R. I guess he was still financially stable. He slowly drove off and when he got to the corner he turned at full speed.

I took a deep breathe then exhaled and drove in the opposite direction. My phone rang and I answered it without looking at the caller ID.

“Yeah...” I said.

“Hey stranger, I hear it's your birthday today.” I removed the phone from my ear and looked at the caller ID then giggled shaking my head.

“Bitch where you been? I have been needing a friend and you just disappeared on me.” I said with a huge smile on my face. Fifi disappeared from Pretoria and no one knew where she was, it was like she was here today and gone tomorrow.

“Babe I had to disappear, Sihle wanted to kill me and girl we have

a lot of catching up to do. Where are you?" She asked.

"I'm headed to the gym then have class later and then at 18:00 PM I have to report at the hospital."

"So you're really doing this school thing huh?"

"Babe Lwanda showed me flames; I can't afford not to have an education of some sort." I responded.

"Oh okay, ditch gym and meet me at Menlyn Mall."

"I'm in my gym clothes Fifi; I can't walk around with my camel toe exposed to the world." She laughed.

"Okay let's meet at your place, what do you say?"

"Goodness, really? Are you really going to make me miss gym?" I smiled.

"Yeah, we need to catch up. Once you get to your place send me your location please, I'm bringing wine. It's your birthday after all, we need to celebrate." She giggled.

"Okay fine, see you just now." She said goodbye then I hung up. I hit a U-turn then drove back to my place.

LWANDA:

You know the saying 'life will humble you'? Life humbled me in the meanest way possible; if you told me 6 years ago that this would be me today I would laugh at you. I lost everything I loved and cared about in less than a day simply because I was a fool for love. I don't excuse the bad I did but I thought I had it figured out. You know, the toughest lesson I got was that karma never forgets an address and it dealt with me accordingly.

I vividly remember what went down when my family tried to hold a meeting because of me and my deceptive ways and one thing I would never forget about that night was what happened in our bedroom. I remember that after my dad walked out I ran up the stairs to our bedroom and I found Kuhle seated on the bed with

her head dropped and her eyes closed, I thought she was crying because of what Aunt Carol had said to her but she wasn't...

"What did I ever do to you? That was so painful that you had to bring me so much heartache?" That was the question she asked. I stood in the middle of the room and I couldn't respond to her question.

"I may never understand why but I will never stand in the way of true love." She lifted her head up then looked at me. I saw how broken she was even though she tried to hide her brokenness from me but I knew Okuhle and the woman who sat before me that night was not her.

"I love you, babe please. She was just a distraction." I dropped to her knees and wrapped my hands around her legs as tears descended from my eyes. She brushed my head and heaved a huge sigh.

"I have been crying for too long Lwanda, I'm all cried out. I'm no longer strong and the tiny bit of strength I have left in me is will power to walk away. She has a half of me now so I'm surrendering my half so that she can have the whole of you." Her tear dropped onto my face and she wiped it.

"Kuhle please don't leave me." I begged but she pushed me away from her lap then stood up. The last thing she said to me that night was "I loved you more than my own life, I sacrificed my best years for you and you turned around and lied to me making me a fool in the process. I forgive you Lwanda." She walked to the closet and took her handbag. I never saw her and Bontle again after that night. She didn't take her clothes or Bontle's; she left with just her handbag, my daughter and the Beemer.

I sunk into depression soon after that, going crazy looking for her and Bontle. I even forgot about Anati for a while. I lost my job in that same week then whilst I was dealing with losing my job I got the shock of life, Kuhle froze our joint account. I had only R 5000.00 to my name and my family had turned their backs on me. I tried to survive for a month then I ran out of money, I couldn't

pay the bills, electricity got cut, I stayed in the dark for another month then the Jeep got repossessed. I reached the lowest point in my life that I was grateful that I bought the house cash but some of the furniture was on credit so most of the furniture got repossessed too.

I started losing weight then I went hard on the bottle and started smoking too. One morning I was sitting outside stressed about money and food, I tried to reach out to Sihle but he was going through his own personal things too. I soon realized that I had no one else to turn to, not even my aunt Carol who was quick to write me off when she realized I couldn't give her money anymore. With stress on top of everything else, divorce papers got delivered to my doorstep and I lost it. I remember I prayed hard that day, got down on my knees and prayed for redemption.

I lost my mind then got institutionalized for 3 months. I slowly got back my sanity then my dad showed me mercy. During my time in the institution I got to reflect upon my life and the things I did and I was told that in order to move forward I needed to seek forgiveness from those that I had wronged. I started with my parents and they forgave me, even got my CFO position back at Maseko Industries. I reached out to Kuhle's family and they too forgave me. I tried to get hold of Anati but I failed then the last person on my list was Okuhle. After dad showed me where she stayed, it took a whole month for me to build up the courage to walk up to her.

I stalked her and followed her around like a crazy person, I was happy that she was doing her own thing and studying towards becoming a doctor again, how I wished I encouraged her to do it sooner but I was scared of her independence at the time.

She was smiling and laughing again, she had retained her sexy body again and she hung around this guy I didn't know, I was told his name was Lifa. He stayed in Durban but he was a regular in Pretoria and whenever he was around he would wine and dine her, he even took her to some outing during recess. They were



out of town for a while and I almost lost my mind again. I still hung to hope though because they had never kissed and she has never invited him into her apartment. I drove by her place every morning before she went to gym and at night when she came back from Steve Biko Academic Hospital. It was a routine for me and it kept me sane until I finally did it and waited for her at the gate. I was ready for anything but I definitely didn't prepare for rejection. After she refused my flowers and chased me away I drove straight to a nearby bar.

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One Month Later

Okuhle:

I had gone to Witbank for the weekend, I missed my daughter and with a lot that was already going on in my life between school and everything else. I needed to get away for a bit and be with my family. It was a Saturday morning when Bontle woke me up earlier than my normal waking up time.

"Let's have a tea party mommy." She said. I turned to my side to check the time and when I noticed that it wasn't even 08:00 AM I wanted to cry. I looked at her with one eye closed and she stood close to my bed with her tea set. Her smile was what actually made me drag myself out of bed.

"So you wake up at this time on weekends?" I asked kicking the sheets off of me.

"Yep!" She nodded her head. I sat on my buttocks, lazy to even get one leg off the bed.

"Come mommy, the water granny boiled for me is going to get cold." She was getting impatient.

"Tea Party at 07:30 AM. You have got to be kidding." I said under

my breath. I inhaled then exhaled and slowly dragged myself off the bed. "Did you brush your teeth?" I asked walking to the door. "Yes, even washed my face." She followed me to the bathroom. "Good for you, never start your day without brushing your teeth." I opened the toilet lid then lifted my nightie and sat down.

"Where is your panty mommy?" She asked looking at me funny. Mind you, she was standing at the door looking at me as I peed, the door wasn't even closed.

"It's invisible..." I said wiping my nuna then flushed afterwards. I walked over to the sink and reached for my toothbrush "So, you're going to watch me brush my teeth?" I asked looking at her through the mirror.

"Yes, I don't trust you." She said.

"What?" I turned to look at her then frowned.

"Mommy, please be quick the water for the tea is going to get cold." She reminded me.

"Okay, I'm almost done." I brushed my teeth at the speed of light, she even began humming a song while I was busy freshening up. After I concluded my business in the bathroom, we walked back to my room with her telling me about the things she was learning at Pre-School and how she loved being with her friends and that she really loved being in Witbank more than being in Pretoria.

When we got to my room I pulled out a jean and a top and she looked at me funny yet again with her hands on her waist.

"What now?" I asked rolling my eyes. She was testing my patience.

"You can't attend a tea party wearing that, mommy no!" She frowned and folded her arms. I looked at her defeated. Now, I understood why mom complained about her, she was a special case.

"Okay, come here..." I pulled her over to me and dropped to her level. "What should mommy wear to attend your tea party?" She looked at me then her frown turned into a smile.

"Okay, well did you read my invitation card yesterday?" She

asked.

“What invitation card?” I asked. I didn’t receive an invitation card and I’d hate to disappoint her.

“You didn’t read my invitation card?” She opened her eyes wide then rolled them. “Mommy, you’re not serious. I’m disinviting you from my tea party.” She threw her hands in the air and walked to the door. “I guess it’s just me and my dolls.” She looked at me then walked out. I stood up and laughed shaking my head, I think my mom was raising a drama queen. I wore a floral maxi dress instead and rushed to her tea party, I was going to gate crush it.

Lwanda:

There was nothing I hated more than weekends, because that was the only time in the week that I got to feel how lonely I was. I had no friends and no girlfriend or wife, I pretty much spent my weekends the same way. Wake up at 08:00 AM, watch TV for a while, then eat something from the fridge then go back to bed and sleep for an hour then go drive around Pretoria and see where the road takes me, usually I’d end up in Menlo Park and I’d park on the opposite side of Kuhle’s gate and wait to see her, I was never lucky though because she hardly left her apartment on weekends.

This weekend I did things differently, I woke at 09:00 AM then took a jog around the block then after the jog I took a long shower got dressed and made my way to News Café – Menlyn. I didn’t feel like being indoors so I thought I should spoil myself with a full English breakfast, I was willing to do anything really as long as I was not in that big house all on my own consumed by my miserable life.

“Good morning sir, may I take your order.” A young waitress tends to my table, she was beautiful, short and sweet but I was not interested, I was past that phase of picking random girls up just to

fill the void I was feeling. Oh, yes... ever since I left that loony house I have had a lot of one night stands, no feelings attached, just sex but I didn't have the energy anymore.

"Hi, I'll have your breakfast special please." I said then took my phone out and went through my contact list.

"Will that be all?" She asked. I nodded without looking at her. She disappeared after a while and I continued with what I was doing.

'[Laughing] Please, I've only been gone for a while. Table for two please.'

'Make it three... Lawrence is joining us remember.'

I knew who that was, that laugh, how could I forget? It was her. I put my phone away and looked over my shoulder. I saw her and she was beautiful like the first time I set my eyes on her. They got a table a few meters away from mine and I could hear everything they were saying. I didn't realize how much I missed her until that current moment. I was getting ready to go over to their table when the friend asked about me.

'So Lwanda is married vele?' Clapped her hand.

'Story of my life [giggled] and to think I still love that fool.'" She sighed. My heart cheered at the sound of that.

'How can you not? 6 years with that guy was practically marriage.' They both laughed.

'Yeah, but hey I can't do that to another woman. I tried reaching out to her but she has been ignoring my calls and text messages. I just needed her to hear my side of the story.'

'So what are you going to do?' The friend asked.

'I don't know, I already put in my resignation at work. I need to leave this place and its bad omen.'

When she said that I stood up from my seat, she couldn't just up and leave. Weird enough, I wanted to be with her and I was going to make a fool of myself in front of her and her friend. I needed to take my chances. I walked over to their table and they were both scanning through the Menu.

“Anati...” I said looking at her. She slowly raised her head and our eyes locked. She just froze and her eyes instantly got teary.

“How are you?” I asked with a smile. Honestly, my eyes were also getting teary but I was not about to take it that far. She stood up and reached for her handbag.

“I need to go, Simphiwe I have to take a rain check.”

“Babe come on? When am I going to see you again?” The friend asked.

“I’ll call you...” She rushed to the door.

“Anati!!!” I called out to her rushing after her. She bumped into someone at the door and dropped her things.

“Oh I’m sorry.” They both dropped to the floor to pick her things up.

“Bitch! Where are you rushing off to in such a hurry?” She looked at the guy and laughed.

“Lawrence, really?” She picked her things up and stood up.

“So what is it?” The guy asked.

“Anati, please. We need to talk.” I grabbed her arm.

“Oh! Hi handsome...” The guy said to me with a smile then winked at me.

“Hi.” I said. “Let’s talk please...” I pulled Anati outside and she reluctantly followed me.

Okuhle:

We (Bontle and I) sat in the sitting room with her making a mess of everything and I had to keep quiet and play along.

“Brenda, that’s not how you drink your tea!” She yelled at one of her dolls pointing at it.

“This is how you hold a cup, you must do it like a lady not like granny does.” She demonstrated how to hold a cup of tea and I made sure to hold it the proper way lest I also got shouted at.

“How does granny hold her cup?” I asked totally amused.

“Mhmm... Mommy your mother disappoints me.” She shook her head and poured more tea into the other cups. The tea was already cold but I enjoyed the little time I had with her. I paid

attention to what she was doing and when she talked to her dolls it was as if she was talking to a real person. She was happy here with my parents and that was all I wanted for her.

“Oh, there you are.” My mom walked in and looked at the table and how messy it was then shook her head.

“Hi granny.” Bontle greeted her with a smile.

“Good morning doll face, your grandpa is calling you.” Mom said with a smile.

“That man is lazy, waking up at this time, no, no, no...” She rushed to the door and then stopped next to my mom. She lifted her dress up...

“What are you doing?” Mom asked laughing trying to pull down the bottom of her dress.

“I was just checking. Mommy said that she wears invisible panties so I wanted to see if you have your panty on.” She shrugged her shoulders. Mom and I laughed hard then she ran off.

“Invisible panties? Really Okuhle?” She chuckled.

“I didn’t know what so say, your grandchild asks a lot of questions.” I giggled.

“Welcome to my world. I enjoy her company.” She walked in and sat next to me.

“I miss her sometimes but she is happy here and her happiness comes first.” I said.

“She misses you too and her father as well.” She held my hands and looked at me. “How are you feeling?” She asked.

“I’m fine mom.” I responded. I knew where she was going with this and I just didn’t want to go there.

“Are you sure? Maybe you should see a therapist and talk about what you went through. Baby 6 years is quite a long time and deception like that is bound to change you as a person.”

“I’m fine really.” I pulled my hands away from her.

“So you have made peace with everything, even forgave him?” She asked. I just kept quiet, she was digging into the past and I didn’t want to go there.



“He just needs to sign those divorce papers and let me go.” I muttered.

“Is that what you want?”

“Yes, that’s what I want!” I said frustrated by her.

“Have you given him his bank card back?” She asked.

“No!” I folded my arms.

“Why not? Unless you’re still hanging onto something...” I stood up and walked towards the door. “Being bitter will eat away from you.” I stopped on my tracks. “Unfreeze that bank account and allow him to have access to his money. Set yourself free with no loose ends. You also deserve happiness but you will never move on if punishing him is what you are living for.” She said. I just heaved a huge sigh then walked out.

“Grandpa, do you also wear invisible undies?” She looked at my dad quizzically.

“What?” My father was confused by what she asked. I shook my head then passed them and went straight to my bedroom.

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LWANDA:

We had been sitting in my car without saying anything to each other, just heavy breathing and an awkward “Yeah...” here and there. I had been nervous to even say anything to her, I didn’t want to sound rehearsed but being in her presence made me feel things I had never felt before. I wanted to wear my heart on my sleeve but I was scared. I still had my own demons to face but she was that hint of light I needed in my life.

“So you brought me to your car to just sit and listen to you breathing?” She asked. She was looking out the window and tapping her fingers on her thigh.

“No, not at all. You look beautiful by the way.” I said nervously.

“Yes, you have said that for the 100th time now. Lwanda what do you want?”

“I wanted to apologize to you, you know after what I did to you and Okuhle I’m unable to live with myself. You didn’t deserve to be lied to like that, I took things too far...”

“That you did!” She interjected.

“And I apologize but you have to believe me when I say that nothing that happened between us was a lie. Everything that we did, everything that was said, it was nothing but the truth. I love you Anati.” She chuckled shaking her head.

“How do you deceive the one you love for 6 years? Huh Lwanda, as far as I am concerned I might not even know you, as far as I know... the Lwanda who lied to me is the Lwanda that I know, the care free one, the traveller, the wild one. What about the married Lwanda? What is there to know about him? Is he truthful or a liar just like the Lwanda I got to meet?” She folded her arms and looked at me.

“I am the same, married or not. My mistake was lying to you...”

“Lying to us! That’s what you’re supposed to say. You lied to us!” She snapped. “You lied to me; you lied to your wife. You know what makes it worse? That you told me that you were not ready for kids but you knew very well that you had a child back at home, you lied to your child too.” A tear escaped her eye.

“Those are not my proud moments, babe please...” I begged.

“NO! When we celebrated our 3rd anniversary I wanted to tell you that I was ready for a baby but each time I brought up the topic, you would say having a baby would ruin us. Remember that conversation?” Tears flooded her cheeks. “I gave you the best part of me and that was my heart. I should have walked away from you the moment your first lie blew up in your face but no, my heart whispered something else to me. How do I trust you after this? What if you do to me what you did to her?” She sniffed and that tore right through me.

“Don’t paint me with a bad paint brush just as yet. I did my

mistakes and I am learning from them. I am a different man. You love me right?" She kept quiet while rubbing her eyes messing her make-up in the process.

"You promised to never make me cry..." She whispered. "I bet you promised her that too." She shook her head.

"Anati look at me..." She shook her head once again looking outside. "Please..." I turned her face with my index finger and our eyes locked. What beautiful eyes she had...

"I love you." I whispered. She bit her lower lip then tilted her head to the side resting it on the head rest of the seat.

"I love you too but..."

"Not buts please..." I looked at her with pleading eyes.

"We can't be together. Go back to your family, fix things with them. Fix yourself, clean out the skeletons in your closet and once you're sure about where you're headed in life come find me."

"Anati please..."

"Sssh..." She put her finger on my lips shushing me.

"I'm leaving town for a while, I'm going to see the world and breathe in fresh air from a different continent maybe..."

"Anati please..." She raised her hand up.

"You have my heart Lwa, just not now. Sort yourself out first and when you're ready come find me." She smiled at me. "I'll always be a phone call away." She pecked my lips then stepped out of the car. I wanted to run after her but she was right, I needed to sort myself out first before I tried anything with anyone. I looked at my wrist watch...

"Might as well go see my daughter..." I whispered. I slowly drove out the parking lot and before I knew it I was on the N4 heading to Witbank.

Okuhle:

I shifted uncomfortably in my sleep. I tossed and I turned until I shot my eyes open and they landed on my handsome brother who was looking at me with a smile on his face.

“Damn girl!!! You can sleep.” He laughed.

“Lu!!!” I jumped right out of bed and into his arms wrapping my legs around his waist.

“Gosh! Mama you’re heavy and this is so inappropriate, I hope you have underwear underneath this dress.” I laughed in his arms and he put me down.

“Of course, I do. Why wouldn’t I?” I fixed my dress then looked at him

“Well the first thing that my niece said to me when she saw me was...”

“Do you also wear invisible undies?” I completed his sentence and we both laughed.

“Yeah that... What do you teach that kid?” He sat on the bed shaking his head.

“It was the closest thing to explaining why I was not wearing any underwear.” I rolled my eyes and sat next to him. He placed his arm around my shoulder and pulled me towards him resting my head on his chest.

“Mhmm... you have quite the chest brother.” I giggled.

“What? These?” He flexed his chest muscles and I laughed.

“Arg! Stop it.” We stood in that position without saying anything and I just sighed. “I missed you baby brother.” I said.

“I missed you too doll face and Darnell can’t wait to see you.” I lifted my head up and looked at him.

“He is here?” I asked biting my lower lip.

“Wow!!! Just wow!!! That’s my friend Okuhle, you are all he talks about you know.” I jumped off the bed and opened my wardrobe.

“Darnell and I are just fooling around, come on...”

“Oh okay, I guess you will not have a problem when I fool around with Fifi then.” I stopped what I was doing then looked at him.

“Anyone but her baby bro, she’s trouble.” I took off the dress I was wearing and I was left in my matching underwear.

“Uuuh!!! She’s feisty that one, she called me one night and we had phone sex.” He said that dry humping the air. “Man the things I can do to that woman.” I looked at him shocked.

“Luthando! Fifi is way older than you, she’s older than me.”

“The older they are the better.” He said laughing.

“Are you ever going to settle down?” I asked shaking my head.

“Marriage is not for me big sister and besides, the honies in New York need some of this...” He said pointing to his dick. “It would be selfish of me if I were to give it all to one woman. Catch my drift?” He smiled and I just chuckled looking at him.

“And now you want to give all of that to a cougar?” I pulled out a lace off the shoulder black short dress and put it on.

“Fifi is anything but a cougar, let me call her real quick and damn! Your ass is popping woman, so you gym now?” He asked getting up.

“Yes baby brother, do you really think my ass is popping?” I asked him checking my ass out on the mirror.

“Take it from an ass guy and I’m not trying to be inappropriate or anything but if you were not my sister I’d heat on you. I’m glad you picked yourself up sisi; this is the Kuhle I know and not that housewife bullshit. I have to admit though, Lwanda disappointed me.” He walked to the door then opened it. “Be quick, I want to take Darnell to Value Meat.” He closed the door behind him and I checked myself out on the mirror smiling.

OKUHLE:

I sat in front of the mirror doing my make-up, nothing epic just a natural look then I put on my favourite lipstick, wild berry. I pressed my lips together then did a pout before taking a selfie. "You look beautiful mommy." She said and I smiled at her. She has been sitting here busy with her tablet playing games. Ever since I got here yesterday she has been following me everywhere, be it going outside or going to the toilet, she didn't mind as long as she was with me.

"Mommy is going out tonight." I said.

"Looking like that?" She popped her eyes open.

"Yes honey, is there something wrong with the way I'm dressed?"

I stood up and checked myself out on the mirror.

"No but that dress is too short. Do you think daddy will like it?"

She asked looking at me. I turned around then frowned. This was harder for her than it was for me.

"I bet daddy will like this dress but I didn't dress up like this to impress daddy." I sat next to her and held her hand.

"Who are you trying to impress then?" She looked so innocent and I just wanted to cry.

"No one my love. This is for me and to impress you of course." She smiled.

"In that case I'm impressed. We should play dress up mommy."

"Definitely, tomorrow we're going shopping then we're going to play dress up. Just you and me." I grinned.

"Yesss!!!!" She hugged me. "I love you mommy." She whispered.

"I love you too baby. Let's go." I stood up then slipped my feet into a pair of pumps. Value Meat was no fancy outing so there was no need for heels. We walked to the door hand-in-hand.

"Mommy, can I ask you a question?" She asked looking up at me. We were walking down the passage and all I could hear was loud laughter coming from the dining room.

"Yes baby, anything." We stopped on our tracks then she looked



up.

“Will we ever stay with daddy again?” I slowly closed my eyes and heaved a huge sigh.

“Why do you ask baby?” My voice was cracking.

“Nothing, just that Angela stays with her mom and dad, they always do things together as a family...” She paused then looked down. “It would really be nice if we were to move back in with daddy.” She whispered.

“Uhm... Bontle look honey, your dad and I are...” I didn't know what to say.

“It's okay mommy, when dad comes I'm going ask him to buy a house here that way we can all stay here and never leave. Don't you want us to be a happy family?” I looked at her speechless.

“Okuhle!!!!” Lu yelled out and I knew that he was getting tired of waiting.

“Look baby, we will talk about this when mommy comes back. I promise.” I gave her hug and she squeezed me tight with her small arms.

“Okay mommy.” She let go then ran off. My mood had dropped and I didn't feel like going out anymore. Why would I go out and have fun when my daughter needed me more than a fun night out with the guys?

I nervously walked into the dining room, focusing on my breathing and fighting back tears when my eyes landed on Darnell.

Goodness, D was handsome and those eyes, God those eyes. He looked at me then smiled. I melted, my legs got wobbly and I just couldn't contain myself. I was sweating in the wrong places and he just kept his gaze on me.

“Aw sisi kunini kodwa?” Lu said.

“Askies hau, I was still talking to my daughter.” I went and sat next to dad.

“You mean that chipmunk?” He laughed out loud then D joined him. I loved their vibe, it was like they were blood brothers. The way they gelled it was effortless and I was jealous of their

friendship.

“You leave my daughter alone.” I giggled. I was so nervous I couldn’t sit still or look in D’s direction.

“So where are you guys going?” Dad asked.

“Value Meat.”- Lu. My dad pulled down his reading glasses then looked at Lu.

“My daughter is not going to that place!” He exclaimed then pushed up his glasses again.

“But baba?” I said even though I had decided I wasn’t going anymore.

“No Okuhle, that place swallows people up so please...”

“Dad you’re full of jokes serious. Who did it swallow? Hai Taima, Angeke!” Lu said shaking his head.

“Luthando this is still my house, you can go to that place but you’re not taking my daughter with you.” He said sternly.

“It’s okay Mr Nlovu. We can always stay in and watch movies.” D said. That baritone had me sitting there like a love struck puppy.

“Stay in for who? Uyadlala saan!” Lu said then got up.

“Where are you going?” I asked laughing.

“I’m going to talk to my mom.” He disappeared to the sitting room leaving us in an awkward silence.

“And you young lady can go and change that dress.” – Dad. I looked at him shocked, I didn’t think he was serious about me not going with D and Lu.

“Darnell can you believe this old man?” I chuckled.

“He means well, come on not all of us get a chance to experience such level of overprotectiveness. You’re lucky that your dad still cares.” I looked at him like nigga please, don’t patronise me.

“Thank you Darnell, at least you understand where I’m coming from.” I couldn’t believe they were ganging up on me.

As I got up to go change there was a knock on the door.

“I thought the gate was closed.” I said walking to the kitchen.

“I bet it’s your brother, he always forgets to close the gate.” I walked to the door with thoughts of D flooding my head.

I slowly opened the door and my mood went below zero. He was surprised to see me and I just looked at him like 'Why?'

"Uhm... Hi." He said with a smile.

"Hello..." I said with a straight face. I waited for him to tell me why he was here.

"You look beautiful, are you going somewhere?" He asked.

"Why are you here Lwanda? Are you following me around now?" I was annoyed that he would even have the audacity to ask such.

"Uhm... I'm sorry. I actually came to see Bontle, if that's okay with you of course." He dropped his head and I stood there thinking about what Bontle said earlier.

"Of course, come in." I made way for him to walk in then I closed the door.

"She was asking about you." I said walking behind him.

"She was?" I could hear the excitement in his tone.

"Yeah." We walked into the dining room.

"Good evening..." He greeted.

"Hello." Darnell responded with his eyes fixed on me then he winked at me. I looked sideways scratching my neck, goodness this guy was doing things to me.

"Hau Mr Maseko, what a pleasant surprise." Dad said. "No phone call letting us know that you're coming. Nivele nivumbuke nje!" He stood up shaking his head then he disappeared to his bedroom. My dad was not a big fan of Lwanda and he knew it.

"O-kay, let me go get Bontle for you. Please, sit." I said. I could feel D's eyes on me as I walked away.

## LWANDA:

As I walked into the dining room my heart stopped at the sight of this guy and when I noticed he was looking at Kuhle I felt my stomach turn, I got worked up when he winked at her that I just

wanted to pounce on him. Mr Ndlovu didn't like me, he had forgiven me for the sake of his grandchild but he once made it clear to me that he wanted nothing to do with me and that he would never rub shoulders with me. I understood how he felt and I would never try to change how he felt about me. If I were in his shoes, I'd most probably react the same way too. I broke his trust in me when I broke his daughter, only my actions would attest for me that I was indeed a changed man.

Kuhle left me with this guy that looked coloured, he had an accent but I couldn't care less, what he did was uncalled for.

"I'm Lwanda, Bontle's dad." I introduced myself.

"Darnell, I'm a friend." He looked at me sternly. We slipped into a staring contest and I was not planning on losing to him.

"Mr Maseko..." I moved my eyes to the entrance and it was Lu. He looked different and grown too.

"Luthando Ndlovu. Unjani?" I greeted.

"Grand, sharp. Boy, let's go..." He took his car keys and wallet.

"Are we leaving Okuhle behind?" I looked at him hella pissed, where was the respect? Asking if Kuhle was joining them in my presence.

"Nah bro, as you can see the situation. Asambe." Lu said laughing. The guy reluctantly got up reaching for his phone and wallet. I wondered if he understood Zulu. It was clear as day that he was American and that he was into my baby mama.

"See you around Lwanda." Lu said. We fist bumped then they walked away.

I sat for a while then the princess appeared wearing a huge smile on her face. When she saw me she came running.

"Daddy!!!!" She jumped onto my lap and I lifted her up kissing her all over the place.

"How are you angel?" I asked placing her on table facing me.

"I'm good daddy, when did you get here?" She asked playing with my fingers.

"A few minutes ago. I took my chances, I thought you'll be in bed

by now.”

“Uh-huh not at this time, its Saturday remember.”

“Of course, babies don’t sleep early on Saturdays.” I tickled her then she broke out in laughter.

“Enough, you’ll give her stomach cramps.” Kuhle walked in. She had changed into sweatpants and a baggy top. I looked at her as she sat down with her eyes fixed on Bontle.

“Mom says hi.” She said.

“I send her my greetings.” I responded then looked at Bontle. “Is it okay if I go with her? I’ll bring her back tomorrow before I go back to Pretoria.”

“Yeah, I don’t think that would be a problem. She’s been missing you.” We both kept our eyes on Bontle. It was awkward because this was the first time we were this close to each other after she walked out on me.

“Did you miss me princess?” I asked Bontle with a smile.

“Yes and mommy missed you too.” She responded with a smile.

“Oh she did?” I looked at Kuhle and she just shook her head smiling.

“Yes, are you going to sleep with us tonight?” She asked with her eyes beaming with excitement. I didn’t know what to say to her. How do I make her understand at that age that her mom and I were over? I looked at Kuhle and she just looked down.

“Not today honey.” Kuhle whispered.

“Oh, okay. Next time?” She sounded disappointed.

“Yes, next time my love.” I said then gave her a hug.

“Honey, go and ask granny to help you pack an overnight bag.” Kuhle said.

“I’m leaving with daddy?” She asked grining.

“Yes princess, you’re going to see granny Mel tonight.” I said.

“Oh yeah! Thank you daddy.” She gave me a hug then I put her down and she ran off.

We sat in complete silence, Kuhle was busy on her phone and I just sat there lost in my own thoughts. I wanted to break the

silence but I was scared. I hated that I ruined her plans, she was probably chatting to that American guy telling him how bored she was because I showed up out of nowhere. She giggled covering her mouth and I just looked at her. Her phone rang and she stood up to go answer it.

“Uthi uyaphi?” She answered laughing.

“No babe, you can’t. Just because he told you to drive all the way to Witbank, you gon’ do that?” She kept laughing.

“Luthando is a child, stay away from my brother...”

“Mhmm... I see, free dick neh? Sihle should’ve killed you when he got the chance to.” She laughed out loud. I wish I didn’t hear all of that.

“Oh okay, I’m not sharing my bed with you. Tell him to book you in at Stay Easy, I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“Yeah, got school on Monday. Honestly, I don’t believe you’re driving all the way for my brother’s dick, just wow.” She chuckled.

“Bye, babe.”

She walked back in with a smile on her face then she looked at me.

“When are you signing the divorce papers?” She asked out of nowhere and that smile just disappeared.

“Uhm... Where is that coming from Kuhle?” I asked. She caught me off guard.

“It’s not coming from anywhere. Please sign those divorce papers so that we can both get on with our lives.”

“We should talk about it Kuhle, I know you want to get this over and done with but can we at least be civil towards each other?” I begged.

“I’ll be civil with you the day you sign those papers. Why are you refusing to sign the damn papers anyway?” She yelled through her teeth.

“I’m not refusing, I will sign those papers but I want us to talk first.” I responded calmly.

“I’m done talking. Next time you want to talk please make sure



you file those papers with your lawyer first before you come to me.” She was getting agitated and that was the last thing I wanted.

“Is that American guy making you say all this?” I had to ask. She looked at me in disbelief.

“Jealousy looks ugly on you and his name is Darnell. By the way...” She reached into her pocket then pulled out a card. “I’ll unfreeze it on Monday. I need to be free of you and your money. I want nothing to do with you Lwanda, if it wasn’t for Bontle I’d block you out of my life forever.” She was breathing fire.

“You don’t mean that mommy, do you?” Bontle said with tears in her eyes. She was in her granny’s arms and Keletso (Kuhle’s mom) just looked at us shaking her head. Kuhle buried her face into the palm of her hands and I just got speechless.

“You are not taking my granddaughter anywhere. Kuhle...?” Her mom said.

“Ma...” She said looking down.

“Go pack an overnight bag and leave with Lwanda. Go fix your differences far away from my house. Your bitterness will not get you anywhere in life. Go now!” She snapped.

“I will not go with him mom.” Kuhle said softly.

“Bontle honey, go to your grandpa. I’ll follow you shortly.” She put Bontle down then she (Bontle) walked away slowly.

“Okuhle... Lwanda...” She had her hands on her waist. “You need to fix your problems for the sake of your daughter. Do you think she wants to feel the way she does? Do you think she is blind and doesn’t see what’s going on around her? Stop hurting the poor child, she did nothing wrong. For her sake and her sanity, fix this!” She clicked her tongue then walked away.

“I just wanted to spend the night with my daughter.” I whispered.

OKUHLE:

It was a breezy Sunday morning, winter was slowly creeping in and you know how Witbank gets in winter. I was standing at the back of the house collecting my thoughts, wrapped in my gown with a mug of hot chocolate in my hand. This weekend turned out to be a nightmare and I still couldn't get over what my mom suggested I should do when it came to the whole divorce situation I had going with Lwanda. For her to even suggest that I should spend a night with the man I despise was below the belt. I understood that she had Bontle's best interest at heart but she should also consider my feelings in all of this. Lwanda hurt me and I refuse to pretend as if he did nothing wrong. I forgave him, yes but I will not dismiss how I feel just because the world expects that of me.

"Sure is cold out here..." I looked over my shoulder and smiled then turned my head back.

"Wait until winter kicks in in full force then you'll wish you were back in the US." I said. He stood next to me and blew air into his hands.

"So why are you standing in the cold?" He asked. I looked at him then flashed him a fake smile.

"Well Darnell, I rather be out here than being inside at the moment." I responded dismissively.

"I see... Is your brother back?" I looked at him confused.

"You're asking me? You guys left together yesterday moes."

"Yeah but he was quick to ditch me when your friend showed up." He chuckled. "You need to teach your brother a thing or two about life. At the rate he is going, I fear for him." He coughed then slowly walked away.

"Hey D..." I turned around looking at him.

"D?" He looked at me laughing. "So we're shortening each other's names now?" He licked his lips.

"Well technically I am not shortening it, Darnell is too long a name

to call out." I shrugged my shoulders.

"In that case, can I call you Amor? Oo-Kuhle is too difficult of a name to pronounce." He chuckled his hands into his pockets and winked at me.

"Goodness, you unnecessarily dragged that name. You have never had a problem with pronouncing my name before." I laughed shaking my head.

"Well now it's difficult Amor." He said teasing.

"Amor? What does it even mean?" I rolled my eyes.

"It's Spanish for Love." He said then smiled. D was going to be the death of me. He was charming and sweet. His eyes and smile were my weakness.

"Oh! Love you say?" I blushed looking down.

"Yeah, unless you have a problem with it?" He enquired.

"I can never." I looked away blushing.

"So, what is bothering you Amor?" He walked closer and I sighed.

"My mom wants me to fix things with my... With Lwanda." I said then turned around and looked at the horizon. Our house was a bit uphill so I got an overview of the neighbourhood.

"Your baby-daddy?" He asked. I nodded then heaved a huge sigh. "Fix things how?"

"I don't know. She didn't get a chance to explain herself or I didn't get a chance to question her." My body was starting to shiver but I was not ready to go inside yet.

"Mhmm... Okay. What do you think she meant? Does she know what he did to you?" He was looking at me the entire time but I couldn't keep eye contact.

"Gosh! I don't have answers to all these questions." I faked a laugh. "And, she doesn't know the full story but she knows enough to know that that man broke me."

"Then I doubt she would want you to fix things with him. Do you want to fix things with him? Do you think your marriage is worth giving another chance? Is it worth saving?" His questions carried conviction that I started repeating the questions in my head.

“There is one thing I know D and that is, I am not going back to that man!” I said with anger.

“Amor?” He lifted my head up and our eyes locked. Mine were filled with tears and his were just charming and hypnotizing.

“What’s stopping you from forgiving him?” He asked.

“What?” I frowned. “I have forgiven him.” I said trying to convince him.

“No you haven’t. Have you spoken to him ever since you guys separated?” His questions were starting to annoy me.

“No...” I whispered then looked away.

“Why not?”

“Because I didn’t want to. I was at peace with him hanging around from a distance.” I responded harshly.

“Were you really at peace? Or, you occasionally thought about him?” I got frustrated just by standing next to him. Why was he trying to make me feel bad for the choices I made for me?

“And your point is?” I asked rolling my eyes.

“I am not judging or anything and I would never tell you what to do but take a moment and think how all of this is affecting your daughter. You and your baby daddy need to find a common ground for the sake of the little one and you, Amor will never find that common ground so long you hang onto the hurt.” Tears stung my eyes as I tried to fight them back. “I’m sorry he hurt you so bad that you find it hard to even be in the same room as him but there is a child involved so there is no other way but to co-parent with him in peace. It ain’t easy but it’s worth the try.”

“I hate you.” I said in a low voice.

“You cannot hate that which you have not loved first.” He pulled me into his embrace and rubbed my back. His chest was broad and welcoming, I immediately imagined how it would be like dating an athlete.

“Thank you for making things clearer for me.” I pulled away and he held onto my hands.

“I want you to be happy and believe me, you can be happy even if

he hangs around you all the time. Forgive him.” He planted a kiss on my forehead then let go of my hands. “Now, let’s get back inside. It’s cold out here.” I laughed at him.

“Says the guy who is wearing a muscle top.” He shrugged his shoulders and then we made our way back to the house.

LWANDA:

I was sitting with my mom in the lounge, I hardly slept a wink after what transpired between Kuhle and I last night and who better to advise me than my mother who has been through trying times before. Her wisdom and her guidance was all I needed in order to deal with what I was going through with Kuhle.

“What is stopping you from signing the divorce papers Lwanda?” She asked staring at me.

“Nothing is stopping me.” I dropped my head and sighed.

“Then what is it? I thought you are in love with your mistress and not her, so why not sign and be free to be with the other woman?”

“Signing those divorce papers means letting her go. I don’t want to let her go.”

“Oh? Don’t you think that would be a selfish thing to do? You have already dragged that poor child through hell and put her through a lot of rollercoaster ride of emotions and now you want to drag the divorce process as well? Does she mean anything to you at all?” She looked at me frowning.

“I rather be selfish than lose her.” She chuckled.

“I can’t believe I’m saying this but I think you’re mentally unstable and we should get you committed again.”

“I’m fine mom, I’m fine!” I exclaimed. She didn’t understand, nobody understood and that was frustrating.

“No you’re not. You have a woman you claim to love but you don’t want to let go of your wife. In what world does that make sense to

you? Okuhle will never take you back boy. It's time to accept that you have lost her and move on." She pleaded with me.

"I have a problem with letting go." I whispered.

"You have always had a problem with letting go and that is why I was shocked when you took the step to get married. I really thought she changed you but no, once you got comfortable with her you slowly fell back into your pattern. You need help Lwanda..." She reiterated.

"Stop saying I need help!" I yelled out and she jumped up a bit.

"There was only one girl who was able to handle you and at least she understood who you were but forget it if you think Okuhle will accept this kind of life. Let her go, if not for her then do it for Ntando. People co-parent all the time and it works out just fine."

"Bontle deserves to grow up with both parents under one roof like we did, why can't we give her that?" I argued.

"Your wandering eye messed up the dream for you. Your insecurities messed up the dream for you. All the money you had messed up the dream for you. Forget the idea that Ntando will grow up with both parents under one roof. It's not going to happen." She said.

"We can always try right?" I asked hoping for a 'Yes, it's possible.'

"No, that ship has sailed. You are of unstable mind and you need help." She stood up and walked away leaving me with a painful lump in my throat.



Lwanda:

My mom's words were on replay in my head. Ever since I came back to Pretoria, I haven't had any peace because day in, day out I received a call from her and she would preach on how I needed help, not that I needed any because I knew that there was nothing wrong with me but she wouldn't stop probing and getting on my last nerve. Because of her (Mel), I stopped trying to get into contact with Kuhle. I felt it was best I made an appointment with a psychotherapist in Silver Lakes, Dr Leandrie Stroth before I sought out any form of communication with Kuhle.

Dr Stroth came highly recommended and I knew that going to her was going to give me the desired results, I knew that psychologically I was fine and who better than a specialist to provide that diagnosis. Once she rules out mental illness then maybe I would try and resolve whatever issues I had with Kuhle, then maybe we would develop a healthy relationship for Bontle's sake. At this point I didn't care whether Kuhle and I saved what was left of our marriage or not but I needed her presence in my life, I cared enough to want her in my life.

"Yeah, I am on my way there." I was on the phone with my mom. She was starting to annoy me with her nonstop phone calls.

"That's good Lwa. You'll get the help that you need." She said.

"Mom please, just stop okay? There nothing wrong with me. I'm just doing this to prove a point." I was getting worked up and a part of me wanted to hit a U-turn and not continue with this counselling shit.

"I'm sorry, I don't mean to push. Call me when you're done, will you?"

"I'll see. Bye!" I hung up and through my phone to the backseat. I sped down the road filled with rage. My mom knew which buttons to press just to get me worked up for no reason.

I made it to Dr Stroth's office in 15 minutes, I was early by 5 minutes. I reached for my phone and scrolled through it, I had

enough time to change my mind but a text from Kuhle came in and all the anger I was feeling slowly faded.

Kuhle: Meet up with up with me at Brooklyn Brothers Glenfair for late lunch. I'll be there at 16:30 PM, hope you can make it.

A smile immediately crept up on my face.

Me: I'll be there...

I responded then got off the car and made my way to the entrance whistling. I was going to commit to this counselling programme or whatever it is called if it meant having a relationship with Kuhle.

"Good day sir." A lady said as I walked in.

"Afternoon, I am here for my 12:30 appointment." She typed on her keyboard with her eyes fixed on the computer screen.

"Mr Maseko?" She enquired.

"Yes, that's me." I responded.

"Okay, Dr Stroth is waiting for you. Second door to your right." She said with a smile.

"Thank you." I walked right passed her. I knocked first before letting myself. There room was beautiful and inviting, it had a pleasant sweet aroma. There was a single couch and one long couch which I guessed was for comfort. The lady was sitting at her desk busy on her laptop, she didn't even see me walk in. I cleared my throat then she looked up.

"Oh sorry, good afternoon. It's..." She looked at her screen then looked at me. "Lwanda Maseko right?"

"Yes, hi." I faked a smiled. My heart was beating out of my chest, I honestly wanted to apologize to her and walk out of that room and never come back.

"Please, take a seat and make yourself comfortable." She got up and came to the single couch. I froze and couldn't move my legs.

"Please, there is no need to be afraid. This is a safe space..." She smiled then sat down. I forced myself to move then sat down as well.

"I'm Dr Stroth but you can call me Leandrie, whatever you find

comfortable.” She said.

“Nice to meet you doctor.” I sat upright wondering what was going to happen next.

“So Lwanda, what brings you here?” She asked with a smile then reached for a pen and a pad from her side table. She also took a voice recorder and placed on the table before me. I uncomfortably looked at the recorder then looked at her.

“If you don’t mind, I’m going to ask you some questions, and take notes about what you say so I can keep it fresh in my memory. Oh, and feel free to interrupt me at any time or steer the conversation to where you need it to go. In your mind, what brings you here today?” She got serious.

“Uhm... Well I don’t know doc but my mom thinks I am mentally unstable and that I need help.” I shrugged my shoulders.

“I see, and what do you think? Do you think you’re mentally unstable?” She gave me a stern look.

“I think I’m completely fine. Do I look like somebody who is mentally unstable to you?” I asked.

“Oh no you don’t but we really don’t have the perfect appearance for somebody who is mentally unstable. Remember, mental illness has everything to do with your mind and has nothing to do with your appearance...”

“I don’t have mental illness!” I huffed.

“Of course not, what is the problem from your viewpoint? Why would your mom say that you’re mentally unstable?” She asked.

“As far as I am concerned there is no problem. Just because I want to fix things with my wife, my mom thinks I am unstable.”

“Okay, tell me about your wife? When did you guys meet? And, how is your marriage like?”

“Well her name is Okuhle and we used to go to the same school, that’s when I first got drawn to her. We never got a chance to date then but after a few years she finally became mine and I immediately put a ring on it.” I smiled.

“At what age was this?”

“Uhm... I was 23 and she was 20.” I said then she wrote on her pad.

“Okay, you married at a young age, you must really love her?”

“I did. She was everything I wanted in a woman. She was respectful and took good care of me and our daughter.”

“You have a child together?” She asked.

“Yes, Bontle Ntandokazi Maseko. That’s my princess.” I smiled.

“How’s your relationship with your daughter?”

“Uhm... Not that great and I am to blame for that.” I sighed then looked down.

“Why do you feel that way?” She sounded rehearsed because she had a follow-up question for every statement I made. I failed to understand how people were able to sit through these sessions.

“I never got a chance to build a father-daughter relationship with her because I used to travel a lot.”

“Work or personal?”

“Both.”

“Which one made you spend less time at home?” I looked at her as she asked me that question. Work never kept me away from home but the trips I took with Anati kept me away from home.

“I don’t feel like doing this anymore. I am of sound mind so I don’t see the relevance of all these questions or why I even bothered coming here.” I said. I was running away from the truth.

“Well Lwanda, this session is what you make of it. You see, feelings aren’t right or wrong, good or bad, every problem has a way of making us feel one way or the other but if you feel like this is a waste of time I will not force you to stay against your own will.” She smiled staring at me.

“Can we reschedule for another time? I don’t think I am ready to open up just as yet.”

“Of course, the point of counselling is to create positive changes as promptly as possible without feeling hurried. When you’re ready make an appointment with my PA and I’ll be here.” She

smiled again. She was calm about everything and she didn't force me to see things from her point of view. I didn't feel judged in any way and I decided there and then that I would come back for another session and hopefully something will suffice.

"Thank you doc. till next time." I stood up.

"Enjoy the rest of your day Mr Maseko." She walked me out and as soon as I was outside, I exhaled heaving a huge sigh of relief. I couldn't breathe in there...

I had enough time to drive back home and shower first before driving to Glenfair.

**OKUHLE:**

Two weeks had passed since I visited Witbank and I took what D said with me back to Pretoria. What he said was true and maybe I had been going about everything the wrong way and I decided it was time I met up with Lwa and talk about this whole thing. After giving it some thought, I actually wanted to have a civil co-parenting relationship with him.

I was done with my morning and afternoon classes and I didn't have any hospital rotations today. I sent Lwa a text and asked him to meet up with me at Brooklyn Brothers Glenfair for late lunch. I was not comfortable with the whole set up but it had to be done. "Sorry, I'm late." He said as soon as he got to the table I got for us. I looked at him and I was immediately consumed with anger.

Okuhle:

He settled in on the chair opposite mine with his eyes completely locked on me. He was picking up weight and his skin tone was clearing. He looked healthier and way better than how he looked a month ago.

“Hi...” I finally greeted him back. I shifted uncomfortably on my seat but this had to be done.

“How are you?” He asked with a warm smile. He was trying shame but somehow his smile annoyed me.

“I could be better, you?”

“I’m getting there. Thank you for inviting me, I was pleased to see your text.”

“I hope I didn’t inconvenience you?”

“Not at all.” He remarked.

An awkward silence passed with us just looking at each other and not finding the right words to say. Both our phones were on the table facing up, none of us dared to reach for them. I wanted to say something but I didn’t know where to start.

“I want to apologize Kuhle...” He finally said. “You didn’t deserve what I did to you, I was stupid and foolish. I toyed with your feelings and threw the love you had for me back to your face like it meant nothing to me. I stopped appreciating you when my focus moved elsewhere and for that I apologize. If I could I would turn back the hands of time and do everything properly...” I looked at him shaking my head, I couldn’t believe what he just said to me. I acknowledged everything he said but the word ‘properly’ didn’t sit well with me.

“When I look at you, I ask myself where I went wrong. Was I not good enough for you? That you had to bring another woman into our lives?” I asked.

“Kuhle...” He tried to say something.

“No listen...” I shook my head. I was cried out so I knew that I was not going to shed a single tear. “When we met or should I say,



when we finally got together you followed me around like a dog on heat. I was your next best thing, you would do anything for me. Heck, you were even willing to wait for me to finish school first before we could tie the knot, of course the universe had other plans and things happened. Dropped out of school and dedicated my life, my love, my entire being to you and somehow that bored you...”

“Kuhle please, can I just...” I raised my hand up stopping him.

“I didn’t want to be a housewife but I listened to you because it’s what you wanted. Matter of fact you insisted I stayed at home and took care of you and the house. What was it again?” I looked up trying to re-call what he said to me that night. “Ah yes... Your place is in this house. You will take care of it, take care of baby Bontle and take care of me and I will take care of everything...” I looked at him and his facial expression changed, he looked down and sighed.

“Isn’t it that’s what you said?” I asked. “Then you went and found yourself a career woman who filled your world with excitement that you felt the need to capture every moment.”

“Can I just say something?” He asked pleading with me.

“No, your turn will come but I want to get this off of my chest.” I took my phone and opened it. I went straight to Google photos and recovered all the nasty pictures of him and his beloved mistress.

I placed the phone in front of him and a slideshow of the pictures played in front of him.

“You see what you did to me? All those years you thought I was dumb thinking that I didn’t know anything, oh but I did and when I came across that other phone I hit gold.” He pushed the phone away and I pushed it right back at him. “You will look at these pictures and you will let it sink in. I’m not some uneducated fool Lwanda and my mother certainly didn’t suffer hours of labour pain only for her daughter to be taken for a fool. Was it nice? Look at that one, in your office. Wow! The shower too, goodness even in

your car. She made your blood boil huh? You took her to vacations, Zanzibar, Thailand, City of Love (Paris) I could only dream to go to such places but I was too boring for my husband so he took his mistress instead. Thank you for that life lesson because the naïve Okuhle is gone and she ain't coming back. So if you were going to preach how much you love me save it for somebody who cares, because I don't anymore. I'm only doing this for our daughter. She yearns for a happy family and I believe we can give her that even if we're co-parenting." I shrugged my shoulders then rested my back looking at him. The sight of him disgusted me but I had to continuously remind myself why I was doing this.

"Firstly..." He locked my phone and pushed it back to my side. "It was never my intention for things to happen the way they did. What I thought was innocent fun turned into something I didn't anticipate. Okuhle I love you believe it or not but I have cut my losses when it comes to you. I'm sorry that you saw everything and you died in silence, I'm sorry you lost yourself somewhere in between pleasing me and taking care of the house. I'm sorry that I was a bad husband and I hung around the wrong crowd. I always saw forever with you but that dream is lost and should be forgotten. I would have loved for us to work things out but I'd be lying about how I truly feel about you. So here..." He put the envelope on the table and slid it over to me. I looked at it and my heart skipped a beat. "I signed them. You deserve to be free and it would be unfair on my part if I try to hold you back. I signed these papers with a heavy heart because I failed you and Bontle but I am fixing myself and soon enough I'll do right by you and her."

I looked at the envelope and my throat dried up, he gave me what I had been asking for and it felt like I was finally letting go of a part of me that I had treasured, you know your most prized possession?

"So you just signed them?" My voice was scratchy. It was finally

happening and the reality of it all really hurt. I used to love this guy and I saw us growing old together but here we were letting go of the dream.

“I had to.” He responded. My phone rang and we both looked at the screen. Lifa’s name flashed on the screen. I took it then stood up to answer it.

“Hey you...” I answered swallowing spit. My throat had a painful lump.

“Where are you? I’m parked next to your complex gate. I miss you.” I smiled faintly.

“Uhm... I’m in Glenfair but I’ll be there in the next 10 minutes.”

“Okay, I’ll wait.” I hung up then walked back to Lwa.

“I have to go.” I said. He sadly looked at me.

“Please don’t sleep with him?” He looked at me with pleading eyes and I was shocked to say the least.

“Bye Lwanda.” I took my handbag and the divorce papers then left.

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Okuhle:

I drove through the gate and Lifa followed behind me. My heart was not in the right place, in all honesty I never prepared myself emotionally for when Lwanda decides to sign the divorce papers. In my head I thought I was going to be full of joy and excitement, I thought I would have a reason to celebrate being free and on my own but instead I felt empty like something was missing. I didn’t have a reason to cry but my heart was torn. Lwanda was all I knew, he was my first and the only dick I knew. I never fantasized about other men because he gave it to me good, he fulfilled my

every need sexually, though we were emotionally disconnected but he was good in that department.

Suddenly I felt lost and alone. I didn't know where to start, do I now put myself out there and wait for life to run its course? Or, I go after every Tom, Dick and Harry to fulfil what has already been lost?

"Okuhle, are you still there?" My mom asked. I had her on speaker as I was driving from Glenfair. I wanted her to be the first to know that my divorce slowly becoming a reality.

"Yes mom, sorry. I just got to my place." I turned off the engine and just leaned back resting my head on the headrest.

"It'll be okay honey, trust me it might seem impossible at the current moment but you will be fine. You lived a year practically separated from Lwanda, you already have a taste of how it feels like to live without him. You're doing well at school, everything is falling into place for you. What's left is for you to work on a co-parenting relationship with him for the sake of Bontle." She said.

"Yeah, look mom. I have to go, a friend of mine from Durban just dropped by. Let me tend to him and I'll call you back later."

"Okay my love. Remember, you're stronger than you think." I smiled then I hung up and got off.

Lifa was leaning against his car busy with his phone, funny how he had cars all over the place but he was based in Durban. Next thing you know, he will be telling me that he has a house in Pretoria. I walked up to him and he looked up smiling. God, had to make men with beautiful smiles and sexy eyes my destiny. All the men in my life had a beautiful smile and sexy eyes, my number one weakness.

"I was beginning to think you didn't want me here." He said as I stopped next to him.

"Sorry, I was still on the phone with my mom. How are you?" I asked. He looked good, he was wearing blue skinny jeans and a BMW Puma white sweater with matching Puma sneakers. He was wearing light clothes for a cold day.

“I’m good and I feel better now that I’m seeing this beautiful face.” He smiled then winked at me. “Come here...” He pulled me into his embrace and planted a kiss on my forehead. “How’s my future what what doing?” I pulled away from him then giggled.

“Future best buddy.” I laughed. “Are you coming or what?” I walked towards the stairs.

“Wait?” I turned around and looked at him.

“What?” I asked shrugging my shoulders.

“Are you inviting me inside?” He was surprised. He has never been inside my apartment so I didn’t blame him for checking if I was actually inviting him inside.

“Unless you want to stand in the cold and shiver to death? Come, will you?” I turned and walked away. He followed shortly whistling behind me, you know that annoying whistle boys do when a girl passes by them? Yeah, that one. I shook my head.

“Uuuuh! Look at that ass, shack it baby...” He laughed.

“Stop it Lifa.” We got to my door then I unlocked opening it. “Mi Casa Su Casa...”

I made way for him to get in and he just stood in front of me staring deep into my eyes. He moved closer to me and I had my back against the door. There was nowhere for me to run but stand there and take in all the heat.

“Are you going to walk in or just look at me?” He smirked then walked past me. I closed the door behind me breathing heavily. The last time I was that close to a man was when I was saying goodbye to D, I still couldn’t believe that I kissed him and what a great kisser he was.

I touched my lips thinking about him, oh how I wish Lu would just allow him to come visit me for one weekend. I wanted to explore him and fulfill my curiosity about how he was in bed. I was never dirty minded but Darnell had that thing of making me want to walk up to him and ask him to fuck me, even if it was just for one night, that was all I needed.

“You know you’re not alone in this apartment right?” Lifa asked leaning against the kitchen counter fiercely staring at me.

“Why are you looking at me like that?” His stare was making me horny or maybe it was the thought of D that had me already yearning for a manly touch.

“Uhm... Nothing. Come join me on the couch and tell me about your day.” He walked over to the couch and I was still stuck on how he was looking at me.

“I’ll join you now, let me go change quickly.” I ran to my bedroom and got into my winter PJs then made my way back to the lounge. He had the TV on SS2 but he looked like his mind was far away. “Everything okay?” I sat next him and he looked at me then faked a smile.

“Of course, you know me. You can’t keep a good man down.” He pulled me and rested my head on his chest. It felt wrong being in that position, hence why I never invited him inside before. It was to avoid finding myself in a situation like that.

“So how was your day?” He ran his hand up and down my arm which sent sensations down my spine.

“It was okay, had school and met up with Lwanda.” I said in a low tone.

“How’s that douchebag doing?” He asked. I suppressed my laugh before clearing my throat...

“He signed the divorce papers...” I responded then sighed. He kept quiet and I kept quiet too. We kept our focus on what was playing on the TV and sunk slowly in some form of comfortable silence.

His heartbeat started racing and I could tell by his constant shifting that something was not okay. I got up and looked at him, his eyes were filled with tears. I looked at him and frowned then he dropped his head rubbing his eyes.

“Lifa are you okay?” I asked. I started getting worried. Lifa was a bubbly character, full of life and always in a good mood but today he was different.



“Uhm... I think I should go. You’ll be fine?” He asked. I looked at him confused.

“Come on talk to me...” I held his hands and looked into his eyes. “I love you Okuhle...” He swallowed and I just looked at him. I slowly removed my hands from his then stood up.

“Lifa, please...”

“I know we can never be together but I am happy that you’re free from that moron. I care about you and I want nothing but the best for you. Will you please say yes to that vacation I was planning?” He asked again.

“Lifa I have school, I cannot up and leave. I’ve made that mistake before and I will not do it again.”

“Weekend getaway? Can we at least do that?” He begged and I felt bad that I kept saying no to these offers.

“I guess I can do a weekend getaway...” I shrugged my shoulders. He smiled then pulled me in for a hug. We stood in that position for a while then he moved his face to mine then our lips locked. He had soft thick lips and it seemed like he knew how to use them. I wanted to push him away but something about the way he was touching me made me want more...

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Lwanda:

A few days passed after the lunch meet up I had with Kuhle, things escalated so quickly on that day that we didn’t even have the said lunch. I arrived and after a few minutes of chatting she left and she didn’t leave on good terms. I didn’t know whether we were good to talk or if I still needed to keep my distance.

I stormed into Dr Stroth's office as I was running late by 15 minutes. You know how doctors get when you run late for an appointment, I would've cancelled but I needed to offload.

"Mr Maseko, how are you sir?" The PA asked as I walked in.

"I'm good and yourself?" I asked.

"Good thanks. She has been waiting for you, you're lucky because you're her last patient for the day." She winked at me.

"Thank goodness, can I walk right through?"

"Of course." She turned her attention back to her computer. I took a few steps then walked back.

"Uhm... sorry?" She slowly lifted her head up and smiled at me.

"Yes?" She said with a grin.

"I never got your name..." I said.

"Ameera..." She responded.

"Beautiful name." I remarked.

"Oh thanks, now get in there before she comes out here." She giggled then looked away.

I looked at her smiling. She was seated but I could tell that she had a nice petite body. She looked coloured/Indian, I couldn't make that out. She had a nose ring and beautiful long black hair. She was a beautiful woman.

"Ahem..." A sound came from behind me. I turned around and Leandrie was standing at her office door looking at me with her left eyebrow raised. "Are you coming in?" She asked.

"Yes, sorry." Ameera looked at me then giggled shaking her head.

I followed behind Leandrie then threw myself on the couch. That couch was comfortable, one could actually sleep peacefully on it.

"It's good to see you again Mr Maseko." She said then took a seat on the single couch with her pen and pad already in her hand.

"Good to see you too doc and I apologize for being late." I responded.

"It's okay but let it not be a habit."

"Of course." I cleared my throat.

"Okay, what's on your mind today?" She asked.

“Nothing much, I think I’m overworked by my dad.” I said.

“Why would your dad overwork you?” – Leandrie.

“I don’t know, maybe he thinks it’s the punishment I deserve after what I did.” I shrugged my shoulders.

“Why would your dad want to punish you?”

“Because of what I did to my wife, now ex-wife.”

“Tell me more about your wife... Ex-wife I mean.”

“Well she is an amazing person, full of love and caring. Ambitious, very ambitious. She is beautiful, inside and out and the world is a better place with her in it.” I said with a smile. I meant every word, she was all that and beyond.

“She seems like a well-rounded person. What happened between the two of you?”

“I happened...” I whispered.

“Care to elaborate?” She asked staring at me.

“I cheated on her.” I said ashamed of judgement.

“How long did the affair last?” Leandrie was good at maintaining eye contact, she dropped her eyes for a few seconds when she had to jot something down but was quick to keep her eyes on me.

“5, 6 years.” I responded.

“Okay, so this other woman, what’s her name?” She asked.

“Anati...”

“Tell me about her.”

“Well, she is educated and we’re in the same field when it comes to career paths. She is beautiful, free spirited, a traveller at heart and full of life. She is kind, very kind and selfless.”

“What made you stay with her for that long?”

“I did things with her that I could never do with my wife.

Misjudgement on my part...” I heaved a huge sigh.

“What do you mean by misjudgement?”

“All she ever wanted was to go back to school and I denied her that right.” I said.

“You’re referring to your ex-wife?” She asked.

“Yes, I travelled a lot with Anati and somehow I felt my wife would

never travel with me like Anati did. I compared the two and I was drawn to the former. There more we travelled together the less attention I gave my wife, eventually I fell in love with the idea of Anati being in my life full time. I proposed to her knowing very well I was married and she, according to society was a mistress. I messed up..." I looked down.

"Why do you keep referring to your ex-wife as your wife?"

"I don't know, I'm used to calling her my wife." I shrugged my shoulders.

"Okay, so did both women know about each other during the 6 years?"

"No. Well my wif... ex-wife knew but I didn't know that she knew."

"How did she find out?"

"She found the phone I used to contact Anati with and she came across a lot of explicit pictures and God knows what else. I guess that was confirmation enough for her."

"She must've been really hurt, did she confront you about it?"

"No. She kept it to herself until the day everything blew up in my face."

"How so?"

"We ran into Anati on a family outing. On that day things took a complete turn for the worst. All my lies caught up with me and I lost both women." I frowned.

"How does that typically make you feel? Do you feel sad, mad, hopeless, stuck or what?"

"I am mad at myself for hurting both women in the way that I did. I feel hopeless because the one that I love doesn't want to be with me. I feel sad because after handing over the signed divorce papers to my ex-wife she went and screwed somebody else, she didn't even wait for 24hrs to pass. In less than mere hours she was already opening her legs to another man. I asked her not to sleep with him but she went ahead and allowed him to find pleasure between her thighs." Tears threatened my eyes. Her actions surely stroked my ego and not in a good way.

“How do you know she had sex with somebody else?”

“When she left the restaurant, I followed her to her apartment. I parked and waited the whole night to see if the guy would leave but he never left...”

“You stalked her?”

“I wasn’t stalking her, I care about her and her safety. I was looking out for her.” I got defensive.

“If a man spent a night in her apartment then surely she must trust that person. Why would you think she was not safe? And why does it hurt you so much that she slept with somebody else?” I kept quiet. Leandrie was losing the plot. “Do you still love her?”

She asked. I looked at her and took a deep breath then exhaled.

“I’m the only man she has ever slept with and I wanted it to stay that way.” I finally admitted. It hurt me just thinking about him on top of her, the images alone made me want to shed a tear or two.

“Did you sleep with this other woman? During the 6 years that is?” I stared at her then shook my head. I knew where she was going with this.

“I think I’m good for today doc. Thank you for your time.” I said getting ready to stand up.

“Lwanda you will never deal with your problems if you keep running away from them. One day you will have no choice but to face reality. I’m only here to help you reach your desired goals, hopefully positive ones. Emotional intimacy is created when you give honest answers to the questions that I ask.”

“It’s not easy doc.” I got up.

“It’s never easy but eventually you’ll be freed from your demons. Nonetheless, my door is always open. Go home and think about what you want to achieve from these counselling sessions and then on our next meeting we will discuss this.”

“Thanks again. Have a good day further.” I walked to the door and she followed me.

“You too Mr Maseko.” I found it weird how she switched between my surname and name and sound different each time. When she

addressed me as Lwanda, she sounded casual and that was during the session. When she addressed me as Mr Maseko, she sounded formal and usually that was when she greeted me upon arrival and when she saw me off after the session. She walked me to the front desk then walked back to her office.

“Bye Ameera.” I said.

“Bye Mr Maseko.”

“You can call me Lwanda.”

“Of course.” I smiled at her then walked out dialling Okuhle.

“Hello?” She answered.

“Kuhle, uhm hi. How are you?” My heart was pounding just by hearing her voice.

“I’m kind of busy at the moment, can I call you back?” I heard movement in the background.

“Are you fucking with him? Is he with you right now?” I asked out of anger.

“What are you talking about? Are you okay?”

“You’re such a bitch! I can’t believe you fucked him, how many men have you fuck... Hello?” I looked at my screen then clicked my tongue. I dialled her again and it took me straight to voicemail.

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Okuhle:

I chuckled a bit shaking my head in the process. I was utterly shocked by what Lwanda just said to me, I had to hang up on him in order to save him the embarrassment of explaining himself and later apologizing for his outburst.

“They don’t seem to have what I’m looking for.” Fifi said emerging from a different aisle. I was out grocery shopping and Fifi tagged along. We were at Checkers Menlyn Mall when Lwanda decided



to call me practically disrespecting me.

“We’ll pass by Pick ‘n Pay, hopefully you’ll find what you’re looking for there.” I said then walked away.

“Hey missy, hold it right there!” I turned around laughing.

“Wee Fifi I’m not Simphiwe or Kamo.” We both laughed. I missed her company.

“So what did that fool want?” She asked picking a few items from the shelves.

“Besides disrespecting me and calling me a bitch, I...”

“Say what?” She interjected and froze looking at me.

“He called me bitch.” I responded then laughed.

“Says the man-whore from Witbank.” She remarked shaking her head. “We need to pay him a visit and put him in his place. Uyadelela lomfana!” She clicked her tongue.

“He is not worth the trouble. Come, let’s go. I have to report to Steve Biko in the next 60 minutes.”

“Goodness! Kuhle I feel like this doctor thing is taking forever, you should sue Lwanda for wasting your time. You could be qualified by now you know.”

“Yeah but it is what it is, come let’s go!” I hurried off and as I turned to my right I bumped into someone and I looked up apologizing...

“Oops! I’m sorry...” We locked eyes and she froze looking at me.

“And why are you just stopping?” Fifi asked coming from behind me.

“Nope, not happening. Move it bitch!” She said as soon as she saw Anati standing in front of me.

“Fifi calm down.” I said.

“I am not going to calm down. Hebana! Okuhle?” I covered my eyes suppressing my laughter.

“Uhm... I’m sorry I’ll just...”

“Ja vele hamba satan!” Fifi said to her completely cutting her short. She walked away and I couldn’t hold it in. I broke down and laughed, tears descended from the corners of my eyes as I held

my tummy.

“Hhee this girl, yaz ufana noLwanda. Uyadelela!” She clicked her tongue then proceeded to the till.

I felt bad, Fifi didn’t have to do all that and call her names while at it. I was not holding any grudge towards Anati, Lwanda was at fault. Yes, she played some part in this entire fiasco but I never got to hear her defence.

“Babe, I’ll be right back. I forgot to get a pack of toilet papers.” I said.

“But they are right there in your trolley?” She looked at me raising her eyebrow.

“Did I say toilet paper? No, I meant... Just pay I’ll catch up with you.” I hurried away before she could stop me.

I went from aisle to aisle until I caught her in the toiletries aisle. She had a bottle of nail remover and it seemed like she was comparing prices.

“Hi...” I said and stood next to her also looking at a few things.

“Hi...” She looked at me then looked away.

“I’m sorry for that, Fifi is crazy don’t mind her.” I took one bottle of nail remover then turned to face her.

“It’s okay, I know her and her random outbursts.” She faked a smile then looked at me.

“Uhm... Can we do lunch sometime next week?” I asked. She looked at me surprised by my request.

“I don’t think it’s a good idea. You don’t owe me anything and I...”

“Please, I insist. I just want to talk and maybe make amends. I know he loves you and for his sake I need to accept that reality.”

“Look Okuhle, this is not my battle and...”

“Please, one hour of your time, that’s all I’m asking for.” I gave her a stern look.

“Okay, I can do one hour.” She sighed.

“Good! Give me your numbers then I’ll get in touch.” I gave her my phone and she punched in her numbers then handed it back to me.

“Thanks, enjoy your day.” I walked away with a smile on my face. I didn’t know what I was doing but I had to find out what was it about her that threw Lwanda into a pit of nothing but lies.

I found Fifi impatiently waiting for me at the door, she gave me one look then shook her head.

“What?” I asked shrugging my shoulders.

“Kanti unjani wena vele?” I laughed at her then her face slowly softened then she joined in on the laughter.

“Allow me to do this please...” I said.

“That bitch has been riding on your man’s D for 6 fucken years and you want to be friends with her? I don’t understand.” She shook her head then we walked towards the elevator.

“For all I know she could be Bontle’s future step-mother so I have to try something.”

“Your reasoning is flawed babes. Why do you want to do this? Be honest with me.”

“Fifi just let it go okay. I know what I’m doing.” We stepped into the elevator.

“Fine!”

A moment of silence passed and when the elevator reached the ground floor we stepped out and walked towards Pick ‘n Pay.

“Do you still want to hear about what happened between Lifa and I?”

“Of course, he is yummy so I want the details. Leave nothing out.” She giggled.

“Everyone is yummy to you.”

“What can I say? I’m addicted to saucy man, and that Lifa looks like he is packed. You know what they say about slim guys.” She furrowed her eyebrows.

“He goes to gym hau.” I corrected her. He has a well-built body for a slim guy.

“Even better, they don’t get saucier than that.” She laughed.

“Sihle should’ve killed you when he had the chance, are you going through a midlife crisis or something?”

“That stupid fool, he never deserved me. He was lucky I even bore him a child.” She rolled her eyes.

“Don’t you miss him?” I asked.

“What’s there to miss? He practically cheated throughout our entire marriage. He was never at home, always out having fun and chasing after skirts. These men are exhausting. Look at Lunga for instance? Thobeka left his sorry ass and she is probably having the time of her life wherever she is.”

“I heard she is in the US.” I commented.

“Good for her! Can we conclude our shopping and go eat? I’m hungry.” She hurried to Pick ‘n Pay and I followed behind her.

I bought what I needed to buy and she finally got what she was looking for and before we knew it we were at Parrots about to have late lunch.

“I’m so hungry, I could buy the entire restaurant.” She said then took a seat.

“I’m going to have a salad. I can’t stay long babe, I have to go.”

“Party pooper.” She rolled her eyes then reached for the menu.

“So, nothing happened between Lifa and I the other night.” I said after a while. She dropped the menu and looked at me.

“What?” She sounded disappointed.

“Come on, I’m not trying to rush into anything and besides there is Darnell.” I liked Lifa and yes, he made me laugh again and helped me deal with my issues but I felt something stronger for D.

“Where is Darnell? Cause, I don’t see him here. Do you? Is he a figment of your imagination maybe?” She asked sarcastically.

“No but...”

“But nothing, that guy... sooo yummy.” She giggled and I rolled my eyes. “He is in the US, you don’t know what he does over there and to top it all off he plays for the New York Giants. He is a famous athlete and probably hanging around groupies all the damn time and you want to save your cookie for him? In what world does that make sense?”

“He wants me to move to the US with him.” She looked at me

then laughed.

“Tell me you didn’t believe that?” She laughed even harder. I frowned as she was busy laughing at me like I’m some stupid fool.

“Fifi please...” She tried to contain herself then pressed her lips together stopping herself from laughing. “There is nothing wrong in me believing him.”

“Chommie, Darnell is a fuck boy just like your brother. All they do is chow and move onto the next one. Imagine the number of months you have to wait in order for him to come visit you.

America is not next door to us like Botswana where you just pass the border and you have arrived, no honey you need to stop living in that fairy tale world of yours. Lifa is your tomorrow not D, gosh! Please don’t go for that guy, he only wants to fuck you.” I looked at her defeated. She said a mouthful.

“You’re exhausting do you know that?”

“I’m your friend and I’ll tell it to you like it is. Now, you better call Lifa tonight and finish what you guys have started.”

“I’m not ready to be in a relationship.” I said.

“I didn’t say anything about being in a relationship. Just let the poor guy tap that ass, he has been investing in it for way too long. All those weekend getaways and he didn’t even have a taste, u-sleg shem ntombi.” She made a funny face.

“I have to go. Can we do this some other time?” I asked getting up.

“What about that salad?” She asked.

“Next time babe.” I kissed her on the cheek then left.

My phone rang as I got into my car.

“Speak of the devil.” I answered then laughed.

“What?” He also laughed. Lifa was the sweetest and he had that voice that made me blush for no reason.

“Fifi and I were just talking about you.” I said.

“Oh! Uhm... Look I need to tell you something.” He sounded serious.

“Okay, is everything okay?” I asked worried.

“Yeah everything is fine. I was thinking we should stop whatever is going on between us...”

“What? Why? Lifa please, don’t...” I whispered.

“Look, I can’t go through this with you again. The love I have for you won’t allow me to. Let’s keep away from each other for a while. You need to heal first then decide on what you want to do with your life. I’m not getting any younger Okuhle and I’m afraid, I can’t wait for you forever. At some point I will stop loving you if you continue with these games, I’m too old for this shit. If you’re not for me then I have to find the one for me.”

“Please be patient with me...?” I swallowed a painful lump.

“I have patience but I’m slowly running out of it. Think about what I said...”

“But wait... Lifa?” I looked at my phone screen then sighed.

“I can’t lose you too...” I whispered. ‘Lifa is your tomorrow not D’ Fifi’s words played in my head. I started the engine then slowly drove out of the parking towards the exit. I knew I had to go to Steve Biko but I was too emotional to be in the presence of patients so instead of driving to Steve Biko, I drove straight to my apartment.

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Okuhle:

The week went by pretty quick. I went from being a divorcee to being dumped by my male friend to being confused by a lot of things. One thing I knew for sure was that I was not willing to jump into a relationship just as yet so with that said I had to set Lifa free. I understood where he was coming from, yes he was some sort of a support system but it would be selfish of me to string him



along when I knew that we could never work as a couple. I was not on that rebound tip so I cut all contact with him, it was hard but it had to be done.

I was getting ready to go meet up with Anati, finally made up my mind to meet her and I didn't know what to expect. We spoke briefly over the phone and she sounded like a sweet person but I refused to fall for her sweet charms. I wore black skinny jeans which fitted me perfectly, they defined my waist line and hugged my hips just right and made my ass pop. Going to gym was finally paying off and I was loving how my body was transforming. I then wore a ruffled off the shoulder white satin top and paired my outfit up with platform peep toe slingbacks shoes. I loved what I saw on the mirror then took a few snaps. My make-up was on point and my hair was tied up into a neat bun.

A knock on the door disturbed my thoughts, I was thinking about how I was going to have a civil conversation with the woman who had an affair with my now ex-husband. I walked to the kitchen then my phone beeped. I read the text then shook my head laughing.

Fifi: Please cancel the lunch babe, you don't need to do this...

I chuckled opening the door then my eyes landed on Lwanda.

"Really?" I blurted out. I wasn't expecting to see him after what he did.

"Okuhle, hi..." He greeted. I blankly stared at him.

"How did you get in?" I asked.

"Tailgate some guy who was coming in..."

"Tailgating is not allowed here, what do you want?" I asked clearly annoyed by him.

"I came to apologize. I feel bad after that phone call, I shouldn't have said that or question the things you do."

"Good! And you need to stop following me around. Lwanda we're divorced and we'll never get back together again. I don't love you anymore. I'm willing to build some form of relationship with you for Bontle's sake but beyond that, there will never be us. Not in this

lifetime anyway.” I said.

“I understand. Can I come in?” He was bold to even ask.

“No Lwanda, I’m rushing to a meeting. Now, thanks to you, I’m running late.” I walked back inside and took my handbag from the bedroom.

“Beautiful place.” He was standing behind me.

“Excuse me, who let you in?” I asked walking back to the kitchen.

“Okuhle please, I’m trying here...”

“Stop trying okay!” I yelled. “Whatever this is, will happen naturally. Stop trying to force matters. You need to work on yourself because from where I’m standing...” I shook my head.

“You need counselling...” I said then sighed.

“I’m already doing that, I’m not seeing any progress but hopefully by the end of 10 sessions I’ll be good as new.” He responded.

“Good for you. If this is going to work then I’m going to need you to be good as new.” I smiled at him then walked to the door. “Now please, I have somewhere I need to be.” I held the door open for him then he slowly walked out.

“I’m sorry for just budging in like this, it won’t happen again.”

“Apology accepted.” I locked the door behind me and we both walked down to the parking lot.

“You know, you’re not so bad. You just need to forgive yourself and stop doing crazy things, next thing you know I’ll be forced to open a restraining order against you.” I said walking towards my car. He was parked right next to me.

“You would do that to the father of your child?” He asked laughing. It was good seeing him laugh like that. A few minutes ago he looked miserable.

“Well the father of my child is losing his mind, if I didn’t know better I’d say he needs to be institutionalized again.” I remarked laughing at him.

“Ouch! Too soon.” He held his chest smiling.

“You should smile more often, it suits you. Come I’m running late.” I opened the car door.

“You look beautiful by the way.” He revealed his beautiful smile which caused me to smile.

“Thanks, you’re not too bad yourself.” I winked at him then got in. I slowly drove out the parking lot and he followed behind me. I opened the gate and signalled for him to go through. He stopped next to me and instructed me to open my window, which I did.

“Yeah...” I said with a smile.

“Thank you...” He said. I looked at him puzzled.

“O-kay...” He winked at me then drove off.

I looked down smiling, I wondered what he meant. I took my phone and responded to Fifi’s text.

Me: This meeting is happening.

I sent the text then switched my data off. I took a deep breath then exhaled, I was doubting going ahead with the lunch thing but I had already asked her so there was no turning back. I connected my phone to the aux cable then played my now favourite song Me, Myself and I by Beyoncé...

‘Me, myself and I  
That’s all I got in the end  
That’s what I found out  
And it ain’t no need to cry  
I took a vow that from now on  
I’m gon’ be my own best friend...’

I sang along to the chorus with a smile on my face. Seeing Lwanda and being able to talk to him free from anger made me realize that I was done with him and that he was done playing a role in my life. The drive to Hudsons Hazelwood Hatfield turned out to be a pleasant one, I was in good spirits.

Okuhle:

I waited for 15 minutes before Anati joined me, she had sent me a text letting me know that she was running late. I got us a table and I ordered myself a drink while I waited for her. I kept myself busy with my phone that I didn't even see her approach the table. "Hey, sorry I'm late." She said. I looked at up at her then got up. "No, it's fine." I awkwardly gave her a hug which lasted for 2 seconds because she just froze not knowing what to do. She took off her beige trench coat then took a seat. She was wearing white skinny jeans with a black polo neck then accessorized her outfit with a gold pendant necklace. She completed her look with knee-high black boots. She looked beautiful and the blond braids complimented her skin tone.

"It's quite chilly outside, are you not cold?" She asked.

"I carry this baby..." I pointed at my black trench coat that was hanging on the chair. "...around for days like these. I swear it was warm when I walked out the house." I pointed out.

"Two more weeks then we're done with winter." She faked a smile then reached for the menu. I stared at her as she browsed through the menu trying by all means to avoid eye contact. I found myself smiling, she was beautiful and I could see why Lwanda fell for her charms.

"Thank you for coming..." I said after a while of admiring her beauty.

"Of course..." She kept her eyes on the menu.

"Anati please look at me? I'm not here to fight you or anything. I just want us to talk." – Me.

She slowly lifted her head up and struggled to keep her eyes on me. I could see the fear on her face and her body language showed that she was uncomfortable.

"Uhm... I'm sorry." She said. She couldn't find the right words and I understood the situation she found herself in.

"It's okay, only God can judge us. I'm only here to talk."

“Of course, I guess we can talk.” She called the waiter over and ordered sparkling water.

“Well, Lwanda and I are divorced now...” I subconsciously said that out loud. That was not how I wanted to break the ice.

“Oh... I’m sorry. I... I...” She choked on her words.

“No, no... please don’t apologize. Our marriage has run its course and I’m okay now. I’m over him and he is over me but I know he is not over you.” She looked at me with pity.

“Okuhle, Lwanda lied to us. I know there were red flags and all that but I chose to ignore them and paid more attention to what was in front of me. He most probably lied to me a numerous times and dodged a over a million questions about him and his life but I always opted to believe that he was a private person so I was not one to probe. I always told myself that if he was indeed hiding something from me then God or the universe will deal with him accordingly. My duty was to myself, I didn’t want to be that girl, feeding insecurities that were not there. I have my own money so I never relied on him financially. My career was taking off so I had no time on my hands to investigate his whereabouts at certain times. I know I might sound absurd right now but I was content with the time he gave me to be with him and when I was with him, he gave me his undivided attention....” I swallowed spit trying to numb my throat.

“So you never suspected that he had a wife or child?” I asked. I really wanted to know. Our orders came but we suddenly didn’t feel like having anything to eat.

“Not at first no, but soon enough things started not to add up then he lied to me about his parents. I should have had the courage to walk away then because on that very same night he miraculously took me to his house for the night...”

“His house?” I interrupted her.

“Well that’s what he said then he went back on his word and said that he was sharing the house with a friend. This was after he proposed to me, I was mad at him for lying. My heart and my

mind were at war after that. I took the ring and every day I looked at it. Thobeka once told me that Lwa was married but I refused to believe her because things were not so good in her marriage so I thought maybe she was jealous and didn't want me to be happy. But, that morning when I got to my place everything started to add up." She sighed. "I'm sorry..." She whispered. "Why?" She was getting emotional and so was I.

"Because I agreed to marry him even after I came to the conclusion that something was off about the sudden turn of events. I should have ran the opposite direction but the love I have for him wouldn't let me. I wanted to burn first before I could accept my fate." She dropped her eyes. "I knew that he was lying about something but I always told myself that it was something that we could both look past and hopefully something I could forgive..." She whispered.

"So you love him?" I asked with a heavy heart.

"What?" She looked up. Her eyes were heavy with tears, she looked heartbroken and I felt sorry for her.

"You just said that the love you have for him wouldn't let you. Present tense..." We looked at each other for a while then she shook her head.

"It doesn't matter anymore, people fall in love then they fall out of love. This is how the system was designed, eventually I'll fall out of love then meet the one that is meant for me."

"What if he is the one meant for you?" I didn't even know why I asked her that question. She was being genuine with me and just like me, she was also victim to Lwanda's lies. She was naïve just like I was. The woman sitting before me was a woman in love and she was struggling to let go because her heart sang a different tune to what she deemed was the right thing to do.

"Lwanda and I can never work." She sighed. "You said an hour should be enough, I need to get going now." She said getting up.

"You barely touched your food." I said trying to get her to stay a bit longer.



“I’ll eat at home, later maybe. Thank you for this...” She took out money from her purse but I stopped her.

“I got it, its fine. It’s the least I can do for meeting me.” I smiled at her.

“Are you sure?” She asked. I nodded then she smiled. “Thank you but I really have to go. Bye.” She wore her coat then reached for her handbag before walking away with the waiter following behind her with her food. I shortly followed after settling the bill then drove straight to Witbank, I missed my daughter.

Lwanda:

I was chilling with Maxwell by the pool area at his house sipping on castle light. He was smoking his blunt which he offered a numerous times but I turned it down. I was a drinker but definitely not a smoker.

“So in your words she looked sexy?” He asked.

“Well yeah... Sexier than she ever was when we were married.” It was hard to admit that Okuhle was appealing to the eye.

“And she was rushing to a meeting, in this weather?” He chuckled.

“What are you saying Max?”

“You just told me that she was dressed light for the weather so that means the meeting could be held indoors. Did you get a chance to ask who she was meeting?”

“I waived that right the moment I signed those divorce papers.” I sighed. I was jealous that she was dressed up like that for a late afternoon meeting. I hadn’t seen that Lifa guy for a while now so she was definitely not meeting up with him.

“Mhmm... I see.” He huffed then puffed. “On other news, I saw Anati yesterday.” I slowly turned my head to his direction.

“What? She told me that she was leaving for a few months...” I

said.

“I don’t know what she said but she is back in town. Man, how do you do it?” He asked looking at me.

“What do you mean?” I raised my eyebrow.

“I mean, these women are beautiful in their own right. Both women are flames, so I’m confused...” He looked down shaking his head. “What was your reason for cheating again?”

“Max please...” I stood up. “I need to make a call.”

“Hau just like that you have forgotten about your baby mama?”

“Shut up!” I walked away from him and he laughed out loud.

I got inside the house then dialled Anati’s number. It rang unanswered then I dialled her again, my heart was beating out of chest. I was scared of the unknown but I needed to know if she was back in town.

“Lwanda..?” She answered in a low voice.

“Nati...” I said. It felt great hearing her voice.

“How can I help you?” She asked. She was being formal and that broke my heart. She didn’t even sound happy to hear from me.

“Are you back in town?” I asked.

“No!” She responded harshly.

“Please, don’t lie to me.” I begged.

“Lwanda please, not now okay. I’ll call you.” She hung up on me. I looked at my phone then sighed.

Me: I love you. Can we fix this?

I sent her the text then sat on the couch anxiously waiting for her reply.

## FIVE YEARS LATER

OKUHLE:

I walked into the OR (Operating Room) with my heart beating out of my chest, nothing could have ever prepared me for this moment. I had always been present during C-section procedures, your minor operations on the leg, arm, nothing major really but this morning as I walked into the surgical ward Dr Pathrone was called into the OR for an emergency Open-Heart Surgery.

“Ms Ndlovu, you’re with me today.” He said walking towards the OR. I looked at Shaz totally surprised and she just shrugged her shoulders.

“You want to be a qualified surgeon right?” She remarked giggling. I rolled my eyes and hurried behind Dr Pathrone. We made our way to the scrubbing room, personal cleanliness was of extreme importance for operating theatre personnel. Xolani walked in smiling at me, he was the anaesthesiologist.

“Big day today Ms Ndlovu.” Xolani said getting in position to begin his scrubbing process.

“Nothing could have prepared me for this moment.” I responded. I was nervous but anxious at the same time. A few more theatre personnel walked into the scrub room chatting away, the perfusionists (they ran the heart-lung machine), the scrub tech (he was responsible for passing the instruments to the surgeon), the circulating nurse (she ensured that the operation ran smoothly), the lead surgeon (She would be working closely with Dr Pathrone), then there was me (Resident in training) and the physician’s assistant. In total we were 9 people in the room to help with this complex heart procedure.

We all performed a surgical hand scrub then wore sterile gowns and gloves. It was important that the correct performance of the scrubbing was done to help protect the patient from infection by preventing disease producing micro-organisms on the hands,

arms and clothes of personnel from coming into contact with a patient's wound during operation.

The patient was brought into the OR, he was a white man, looked like he was in his late thirties. An IV was already connected to his arm, he was positioned comfortably on the operating table then an oxygen mask was placed to his face. I observed as Xolani administered medication to the patient to make him sleepy. A breathing tube was then placed in the airway as final preparations were made.

Everyone played an integral part in this operation and I found it weird how they held conversation while busy with what was required of them. I was not hands on but I was instructed to observe and take notes. I was only familiar with Dr Pathrone, who was communicating with me directly, Xolani and Zakes, he was the scrub tech.

"All the necessary equipment is accounted for doc." Zakes said to Dr Pathrone.

"We have enough blood available..." One of the perfusionist said just after Zakes. Dr Pathrone and the lead surgeon Dr Moodley reviewed the procedure and within a few minutes the Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting was in progress.

"I will make an 8- to 10-inch cut in the chest." Dr Moodley said. All the while my eyes were peeled giving my undivided focus on the patient's chest at Dr Moodley cut through the patient's breastbone to expose the heart. I was told that this procedure was going to take three to six hours, I was fascinated by the sight of the beating heart. This was my calling and I could already see myself performing a similar procedure as the lead surgeon one day.

The past five years have been nothing short of amazing. I graduated from Medical School in record time and I was now doing my residency program. Upon completing med school I decided that I wanted to become a surgeon so the journey to becoming a qualified surgeon was going to take a little bit longer but I was okay with that. I compromised a lot of things for my

education but one thing I didn't compromise on was my relationship with my daughter.

Speaking of Bontle, she was back in Pta staying with her dad and his soon to be Mrs. Our co-parenting relationship was actually strong, we got along just fine and respected each other's space. I only got Bontle on weekends because during the week I'd usually be at the hospital till late in the evening.

I didn't have a love life but I still entertained D and had something going on with Xolani, nothing romantic though but something was brewing between us. D still had my heart but the distance was proving to be a challenge. We hardly spoke because I was working odd hours and when I was not working I was sleeping or spending time with Bontle. I was at a point in my life where I was content and happy with everything. Lwanda was getting married soon and I couldn't be happier for him, I understood that we were never meant to be and he deserved a second chance at love.

LWANDA:

"Bontle!" I yelled at the top of my lungs rushing down the stairs.

"Easy soldier, you'll trip and fall." She walked up to me and pecked my lips.

"She's going to be late." I huffed.

"Fine! I'm here, no need to throw a fit." She walked down the stairs rolling her eyes. "Mom's phone is off so I don't know..." She shrugged her shoulders and walked to the kitchen. I looked at her as she disappeared into the hallway.

"What am I going to do with her?" I asked.

"She's growing up and slowly blooming into womanhood, give her time."

"Yeah, you're right. Let me get going, don't forget our lunch date."

"Of course." We shared a kiss then I left.

I bought a house in Silver Lakes, sold the one in Groenkloof and split the proceeds with Kuhle. It wasn't easy letting go of that house but it had to be done. We (Okuhle and I) had shared custody of Bontle, who was now back in Pretoria and stayed full

time with me because Kuhle was doing her residency program which required her to spend most of her time at the hospital. It hasn't been easy staying with Bontle, simply because our relationship was not that strong and it didn't make it any easier now that she had to adjust to having two mothers.

I was engaged to be married, a decision I didn't take lightly. I thank Dr Stroth for the part she played in my journey to healing and accept the wrong I did. It wasn't easy letting go and I still struggled with a few things, I still had the 'what if' moments whenever I was with Kuhle. She was always going to be my first love no matter.

"I don't like her..." Bontle said as I got into the car.

"Not this again..." I sighed.

"But dad, why can't you be with mom?" She asked in a shaky voice.

"You know why baby, please. She makes me happy."

"And mom doesn't?"

"Bontle, honey please... I need you to understand."

"Eleven year olds don't need to understand anything. I just want you and mom together, not her." I looked at her then heaved a sad sigh. I slowly drove out the driveway stealing glances at her. She pulled her earphones from her backpack plugging them into her ear then dropped her seat and relaxed.

I drove onto Solomon Mahlangu Dr headed towards Hatfield, Bontle attended St Marys DSG and she was going on a school trip to the UK for a week. She didn't get a chance to bid her mom farewell so I understood why she was mad. Kuhle did say she would try and come see her off before leaving but it was not a promise. I felt bad because she was closer to her mom and her not being her was adding salt to the wound.

I drove while listening to the radio with her humming to whatever she was listening to. I was in my head wondering if Bontle would ever accept that her mom and I would never be together again.



“We’re here...” I said after parking. She removed the earphones from her ears then sat upright.

“Please tell mom to call me?” She said with tears in her eyes.

“I’m sorry she couldn’t be here.” I responded trying to make her feel better.

“She didn’t promise me anything but I know she will make up for this...” She whispered.

“Of course.” She flashed me a faint smile then opened the door.

“Do you need help with your bags?” I asked.

“No, I’ll be fine.” She got off then reached for her backpack.

“I love you Bontle and please, take care of yourself. I’m going to miss you.” I said before she closed the door.

“I love you too dad. I’ll try not to miss you.” She lightly closed the door and rushed to the boot to get her luggage bag. She came to my window then waved goodbye. I looked at her as she walked towards the entrance rolling her luggage bag. I tried Kuhle’s phone but it was still off, I assumed she was in theatre so I made nothing of it. I left her message then drove straight to work.

## THREE DAYS LATER

Okuhle:

I was with Xolani in his Jeep Wrangler parked in front of news Café, Glen Manor. I was meeting up with Lwa, apparently he had something to show me so I had to cancel my lunch date with Lani. Instead of taking my car which was safely parked at Netcare hospital, he (Xolani) insisted on dropping me off. 'I want to see if you're not lying to me, I'm dropping you off and I'm not taking no for an answer.' He said. I didn't protest and besides I was saving on petrol anyway.

I was wearing a black pencil skirt which was a few inches below the knee with a powder blue blouse that showed a bit of my cleavage. When I was at the hospital I was always in a white coat so I was always covered up.

"Looks like we have a minute to spare." He said licking his lips. He leaned over to my side and slip his hand up my thigh, forcing my skirt up.

"But he is sitting right there..." I said swallowing hard. He had my blood rushing and he knew that I was a sucker to his gentle touch.

"Oh! Shit... Lace underwear." He whispered. He slid my panty to the side and rubbed his fingers on my nuna.

"Xo..." He kissed me. "lani..." He shoved his tongue down my throat and I breathe heavily as the kiss deepened. He inserted his finger in my honeypot and I spread my legs wider to give him

easy access. I moaned heavily as he pleased me with his finger, I groaned and grunted as I held onto the seat wanting him to go deeper.

“You like that huh?” He said looking at me with hunger.

“Please stop.” I whispered biting my lower lip.

“Let’s get out of here so that I can take care of this.” At this point he could ask anything of me and I would agree to it. He was a sex god and I never passed up an opportunity to get fucked by him. As I was about to say ‘Yes, let’s get out of here.’ My phone rang. I looked at him then he smiled and pulled away.

“Saved by your phone.” He chuckled then adjusted his dick. I fixed my panty then pulled down my skirt.

“I have to go.” I said in a faint voice. I was already turned on and a part of me really wanted to stand Lwanda up.

“Don’t worry, I’ll feed you later.” He pressed my chin then pulled me over for a kiss. I sucked on his lips then pulled away looking at him. He was yummy and I wanted more of him.

“I want it rough with pleasurable pain. I want hickies all over my body, I want to feel your dick press against my abdomen, and I want you to tear me apart.” I said squinting my eyes.

“Damn! Woman get out of my car.” He said laughing. He leaned over to my side and opened the door for me. “Go!” He said. I laughed then got off.

“Should I pick you up when you’re done with him?” He asked.

“No, he’ll drop me off at work then I’ll drive to your house from there.” I responded.

“Okay. Remember, that pussy is mine and mine alone. He had his chance but he blew it, don’t fall for his charms.” He said with a straight face.

“Wow! Really?” I laughed at him then closed the door. He started the car then blew me a kiss. I smiled then turned towards the News Café entrance. My eyes landed on Lwa and he was looking at Xolani’s car as he drove away clenching his jaw.

“Hey...” I said when I got to the table.

“Hi.” He got up then gave me a hug.

“How are you?” I asked then sat opposite him.

“Good, you?” He looked nervous, which was odd.

“I’m great. What’s with the nerves? Loosen up.” I giggled.

“Being part of the working class suits you.” He remarked then smiled.

“Yeah, I can’t be kept. So, what’s this about?” I asked with a grin. What transpired in the car with Lani was on replay in my head and all I wanted to do was to conclude this meeting and run to my sex partner.

“I have something to show you but it requires for you to be in the car with me.” I gave him a suspicious look. After what Lani did to me, I couldn’t have Lwa do the same.

“Why must I be in the car with you?” I asked.

“Because I have to drive us to the location or you can drive and I’ll direct you.” I heaved a sigh of relief. I was glad that he was not making any moves on me, the last thing I needed was to betray his fiancé’s trust.

“Oh okay... We can do that but I’m not driving.” I said. I walked over to the counter and got myself sparkling water then we went to his car.

“Wow! You bought a new car?” Lwa had the need to change cars every three years. “I never took you for a BMW type of guy. It has always been Mercedes Benz or VW.”

“Well Amy loves it so I was forced to buy it. I bought it for her actually, I just borrowed it.” He said opening the door for me. He walked to the driver’s side then got in.

“How is she doing with the wedding preparations and all?” I asked.

“She told me that she was coping just fine so I believe her.” He started the car then slowly drove out. I looked at him then looked out the window. ‘She gets the white wedding I never got.’ I said in my head then giggled out loud.

“What?” He asked with a smile.

“I’m in my head. Don’t mind me. So where are we going?” I was anxious to know where he was taking me.

“You’ll see. It’s not that far from here.” I nodded then we drove in silence with music playing in the background. I loved how I was so over Lwanda and I was actually happy that he was getting married. Hopefully this time around he would stick to his vows.

After a few turns we stopped at some storage facility entrance. I awkwardly stared at him as he drove past the gate.

“People know I’m here with you.” I said with a straight face. He looked at me then laughed.

“Come on, you have that little faith in me?” He opened his door. “Come, please.” I got off then went over to his side. He took my hand into his then we walked for a few meters then stopped at storage unit 05.

“Ready?” He asked.

“Will you open that door already? The suspense is killing me.” I responded. He slid up the corrugated iron door and I opened my eyes in shock.

“You kept it?” I ran towards him laughing and he ran away from me.

“Yes, I wanted to show you what you did once the dust settled.” He laughed then looked at the car. I couldn’t believe he kept the A45, wrecked as it was, he kept it. We stood next to each other looking at it then we both sighed.

“On a serious note though, I only wanted to keep this as a reminder.” He said.

“Reminder for what?”

“Not to repeat the same mistakes I did. I made you do this. I drove you to the brink of madness, you lost your sanity because of me. I will keep this car until the day I die.” He turned to look at me then he turned me around to face him. “Do you think I deserve redemption?” His eyes were glassy with tears.



“You deserve a second chance to start anew. You see that?” I pointed at the Merc. “That shouldn’t repeat itself and it shouldn’t come in a different form either. I believe you’re a changed man and I know you will love Amy the way she deserves to be loved.” He turned around then folded his arms.

“Are you okay?” He asked.

“Okay? What do you mean?” I was confused by his question.

“I never got to ask you if you’re okay with me getting married again. So, are you okay with this?” I looked up at him then smiled. It was like the heavens opened, why couldn’t he be this guy back then?

“I’m happy for you Lwa. I want you to be happy and if your happiness lies with Ameera then please, don’t let this ship sail without you aboard.” He took my hand then we walked slowly towards the Merc.

“Man, you did a number on this baby.” He laughed and I playfully punched him on the shoulder.

“And I have a scar to prove it.” We turned to face each other then he slid his thumb on the scar. He looked into my eyes then whispered “I’m sorry.” His eyes moved from my eyes to my lips. His hand slid down my cheek then he rubbed my lips with his thumb. I exhaled trying to maintain my breathing.

“You will always have a special place in my heart.” He said then backed away and walked out of the unit.

I walked around the car as I replayed that fateful evening in my head. I slid my hand on the body of the car smiling and giggling, I felt every dent and bump then I laughed. That memory was vivid in my head, I remembered every tear that I shed and I how I dropped to the floor in front of the car crying hysterically. I truly came a long way, not once did I ever think I would get over the pain and hurt. I doubted I would ever smile again, heck I thought I would never find happiness again but here I was laughing at a painful memory without shedding a single tear, surely that should be confirmation enough that I had indeed moved on with my life.

“I think we should get going.” His voice interrupted my thoughts. I looked at him then smiled.

“Thank you.” I said.

“For what?” He frowned.

“You have just set me free.” I ran into his arms and buried myself into his embrace. I was free...

Forget what hurt you but NEVER forget what it taught you. -  
Shannon L. Alder

The End.