

Chapter Eighty-Five

Nozipho Biyela

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I was supposed to rest, as Nontombi said but I only got two hours of sleep only. The kids crowded in my room and demanded popcorns because there is a Disney movie they were going to watch.

Sbu refused to wake up, Lwazi had to attend an urgent meeting and Mandla can't make popcorns even though there are instructions on the packet and internet. I had to wake up and make popcorns after that I couldn't sleep.

Quinton is handful, with his dad out of presence he is uncontrollable. I have to keep my eyes all around the house. It's a normal day for them. They are happy to be together. I wish I can be as clueless as they are.

My mind is roaming, I'm worried about Simtho and Don.

My mind is not thinking about them though, it's Thapelo I'm more worried about.

He was mending things with Ziphe now this threatens to shake their shaky marriage even more. As much as I'm all for my family he also has the right to choose his family. His sister and niece are the only family members he has left. If his niece did this the going is going to get tough. Biyela will have no mercy, nobody spill the Biyela blood and live to tell the tales.

"Is your husband still asleep?" Mandla asks coming from the outside.

I nod.

He takes a bottle of water from the fridge, opens it and drinks. I think there are two drops of water left in that bottle. He puts the cap back on the bottle and puts it inside the fridge. I just exhale, I have no energy.

"Has Zanda contacted you? I've been trying to call her but it rings to voicemail" he says full of concern.

"Clearly she is asleep, they are tired as I am. We didn't sleep last night"

He exhales, "Don never get a break"

I sigh, "You can say that again"

"This too shall pass, he will be happy. Simtho make him happy. That's all that matters"

I clear my throat, "Mandla"

He looks at me.

"Call Thapelo he needs your support" I say.

He frowns, "Why? He chose his niece"

"What if she didn't do it? Thapelo is caught in the middle of his family and us. Even if Tamika did it, he needs our support. He has been with this family, with you and everyone through thick and thin"

He exhale and take his phone out of his jean pocket.

I walk out to check on the kids so that he have some space.

They should be watching their movie and eating popcorns quietly. I'm surprised to find the popcorns all over the floor, the giggles louder than the TV volume. Quinton is the one throwing popcorns at the others.

"Quinton!!" I say.

He see me and run to the couch. He jump right on Liyanda's hand when he sit. Liyanda start crying.

Shouting is the last thing I want to do.

"Quinton, Junior and Sphiwo go to Junior's room. You'll continue with the movie there" I say.

Junior pull Sphiwo's hand and walk away. Quinton follows them singing 'Happy Birthday to you' very loud. I don't know how Sena cope with this child.

"Stop crying" I say to Liyanda.

She is very dramatic. I know she may stop in the next hour, once Sbu has woke up and asked who hurt her.

"We'll play bikes later" I say.

She look at me, I cross my fingers, she start wiping the tears.

"I'll get Danone yoghurts for you, behave" I say.

I return to the kitchen and take out yoghurts. Mandla is still on the phone. He look very tense, he is not the one talking. I guess Thapelo is just venting on him.

I walk out quietly to distribute the snack among the little mosquitos.

When I come back to the kitchen, Mandla is tapping on the table with his fist.

Sign of frustration!

"Is he okay?" I ask.

He shake his head, "He can't find his niece. You know how he is"

No I don't know how he is.

"What's going on?" I ask.

"His uncle is on his way"

"Thapelo has an uncle?" I ask.

"Not biologically. It's his father's friend, supposedly his ex guardian angel"

I chuckle, "Why would he do that? Tamika is under Biyela's watch until the truth is out"

He shrug, "Well he says he is doing what every uncle would do.He failed to protect his sister from his father but swore to protect his niece."

This is unbelievable!

"Why is he so sure that his niece is innocent?" I ask.

"Tamika had a miscarriage back in high school, which caused an effect on her state of mind.He say he is sure she will never wish losing a child on anyone."

I exhale.

"He say it's unfair for Biyela to torture his niece before solid proof.According to him,no poison would ever cause an umbilical chord to wrap around baby's neck.So he refuse for his niece to take the fall and bows to go extra miles to make sure nothing bad happens to her"

I look at him hopeless. This is what I feared.Bad blood.

He scratch his head and walk away. I let out a long breath.

"Mama is everything okay?" He ask.

I look up.I've been sitting on this chair lost in my thoughts for almost thirty minutes.

I shake my head, "Call Biyela,he must let Tamika go"

He frown, "That girl killed Simtho's baby"

"The results are delaying.Not pointing poisoning of any sort.This will end badly,Thapelo must be considered in all of this. He is family, he will not let her get away with it if she did it" I say.

He think for a minute then take out his phone.

"Dad..yes we are okay...dad!..no I want you to let go of the girl until we get solid proof we can take drastic decisions.. no Thapelo is a good guy,he cares for this family..what???" He look at his phone as the line goes dead.

"What?" I ask.

"The girl has fainted"

My eyes pop out, "How? What happened? Where is she?"

"In the warehouse with my dad's men.They ignored instructions and beat her to pulp hoping for the truth. She fainted, they are trying to wake her"

I hold my stomach, my intestines just twisted.

Chapter Eighty-Six

Nozipho Biyela

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Lwazi has come back, Quinton has started behaving. He is the one with the kids upstairs. There isn't much noise. I must say his calm daddy skills work like a charm. He should be the one in charge of the kids during family dinners and ceremonies.

Mandla is somewhere in the house drinking the third beer. Sbu is restless on the couch opposite me. I'm holding a massive prayer with my heart.

We are waiting for Biyela's call. We want an update of the situation. He is not answering our calls, we are on our nerve edges.

My phone rings. It's Don.

"Hey" I say softly.

"Hey Nozi is Junior okay?" He asks.

"He is fine, how are you?"

I don't like the fact that he has been in hospital since last night. Going home to rest a bit doesn't mean Simtho is going to die.

"I don't know"

I sigh "You'll get there. Where is Simtho?"

"She is sleeping. The results came"

I look at Sbu and sit up straight, "What are they saying?"

"Big medical words of wrong movements, I don't understand" he says clearly frustrated.

"Did they find or suspect anything poisonous which may have caused that?" I ask.

"No. It could be she used untraceable drugs, there are cases like that" he says.

I exhale, "I'll let everyone know, thanks for calling"

I drop the call and look at Sbu.

"No poison was found" I say.

Sbu stands on his feet, "The girl may be dead"

I close my eyes, "Do you know the warehouse she is kept at?"

He nods.

I put my hands on the waist, "What were you doing in dodgy warehouses? Gosh I don't know the man I share a bed with"

"Not now Nozipho" he says.

He is right, I will use this against him next time we fight. Now is not the time.

"We need to go there" I say.

He frown, "It not some kind of café with aircons inside"

I roll my eyes, "Let's go, this is not light. Someone's life is in danger and we can talk sense in Biyela's head. He listen to you and have a soft spot for me"

He exhale "I have a bad feeling about this"

He must grow some balls. This is where he get in to save his family as the son. He is the next head of this family.

Mandla walks in. He look at us suspiciously.

I tell him before he can ask,

"It wasn't poison" I say.

He sigh "What now?"

"We are going to tell Biyela in the warehouse" I say.

He look at Sbu, "Are you guys sure it's a safe thing to do? I mean Thapelo and his uncle are turning Durban upside down as we speak"

Not him too!

"It's time for intervention. Blood of innocent souls will be spilled"

He nods, "Good luck, I'll contact the girls in Inkandla"

"Thank you. There is cooked food in the fridge, should we not come back till late warm it and serve yourselves"

They fist-bump with Sbu. He hugs me. I pick my purse and follow him as he drag his feet to the door.

"Be safe guys, I don't want you to be caught in the crossfire"

"Mandla we will be okay, it's not like we are going to Isandlwana war"

He chuckles, "The toughness you have Mrs Biyela"

"Sometimes she shock me too, the spoilt brat of the Fayas" Sbu says.

I laugh "Stop this ganging now!"

We get in the car, he is still reluctant about going.

I try calling Biyela one more time. He doesn't answer, he leave me with no choice but to expose myself to his 'taking care' of things.

I try to keep myself busy on the cellphone so that I don't pay attention to the route of Biyela's warehouse. I will never walk this journey again. My mom would have a fit if she found out.

"It's that one on the left side" he say.

I look up and look where he is saying.

"Is that a warehouse?" I ask.

"Ya,I will park here"

I'm shocked, "I had something else in mind. This is a nice building"

He chuckles "I never said it was ugly"

He park two yards away.

"You're going to stay here,I'll do it alone"

What???

"That was not the plan" I say.

He look at me, "Change of plans my wife.I don't want you to go inside there"

I push the door and get out.

He get out and look at me angrily.

"Sbu I suggested this,I'm not going to let you go to whatever situation is right inside there.I'll stand by you"

He shake his head, "They have weapons, you are pregnant you shouldn't go"

"I'm stronger than that.Let the talking stop,we are in this together, let's go" I say picking my purse and leading the way.

We bump into Biyela by the entrance. He is shocked to see us.He look at Sbu deadly.

"Baba I'm the one who wanted to come" I say in rescue.

"And you allowed her to come here? Hhe Sbusiso?!" He roars.

"The hospital didn't find the poison" I say.

"I've cancelled them,I'm waiting for report from my own specialists" he say.

I look at Sbu.

He look miles away,he doesn't want to be here at all cost.

"How is the girl?" I ask.

"Inside, refusing to speak the truth."

"Is she awake?" I ask.

He give me a look, "You risked your wellbeing and my grandchild's to come and defend that brat?"

I exhale "Thapelo and his uncle are tracing you down.Let go of the girl,she is innocent"

"I want to see if she is okay" Sbu says.

He make space for him to pass.He close it when I'm about to pass.

"Not you.Go in the car" he say.

I know better than to argue a murderous man.I exhale and walk back.

I get in the car and call Sena.They've finished with the burial. I can tell from her voice that the mood is still sour.

I can't wait for all of this to be over.For everyone to heal.For the family to get back to normal.

After the call I video-call Palesa.She have no idea what's going on.She lift up my spirit. I find myself laughing at her silly jokes.

I keep the friends who comfort me unknowingly during hard times. In the Biyelas the family issues don't go to the outside.We are in various businesses good reputation is important.

There is a black car that parks a few feet before mine. I guess it's Biyela's specialists with the results.

I wonder why the cops haven't been alerted.This place look suspicious to me,they surely know dodgy dealings take place here.

Three men get out of it.They engage in a small conversation before heading to the building.

The one in the middle is him.The shoulders,the height and the navy pant that Ziphe hate with passion.

How did they found out about this place?

Who are those two men?

I punch Sbu's numbers with shaky hands.He doesn't pick up.I keep calling until Thapelo disappears inside the building. The other two stand outside.

I try calling Biyela to no avail. My heart is pounding out my chest. I can't stop my knees from shaking. I hold a big prayer by heart.

After what feel like forever I see Thapelo walking out.He go and talk to his men then go to the side of the building.

I swallow my fears and get out of the car.

Thapelo must listen to what I have to say.Any time from now the results will come back,his niece will be free.We will make up to them.Necessary apologies and compensations will be done.

I see him.My husband. He walk out the entrance.

They pull guns from their backs and point at him.I shout for them not to shoot him.

It's too late.Sbu lie on the grounds,the shots fired hit the wall.I see smoke coming from the wall,it disappears after seconds. He shoot again,Thapelo come flying in front of them.

All I hear is, "He is my brother"

He fall to the ground. Sbu rise up and run towards him.The two men push their guns back on their backs and run toward him.

Five armed security guards run out from the building. I see Biyela running out of the building too.

I try walking to the scene but my legs fail me.I end up to the ground on my ass.

Chapter Eighty-Seven

Sena Biyela

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Nobody has told us what is going on.All we were told is to get up and get ready. My mom is restless,talking to herself and pacing up and down the yard.My instincts tells me something bad has happened. One person that comes to my mind is Simtho.

I'm silently praying with my heart.We are supposed to be eating but none of us is.The tea is now cold in the cups.No one is answering the calls in Durban.Not even Nozipho.Something has happened.The worst has happened.

"You think she is dead?" Zethu ask Fiki.

"No,she can't die.Maybe she is not coping mentally" Fiki says.

"Then why they are not telling us that? Why was mom crying all night?" Ziphe ask.

Fiki sigh "She is stressed about her"

"Why are they waking us by dawn if she is just mentally not coping?" Zanda ask.

Fiki is bombarded by questions she can't answer.As the older one she is expected to magically know what is going on in Durban while she is at Inkandla.

Mom walk in,she look at us angrily.

"You haven't eaten? I'm gonna leave all of you here and tell the drivers not to come here,do you hear me?"

I sigh "Mom what's going on?"

"Nothing, we just need to leave" she say.

I think we are old enough,we can handle whatever it is.

"Is Simtho okay?" Fiki ask.

She nod, "Simtholile is fine"

"Then what is it Mom?" Zethu shout.

She sigh "I don't have much details but there was a shooting yesterday"

"Shooting where?" I ask panicky.

"I don't know okay" she say with a fixed fierce look on me.

I guess we can't know now.Mommy knows the best.

"I think we are ready to go" I say.

We all go to the big rondavel.Bab' Mzingelwa burn impepho to let the ancestors know that we are leaving and to guide us.My mind is not even here.

Why can't he send even a text to let me know him and my son are fine?

My knees are breaking as I follow others to the car.

"Fikile and Senamile come take snacks in my car" she say as we are about to get in the car.

This keep getting suspicious.

I don't like this game she is playing. I have tears in my eyes,anxiety is killing me.

We walk with her to her car which is parked a few feet away.She open the car and get in.

We get in the backseat and wait for her to say whatever she want to say.

"Don't panic, someone was shot" she say.

She already told us that mos.

"Who?" I ask.

"Ziphelele's husband"

What????

"Ma wait...Thapelo was shot by who?" Fiki ask.

"How is he? He is alive, right?" I ask.

"Yes he is alive, he was shot in the leg"

I sigh in relief, "Thanks God! So who shot him?"

"His uncle.It was meant for Sbusiso,he jumped right in front of him" she say shaking her head.

That's like in the movies.Who does that? He would die for his friend.I don't know how their friendship started but it's stronger than biological brotherhood.

"Wow!" Fiki exclaim in disbelief.

"Nozipho is in hospital"

Does it stop? The drama.

"Was she shot too?" I ask hopelessly.

"She witnessed everything and had a panic attack. You know how your father is, she is still in hospital being monitored"

As much these are bad news I'm still happy that nobody died. It's some consolation. We don't need another funeral.

"Ziphe will panic, cry and cause a big scene so keep this to yourselves. I'll tell her once we are home"

Home is Sbu's house. It's a Durban home for everyone. I guess that is where we are heading right now.

We take fruits, get out of the car and walk to our car silently. Zethu is the first one to ask questions.

I can't face Ziphe, I bury my head on Zanda's seat and pretend to sleep. Fiki try to lie to them but she is too obvious.

I ended up sleeping for real, it works for me because I didn't feel the rest of the journey.

We arrive at Sbu's house, it's very quiet.

I wonder who is with the kids because everyone must be in hospital.

"Oh my child!" She says walking towards us.

When did she arrive? I wonder what she fed our kids.

"Aunty" Zethu says.

We all hug her. When she hugs Ziphe she doesn't let go, she keeps brushing her back.

"I promise he will be okay"

Mom should've just told Ziphe in a good way. This will get messy.

"Aunt where are the kids?" I ask trying to stop her.

Is she stoppable though?!

"Upstairs. We just prayed, Thapelo will pull through. No guns formed against him shall kill him. Fireeee!!"
She says raising her hand to the air.

I just hold Ziphe's hand, she is breathing heavily. We can't have another panic attack patient. Fiki rush to get water.

By the time mom arrives Ziphe is already fighting us wanting to go to hospital.

We all want to go but mom said we should wait for her here. Thapelo may not even want to see Ziphe right now.

One glance at Ziphe gives her all the explanation. Plus Aunt Lydia is in the kitchen singing "Ngonyama kaJuda" very loud.

"I'm sorry my baby. He'll be fine" Mom says hugging Ziphe.

She starts crying again. The kids are now scared, Zanda ushers them upstairs.

We start comforting her.

"I did this mama. If I didn't make accusations on his niece he wouldn't have got shot" she say crying.

"True that" I say.

Mom look at me. I shrug my shoulders.

Blame caused all of this mess.

Ziphe blamed Tamika for Simtho's baby death. Dad blamed himself for not protecting Simtho as she is the one with bad lucks, mostly. Thapelo blamed himself for forcing Tamika to do dinner. Now the circle is back at Ziphe. It's tiring.

"Someone is at the gate" Zanda say walking down.

"Open" mom says.

I don't know why mom don't want us to go to the hospital.

Why did we come back flying from Inkandla then?

An old familiar man walks in with a walking stick.

"Menziwa" he greet taking off his brown hat.

I'm still trying to point and pin him in my mind.

He look at us one by one. Mom stand up,

"Bab' Mbatha" she say.

Silly me! It's Loyiso's dad of course.

"Where is makoti?" He ask.

He haven't contacted Simtho ever since the funeral.

It's like they both blocked connection and whatever relationship they once had.

"Oh Simtholile! She is not around" mom say confused.

He sigh disappointedly.

"She never came back, I told her she must" he say.

Mom look down, "I don't know that, she never told me"

"The forth full moon shouldn't have vanished without her in the premises of Mbathas. They needed protection. I've been expecting her"

I look at Fiki, she is confused as I am. Mom offer him a seat.

"What are you saying Bab' Mbatha" she ask.

"It has been hundred years since the baby was born without umhlatshelo, which is a white goat and white spotless chicken in our family. I begged her to come back before the forth moon. When I called her number it threw me to white women." He says.

I need time to process this. Can something like that happen?

We are all speechless

Chapter Eighty-Eight

Nozipho Biyela

.

When I open my eyes I'm hoping my husband would be next to me. I haven't seen him since I woke up yesterday after being rushed to hospital after fainting. They keep telling me he is going to come, I must relax and focus on getting better.

One person that has been in and out here is my father-in-law. He is the one telling the doctors how to do their job. I don't know what kind of a person he is. He should be shaken by what happened yesterday. His son nearly died, his son-in-law was shot. He should be remorseful, panicking or at least showing emotions.

"You are doing it again" he say.

I just look at him. Why must he babysit me?

"You should stop worrying, everything is fine" he say.

"I'm not a kid Mandla" I say.

He keep quiet and open yoghurt and hand it to me with a spoon.

"Thank you. I'm sure Zanda could do with some pampering too" I say.

He chuckles "She understand. Eat"

I roll my eyes "Yes boss"

Biyela walks in. He pick a medical file on the table and reads. Is he a nurse now?

He shake his head, "They are supposed to do the ultrasound after every three hours"

I sigh "Baba you're taking this too far. I'm fine, really"

"No I will not fail to protect my grandchildren again."

Mandla clear his throat, "Baba have you let go of the girl?"

He look at him, "Not before my tests clears her. That stupid uncle will pay for shooting my daughter's husband and attempting to shoot my son. That's my boy they aimed at. MY SON!!!"

I thought what happened would be an end and the beginning of the healing, forgiving and conciliation journey.

"How is Thapelo anyway?" I ask.

"He is strong, he will be fine"

I need more than that.

"Is he going to be able to walk on his own?" I ask.

They look at each other. I get my answer. He is not going to be able to walk, yet. My heart sinks. Maybe I caused all of this. Sbu didn't want to go, Mandla warned us but I didn't listen.

"I need to go see him" I say.

I get off bed before they can argue me. They have no choice but to accompany me to his ward.

Sbu is sitting beside him but they are not talking. Each of them is absorbed to his own misery. Biyela and Mandla don't get in they take a different passage.

"Hey"

They look at me. Thapelo try to smile. His smile doesn't reach his eyes.

I kiss Sbu's cheek and hug Thapelo. He just brush my arm.

"How are you?" I ask Thapelo.

He exhale "The leg is painful. Not as much as my heart though"

"I really thought one of you died. The sound of a gunshot. The smoke, I felt like my nose inhaled it. I saw Sbu falling on the floor then seconds later it was you"

Sbu put his hand on my hand, "I'm sorry"

It's not his fault, it's mine. I'm the one who exposed myself to dangerzone. I pushed him to go.

"I don't know how I can thank you for saving my husband. He was going to die. The kids would've asked where is their daddy. I don't know what I would've done without him. Sphiwo need his father's guidance, he is the girls superhero and my unborn baby wouldn't have known..." I can't control my voice nor stop the tears.

Thapelo clear his throat, "You don't have to thank me"

I wipe the tears, "But I do, I'm grateful"

He chuckles, "What everyone don't know is Sbu, Donald, Mandla and I became a family before everyone attached on our lives. Before we married, before we built careers and houses. Before everything we became a family. After everything we are a family."

I nod "That's why I appreciate you guys. You're a family"

"Before the blood that run through our veins we are a family. I will never let him die,not if I'm able to unable it" he say.

Sbu exhale, "How did it come to this?"

"Your family of blood, my wife included, accused my niece of poisoning Simtho out of jealousy.Your father, my father-in-law kidnapped her and had her men beat her over those accusations" he say blazing with anger.

Sbu sigh, "He over reacted.I guess he is not over being unable to help Simtho with Loyiso.Now he is trying to make up for that by protecting her and playing that hero he never was"

I nod "He indeed was trying to play that hero but he took it to a whole new unnecessary, immature level"

Sbu chuckles "He have ears everywhere"

I roll my eyes on him.

"So how is your uncle after he mistakenly shot you?" I ask Thapelo.

"He came after they took the bullet out,he told me I must be strong men don't lie in hospitals"

Is he for real?

"What?" I ask shocked.

Sbu laughs "He still wanted to shoot me.If Thapelo wasn't here by now I would be having fish with Jesus"

It shouldn't be even a joke. This means Thapelo's uncle is still in his war pants.It's not over.

Aunt Lydia walks in with three beers.I stand on my feet.

"What is that doing here?" I ask my arms folded.

"We need this more than ever.Times like this need beers.Boys help yourselves" she say putting icy cold beers on the table.

"Open for me bruh" Thapelo says.

I glare at him, "You're a patient. You are taking injections and medication for goodness sake"

"Nywe nywe! Leave him to drink,he was shot he need a beer. Where is your wife anyway?" She ask.

"I have a wife?" Thapelo ask gulping the beer.

I'm praying a nurse or security guard walks in and call police on Aunt Lydia for violating hospital rules. How did she even get past the security?

"She is not here. Aren't they're still in Inkandla?" Sbu ask.

She frown, "They came back,isn't Thapelo was shot by his hooligan uncle and your pregnant wife fainted? She is supposed to be here, she left two hours before me.I would have came with her but I had

to accompany Mbatha to Simtho's hospital. He is the grandfather of the baby, it's his ancestors that took the baby"

I sink back on my chair, "Mbatha? Loyiso's dad. How did he know?"

She laughs "His ancestors connect with him. Don't undermine the elders"

Did I undermine anyone?

"Aunt you said Ziphe left two hours before you, where is she?" Thapelo ask.

"I should be the one asking you that. She is supposed to be here" she say.

Sbu take his cellphone and dial.

He look at us, "It goes to voicemail"

"Maybe she left it home, she passed by the shops first" I say.

Thapelo close his eyes and grunt, "Noooo! No no no!"

We all look at him.

"Are you in pain? Do you need another beer or injection?" Aunt Lydia ask.

"I should've known. My uncle is going with this the wrong way. I don't like gangsters, all I wanted was my niece back" he say crying.

"What is it?" Sbu ask panicking.

"Eye for an eye" he say tears running down, punching his phone with a shaking hand.

What does he mean eye for an eye?

Chapter Eighty-Nine

Fikile Biyela

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Ziphe has been kidnapped. It's another shocking episode. Another flame generating the war even further. We have no suspects other than Thapelo's family.

Tamika has been cleared, both by hospital results and Mbatha. The poor girl has paid for the sin she never committed. Her mistake was to have a crush on Don, dislike Simtho and serve her dinner the night she lost her baby. I hope she will mentally recover from all of this, I doubt she will forgive us anytime soon.

Loyiso's dad has solved the puzzle. It was the Mbatha's ancestors that strangled their own baby. I don't understand how they roll but I know never to underestimate them. Very powerful dead people.

It's about time dad bow down his head to the Mokoenas and apologise. His stubbornness won't do any justice, instead more people will get hurt. The sooner he let this whole thing go the better for everyone.

"Ma" I say walking to the balcony where she is having hot tea.

I didn't know hot tea calm nerves, mom would surprise you. Rather have a cold beer.

She is deep in thoughts, she doesn't even notice me taking a seat next to her.

I touch her shoulder, "Ma!!"

She turn, "Oh Fikile I didn't see you coming here"

"You need to talk with dad" I say.

She sigh, "You think they're hurting her?"

"No. I mean she is their daughter-in-law for good heavens"

She shrugs "We've hurt our son-in-law too"

I think time for whining and making square faces is up. She need to stand up and take action.

"Go to your husband now. Let Tamika go" I say firmly.

She look at me "Your father..."

I put my hand up, "Before this destroys all of us and Ziphelele get hurt"

She exhale, "Close the doors, I'll tell security guards not to leave the gates"

This is what I'm talking about. I follow her as she walk inside the house. She walk with determination and anger.

"The mess!" Sena says after she walked out.

I let out a huge breath, "One day we will talk about this and laugh. For now I need a glass of wine"

"Never mind the wine, Sbu's whisky" she say.

Zethu walk in looking like a zombie, "Have you tried calling Ziphe again?"

I look at Sena, she shake her head.

"Nope" I tell her.

She fold her arms, "So much for big sisters! Shouldn't both of you be out there looking for her?"

"Dad have almost twenty people looking for her. What difference could we do?" Sena says.

"I don't know but don't be hanging with whisky bottles having fun while our sister is out there. God knows what she is going through!"

I think she is taking her frustrations out on us. We are all devastated. Having shots of whisky doesn't mean we care less or having fun.

"Hey don't fuckin'..."

I cut through Sena and ask her if Tyson is fine.

She exhale, "He is fine although we haven't talked all day"

"Call him,the drama in this family shouldn't come between our love lives" I say.

Sena chuckles, "Do you have a love life?"

I look at her.I can't believe she is asking me this, in a mocking way.

She smiles, "Exactly. You need to get a man,even a drunkard,you'll dust him up"

Zethu look at her disgusted, "Can't you have this men talk once Ziphe has been found?"

Sena wave her away,"She seriously need to get laid,even Biyela himself is worried about the spiderweb between her thighs"

My mouth hangs open, "You're kidding, right?"

She laughs, "No,he came to my house all tears saying his daughter would die a reformed virgin"

I want to believe her but the way she is laughing about it make me doubt her.Zethu click her tongue and walk away scrolling on her phone.

"I think we need to pray" I say.

Sena frown, "Why?"

"Simtho lost her baby,Thapelo got shot, Ziphe is kidnapped and Zethu is showing human being emotions" I say.

"I'm tired of crying, this whole situation is emotionally dragging all of us.It's drama after drama,like where is the happiness and comfortability we've worked for all our lives.You know,that 'ensuring financial and physical safety'.I think we deserve a break,especially Ziphe and Thapelo"

I nod and swallow a shot.

"When all of this is over we're taking a holiday to Cape Town.We do need a break" I say.

She clears her throat, "I don't like that place, Cape Town, we can go to Eastern Cape instead"

Since when she doesn't like Cape Town? Her face has completely changed.She really hate Cape Town, I wonder why.

"Wherever you want as long as they sell wine" I say.

"We need to have a talk with Ziphelele once all is settled" she say.

I like how we all believe Ziphelele is coming back in one piece and everything will get back to normal.Faith can get you anywhere, they say.

"What talk?" I ask.

She give me the look that ask if I'm stupid.

"You heard how she talked with Thapelo in the hospital. That shouldn't be a way we address our husbands. Thapelo is a great guy, he has put up with a lot of shit from her the best she can do is to give him respect" she says.

I look at her, "You're misreading this whole thing. She was just listening to her instincts, which unfortunately were wrong"

"Do you know how many fights and arguments I've had with Lwazi? Not even once had I sidelined him or made him look unworthy in front of my family" she says.

I sigh, "She was just frustrated about Simtho's situation and all the errors pointed at Tamika then"

"That doesn't excuse the manner in which she addressed Thapelo. I'm a bitch in the bedroom, I shout at him in the kitchen, I order him around in the evenings but when we are out, with other people, I give him his place" she says.

Maybe she should be my mentor once I get married. It looks like she knows all the do's and don'ts.

"Hey hey hey" the voice says coming from the door.

We put the glasses away and hid the whisky. I grab a kitchen cloth and wipe the counter. Sena arranges the cups in the cupboard.

"Oh here you my kids! Good to see you taking care of your brother's house" she says from the entrance.

"Hey auntie. How are the patients?" Sena asks.

"Nozipho is very judgemental and needs to come out now. Her kids are handful while she is relaxing on hospital beds writing menus of what she wants to eat. I don't like how she threw the beers I carried for the boys in hospital"

I laugh, "What? You carried beers to the hospital"

She clicks her tongue, "Anyway Thapelo is fine. He is physically recovering, spiritually he is devastated by his wife's disappearance."

"Thanks God nobody died! All that is left is for Biyela to set Tamika free and Ziphe to come home" I say.

After a few minutes she walks away to check on the kids and shouts at Zanda and Zethu.

My phone rings on top of the counter. Sena takes it and passes it to me.

It's Skhumbuzo, my boyfriend.

I reject the call and send him a text to call me later. I don't want Sena to know that I have a boyfriend, yet. She will snoop around, meet him behind my back and tell the whole world.

I'm still on phase one of this relationship. We are still getting to know each other. I love him, no doubts but I need an assurance and remarkable progress before I can announce the news and do the introductions.

"Who is Skhumbuzo?" She asks.

What did I say about snooping around? In that two seconds she had my cellphone on her hand she crammed the caller name.

"The Tongaat meat supplier guy" I say.

"Wasn't he white?" She ask staring at me.

I don't break her stare, "I changed him"

She nod, "I guess he wanted to supply the meat again"

I roll my eyes, "Go kiss your man's ass"

She laugh "We call them suppliers these days"

I walk away before I raise more suspicions.

Later when we are making lunch for kids mom and dad walk in.They look devastated than before.

I stand up, "Did you let Tamika go?"

Mom exhale, "Yes your dad did.He even got her the best doctors and psychologist monitoring her"

That's a relief!

"Now Ziphe will come home and everything will fall into its place" Zanda say in huge relief.

"Ziphe was not abducted by Mokoena's uncles" dad says.

"What?" Zethu ask.

"Her car is in Checkers parking lot in town.She is untraceable"

I don't understand what he is saying. Ziphe was taken by Thapelo's uncle so that he let Tamika go.

"She was taken by Thapelo's uncle" I say.

"It's not always those we suspect the most.I don't know who have my daughter" he say sitting on the couch powerlessly.

Chapter Ninety

Zanda Dlamini

.

Ziphe is still out there.Nobody knows where. Her father has tried all he could, he is still trying,to find her.The atmosphere is sour in the Biyela's house.

Nozipho has come back as well as Mandla,Simtho and Don.Sbu came to check on his kids and returned back to the hospital. Thapelo need his support more than ever.He is going through a lot emotionally and physically.

Simtho was supposed to leave with her father-in-law. He wants to perform a cleansing ceremony for her. They also need to fetch the baby's spirit and name her to avoid bad lucks. That old man knows his ancestor's story, the sooner Simtho listens and follows his instructions the better. I have nothing but respect for him. He is very humble and regards Simtho with royal respect.

The lastborn is missing, everyone is frustrated and sitting on edges. Their mother is worse, she is furious and not talking to Biyela. Apparently this is his fault and he has one day to find her or else...!

"Baba don't just stand there" she says from the kitchen passage with her hands on her hips.

Biyela pushes the cellphone he was scrolling back in his pocket and sighs.

"My boys are all over South Africa, there is no lead" he says.

"Find the lead, I want my daughter here by dinner" she shouts.

Sena chuckles and mumbles something under her breath. Her mother notices what she is doing and comes with an ambulance velocity to her. She grabs her ear and twists it.

We are all shocked. This is not Mam' Biyela I know.

Biyela grabs her, "Mama kaFikile!"

She yanks him off and points at Sena, "I will sort you out, don't ever mock me. I'm an elder to you, your mother"

Sena is rubbing her ear, shaken. Quinton is looking at his mom confused but clearly amused. The twins are giggling behind their hands.

Biyela pulls his wife's hand, "You will not take out your frustrations on my daughter. Come take it all out on me, isn't I'm the one who caused all of this?"

They disappear in the staircases.

I think I need a whisky shot too but my status doesn't allow me.

"Are you hurt?" Mandla asks.

Sena shakes her head, "I'm just annoyed"

Zethu's phone rings. She answers it and walks away. I must say she is the most frustrated one. She is thinking of the worse while we all of us hold on that slim lace of hope.

She has only eaten two spoons of food and drunk a lot of energy drinks.

"Go lie in the bedroom we will tell you if anything new happens" Nozipho tells Simtho.

She balances by the couch, stands up and walks slowly to the bedroom. She looks like hell. Don is falling asleep on the other side.

"Join your girl" Mandla says.

He shakes his head and buries his face with his hands.

In the meantime we need to start cooking. Not so sure how many people are going to eat but the pots need to be boiling.

When I stand up to go, Mandla hold my hand.

"I'd like to speak to you"

He sound serious. All eyes are on us.

"Let's go to the kitchen then" I say.

He follows me to the kitchen. I take the potatoes to peel while we talk.

"Are you okay?" He ask.

"Physically, yes. I'm worried about Ziphe" I say.

He nods, "She is going to come back. How is my little angel?"

I smile "Fine I guess"

He wrap his arms around my waist, "I miss you"

"I wish all of this was over. I miss my house. Not that I don't want to be here, I do, this is my family they're always there for me" I vent.

He exhale, "I'm sure they won't mind if you take a little break"

I sigh, "I don't know"

"You can go babe, we will manage " she say from the entrance.

We turn to look at her.

"No I don't want to go, I want to be here and support you guys. I just feel overwhelmed and miss a bit of normalcy" I say.

She walk in, "Me too. I wish I can go to my house. Mom's bad vibes aren't my favourite"

"She is just hurting" Mandla says.

"We are all hurting but we're not twisting other's ears and having sex upstairs"

Wtf?

I cover my mouth, "No get out!"

She roll her eyes, "I want to have a cocktail, like right now"

She is still holding the first position when it comes to drunkards of this family. It's a good thing that she loves working too much and doesn't find enough time to feed her drinking habit.

"Fiki you need to slow down. You girls are the first to give instructions to us not to drink in front of the kids" Mandla say.

She grab a banana, "I wish I can drink all the troubles away.I could do with some weed too"

I laugh, "If you had a boyfriend you would be tamed by now"

She smile "Your beautiful jacket"

"What jacket?" I ask confused.

"Your beautiful jacket" she say chewing.

I'm not wearing any jacket.What is she on about?

"I said you need a boyfriend so that you cut your habits" I say.

"And I said your beautiful jacket" she say throwing banana peels in the sink and walking away.

Mandla laughs.

I don't know why she avoid the boyfriend topic.

"I miss doing what Biyela is doing upstairs" he whisper in my ear.

I turn and look at him stunned, "Now it's not the time,my friend is still missing and your friend is in hospital"

He kiss my neck, "It doesn't mean we should abstain.Look at Biyela"

I roll my eyes, "He is just trying to calm his wife down, she was throwing unnecessary tantrums. He just want to show her that he still have control somewhere"

He laugh, "I also want to take my mind somewhere and forget about reality"

I sigh, "Where?"

"We can drive to our house and come back later" he say happily.

"Fine I'll tell Sena to come cook"

I wash my hands and follow him to the lounge.

"Guys we are going out for a while.Sena please go carry on with dinner" he announce.

"Out where?" Zethu ask.

"Home,we'll come back later" he say.

"Mhhh go Weezy go!" Sena says.

I give her a look,she giggles.Her mom should've twisted her ear harder.

"Oh I see" Zethu say smiling.

I hate this.I pick my cellphone and walk out leaving number of silly giggles behind.

We get in the car and drive to the house. I'm ready to scream for something pleasurable. I need to sweat and stretch my legs for good use.

A car hoot and drive after us as we drive through the gate. Who is this now?

"Is that your sister?" He ask.

Oh yes it is Phumla!

I was trying to have a break by coming here.

"Guys I've been waiting for hours" she shout.

I get out of the car and walk to her.

"Hello Glowie" she say opening her arms.

It's been a while. I hug her.

"Hey what brings you here?" I ask.

"Hey I have hot gossips, do you remember Thula?"

All this way for hot gossips?

Do I even have the energy for this?

"Phumla come on, I'm tired" I say.

"He died last night, they say he overdosed" she say happily.

I don't know how someone's death comes as hot gossip.

"I have something serious to attend with Mandla, if you don't mind" I say.

She look at me, "I'll chill in the dining room then"

I sigh.

She is not getting the memo. I let her be.

Mandla doesn't look pleased at all. He greet her simply and walk away.

"He is so full of himself" she say clicking her tongue.

I roll my eyes "I don't want any drama"

"Drama is your man who can't fuck properly"

I stop dead on my tracks, "Say that again"

"Come on don't pretend like he is a sex god. He need to be humble, I spent years of my life entertaining his artless bedroom skills" she say.

"I think you should go"

She look at me, "Why? He is the one who act like I took his virginity and dumped him"

My temper is unstable these days. It goes in and out of the ICU.I haven't found the medication for it so I make sure I diet with calmness.

"Please go I'll call" I say.

She sigh and walk back.

I count 1..2..3 before I proceed with my way

I find Mandla drinking juice in the kitchen.I walk past him and sit on the chair.

"Where is your sister?" He ask.

I give him a 'shut up' glare.

"Well,shall I pour the juice for you?"

"Yes please" I say.

He chuckles, "I wonder what she said"

"I swear I was going to slap her if we stayed two minutes longer together"

He laughs, "You can put her in sale"

I grin, "Nobody would buy her even if I did"

"Let me guess,she made a comment on your weight" he say.

What does he mean 'on my weight'?

"So you're trying to tell me I'm fat?" I ask.

"No,not at all" He say.

I shake my head, "Well she made a comment on how artless and dull you were on bed.I nearly lost it"

"This is too sweet,I must add water" he say.

I watch him pouring water in the glass,stirring and give it to me quietly.

"Thanks babe" I say.

He nods.

"I'll go take a bath,you can watch a movie or something"

I put the juice down, "Or I could join you in the bath"

"No" he say yanking my hand off.

And now???

I make us something to eat while he is gone.

"Look what I made" I say showing him a plate.

"Nice.Let's eat and go"

Go where? Why is he suddenly this angry?

He grab the plate and eat silently. He is acting like the pregnant me.

"I can't wait to show you my new moves" I say.

He put the plate away, "I'll be in the car"

I look at him shocked, "What did we come here for?"

"Make fast Zanda,I need to check on Thapelo too" he say and walk out.

I'm left stunned on the chair. What the hell is wrong with him?

Chapter Ninety-One

Nozipho Biyela

.

R100 000 reward has been promised to whoever that can help us find Ziphe.It is the fourth day since she went missing. Thapelo has forced his way out of the hospital. He is using crutches, I don't know what difference he thought he was going to make. He refused to stay under one roof with Biyela.He went back to his house,Mandla volunteered to go stay with him since he refused to hire a nurse.

He is not the only one hating Biyela's guts.Nontombi too.She blame him and refuse to share the same oxygen as him until her last born is back in one piece.Yesterday she packed and moved in Sena's house.

Biyela is defeated,powerless and broken. He is used to his power getting him everything. Well,not anymore.

Zethu also walked out shortly after Nontombi.According to her we are not trying hard enough to find Ziphe.She also said some hurtful words to Sbu and Biyela.I know it was emotions but it was uncalled for.Biyela and Sbu are broken enough,they don't need the family to push more.

The police have been informed. The missing person case is under investigation. The whole town is decorated with Ziphe's pictures.We've been getting chancers calls,nothing concrete so far.

My husband walk in.Right now I want to hug him and tell him everything will be fine.

"Hey" he say getting on bed full clothed.

He is too quick to lose weight or it's just my eyes? His eyes show restlessness and broken spirit.

He kiss my forehead and wrap his arms around me.I lie on his chest with my head.

"I love you,you know that?" I say.

"Ya I love you too mama"

I brush his hand, "This too shall pass.She is going to come back"

"They hate us.Me and dad" he say.

"Who hate you?"

"Fikile,Sena and Zethu.I see it in their eyes.We failed to protect them,we failed our number one priority" he say.

I exhale, "It's beyond anyone's control.You nearly died for this mess to end,they know that they are just frustrated"

"Fiki didn't even eat with us.I feel like the family is breaking apart" he say sorrowfully.

I think we should worry less about the ones in a security guarded house.We have a missing sister that we should give our heartache to.

"It will be over" I assure him.

He let out a long sigh.

"I'm worried about the kids.They are picking the mood" I say.

"Why are you saying so?" He ask.

"Liya didn't eat her supper,Junior has been in his bedroom all day.Did you see him today?"

He shake his head "I don't know what to do Nozipho"

Biyela must look at this deeply and think back.He might have hurt someone and created enemies.This is being done to hurt his family.

"I'm hungry"

Say what!?!

He is the one who gave his meat to Aunt Lydia.He said he is not hungry.

"You said you're full and gave your food away" I say.

"I wasn't hungry then, I am now"

Okay so now I must get up from this comfortable, warm bed and walk through cold passages and freezing stairs to make him food.

I yawn, "We need to rest.There is fried fish,you'll warm it up"

He doesn't respond. I close my eyes,pretending to be falling asleep.He remove my hand slowly and reach for his cellphone.

This coming weekend was supposed to be Sena's lobolas and Sunday family dinner.

The lobola is going to be postponed,family dinner will be cancelled.I was looking forward to dinner.I miss the family, united on one table.Mostly I would've enjoyed the food,Nontombi is chef-connected.

There is a knock on the door. Who is it? Let it be not the twins.

"Who is it?" I shout.

Oops! I was deeply asleep.

"Come in" he shout after me.

Biyela walks in with a plate of food. They're kidding me!

"Here" he say giving Sbu.

"Thanks Baba"

Is he trying to paint me the bad wife?

Damn! I can't even face my father-in-law right now.

He quickly walk out after saying the second 'goodnight'.

I sit on my ass, "Seriously?"

He look at me with his mouth filled up. He mustn't act clueless here.

"Why are you shaming me?" I ask angrily.

"By doing what?"

Is he stupid?

"How dare you ask your father to perform my duties?" I ask.

He frown, "You refused and pretended to be asleep"

"You were supposed to go to the kitchen yourself. I dished for you and you said you're not hungry. Now was I supposed to wake at 9pm to do that again?" I say.

"I don't see the big deal"

I click my tongue, "The big deal is your father think I'm not taking care of you"

"Do we still have people who care about what others think?" he ask biting a breadroll.

I grab my pillow and sleep the opposite direction.

He eat until he finishes before he ask if I'm deciding to feed him my toes all night.

I ignore him. He need to learn about consideration before doing stupid things.

"Your feet are on my mouth" I say.

"Come on, I always put them there. You put your face in their place" he say.

I push his feet away violently. He laughs.

OMG! He is laughing. I missed his laughter.

I look at him happily.

"Aren't you mad now?" He ask laughing.

I roll my eyes and push my head right under the covers.He touch my nose with his toes.

I turn back immediately, "It's not funny,I don't want to sleep like this"

He smiles, "You vowed before the priest that you will do it"

My vows said nothing about sleeping positions.

I sleep with my back on his chest. He sneak his arms around my waist and kiss my neck. My anger vanishes.

"I love you" he say.

I smile, "I love you too moron"

He exhale "Hopefully God will answer our prayers tomorrow.I'm tired of praying and hoping"

"He will." I say.

Faith got us here,it will get us through tomorrow.

Chapter Ninety-Two

Sena Biyela

.

After dinner yesterday I decided to follow my mom with my little family.She need someone to be there for her. Her emotions are running wild,I'm worried about her. She is not the type that lose temper easily.Lately she is biting everyone's head off.Ziphe's case is taking a stroll on her.

My dad on the other hand is a walking zombie.Mom has made sure to bruise his conscience. She wanted to break him apart.A part of me is glad they won't be under one roof for now.My dad is devastated enough, this is the time where we should be standing together as a family.

Waking next to my man,on our bed in our bedroom almost feel like normalcy,except that my sister is still mia.The nightmare isn't over yet.

It look like he's been up for a while.He is on his phone scrolling.

"Morning" I say.

He put the phone under the pillow and wrap his arm around me.He give me a light peck.

"Finally you open your eyes. I missed you"

I smile "I had to enjoy the moment of peace"

"Well some good news to start your morning with,Jay is out of hospital" he say.

"Wow! Somewhere, somehow something great is happening. I thought Jesus has died again and failed to wake up"

He sigh, "He didn't babe. Soon Ziphe will be home"

I'm tired of hearing that verse. She is not home today, I wanted her home today.

Why is God not answering our prayers?

A loud knock, no a massive door banging, disturbs us.

I know Quinton wouldn't do that. He is busy watching morning cartoons. I get off bed and put my gown on.

It's our angry guest.

"Mom"

"Is this the time a woman wake up?" She ask glaring at me with fire spitting eyes.

I yawn, "Mom this is my house"

"I don't care. You should know when to wake up. Who is making breakfast for your fiancée if you're still wearing gowns with unwashed face?"

I don't need this so early in the morning. I don't know this mother. My mother is soft and good-mannered.

"Lwazi doesn't eat this early" I say.

She pull me out and close the door behind.

"Senamile I didn't raise a mash of a daughter. Go bath and get ready to go to the shops"

Shops???

"Why do I need to go to the shops?" I ask.

"Because you don't have any proper breakfast food. Your cheese is two days from the expiration date, you have only 250ml of milk. And that white bread that has turned brown? Where do you buy those eggs? Ever heard of fresh tomatoes in your life?"

I sigh, "Fine, make a list"

She walk away shouting. I open the door and walk to Lwazi laughing. I throw myself on bed and groan.

"Be patient with her" he say.

I look at him, "Who is gonna be patient with me?"

He smile "Your man. You let her take her frustrations on you, I'll let you take out yours on me"

"I know in which way" I say.

"I love you because of that sharp brain" he say.

There is no time for morning glory, I go shower and dress up to go.

I find her in the kitchen cooking. The smell kill me slowly.

"I'm here"

She turn around from the stove, "Don't worry I settled for amagwinya (vetkoeks),you can go later to shop for lunch"

"Amagwinya Ma!" I say.

She raise an eyebrow, "You're not in a position to make demands.I saved your lazy ass,I'm sure your man is few minutes away from fainting. This is the best breakfast your kitchen can afford"

I sit on the chair, "We can order breakfast"

She give me a warning look and turn back to turn amagwinya in the pot.

Lwazi and Quinton walk in as we set the table.

"Just in time" she say.

I roll my eyes behind her.

We sit around the table.Lwazi is happy with today's breakfast. He is eating like a hunter after a long journey.

"Do you like your food babyboy?" She ask Quinton.

He make a funny face and shake his head.

"Well you can't always get what you like in life.Eat and finish,there are kids who wish they can have what you have.Be grateful" she say.

"But Ma he can have a cereal if he is not happy" I say.

She give me a look.

"I don't want you to raise your children the same way I raised you.Highlighting that they always have choices"

I nod and keep quiet.Lwazi keep the conversation heated in the table.They get along very well.

After breakfast I'm summoned to a heated 'How to be a good wife' lesson in her bedroom. I don't know how long my mom is going to be like this nor how long will I be able to put up with her.

She rearrange my cupboards and clean my fridge.She is taking her frustrations on my kitchen,cleaning it until it's spotless and shining like a diamond.

Later I receive a list of grocery I need to go buy.It's a long list that include 10kgs but I don't mind I'm happy to go out and get some fresh air.I might drive around Lwazi's office to give him lunch since he left without his lunchtin drive to Getway Mall.As I park a girl wearing a short jean wave at me.I roll down the window, more girls appears. They point at me and talk to each other.

It's one of those. I roll up the window and put on my sunglasses. I send Lwazi a text asking what he would like to have for his lunch. He doesn't respond, I'll have to decide for him.

I take my bag and get out. The girl that was waving walks to me.

"Hi Sena"

I want to ignore her like I usually ignore people but somehow I return the greeting and wait for her to say whatever she wanted to say.

"I saw your sister that is missing" she says.

I take the sunglasses out.

"When, where?" I ask.

She glances back at the others, playing with her hands.

"It was five days ago, I was with my mom shopping. When we went to our car, a dark guy was carrying her to another car. We thought she had fainted or something and the guy was helping her" she says.

I let out a deep sigh, "Let's go to the car, please"

She nods quickly.

We get in the car, the other girls walk away.

"Those are?" I ask.

"Oh they're my friends. I came here because I knew you were coming here from your Facebook page"

I need to cut down on social networks.

"You say you saw the guy who took her?"

She nods, "He was dark, tall and decent looking"

"Did you see which car he took her to? Anything from the model, colour or registration number"

She shakes her head, "We didn't pay attention, it was raining. I thought it was a bodyguard so it didn't really matter until I saw the posts"

"Okay thanks for letting me know. What's your name?" I ask.

"I'm Londeka from Umlazi L section"

I nod, "Londeka I need your contact details. We will follow up from your information"

"I hope you find her, she is my Facebook friend and very nice. Maybe you can ask for Checkers footage, I'm sure they have cameras facing the parking" she says.

I exhale, "They had a technical problem that day. When it rains it pours"

She puts her hand on mine, "I'll tell my mom to pray for her"

I smile, "Your numbers please"

She give me her cellphone number and say goodbye.I sit in the car for almost thirty minutes making calls.

I don't have the energy to continue with my journey but I remember the lioness at home.

I buy everything she wrote including the 10kg of sugar beans.I don't know why do we need so much beans.Maybe we are going to sell bean bunnies.

When I load the grocery in the boot a hand tap my shoulder. I nearly jump up.

When I turn I'm welcomed by a dark guy wearing a khaki short and animal skin sandals. He is wearing a white torn vest on the top.

"I don't have money" I say.

"I don't want money" he say.

My heart start pounding. Maybe it's Ziphe's kidnapper.

"What do you want?" I ask trembling.

"Read this at home" he say handing me a brown envelope.

I take the envelope with a big frown.

"Everything okay?" A man wearing black asks.

I recognise his face. My dad is stubborn,I told him I don't want to be followed around by his scary people.

I look at the envelope guy,he look chilled.

"I think so" I say.

He walk a few feet away and stand watching us.

"Who are you?" I ask the guy.

"I'm Nkabenhle but it really doesn't matter. Go well" he say and walk away.

I watch him until he get in the white bakkie and drive away.He is not tall so he is not the kidnapper.But who is he?

"Check this for me" I tell the bodyguard.

He take the envelope and open it.He look inside and close it.

"It's just a letter" he say.

I nod, "Thank you"

I drive home agitated. I wonder what's in this letter.Why was it delivered to me personally by the guy who look like he live in the caves?

Who is Nkabenhle? What's in this letter?

I'll find out once I'm home.

Chapter Ninety-Three

Zethu Biyela

.

He has taken a day off. I'm grateful for his presence, I'm a bit better with him around.

"Are you okay?" He ask.

I put the plate I was wiping inside the cupboard and sit on the chair.

"I'm not okay. Never will be, until my sister comes home"

He run his hand through his hair and take a seat opposite me.

"I'm confused" he say.

I give him a 'go ahead' look.

He lean back on the chair, "Why is your father failing to trace her?"

He is asking the wrong person. I shrug my shoulders.

"Why am I unable to find a lead? I've never failed before"

I sigh "I don't have answers Tyson"

He bite his lower lip then stare at me deeply.

"Unless someone who know us very well is involved" he say.

I frown, "Someone like who?"

"Loyiso is dead, my cousin died because of your father but we're not there. It's only me and your father now" he say thoughtfully.

"So you want to say it either you or my dad?" I ask irritated.

His stupidity is on another level. He amazes me, white people should be bright.

"Your dad wouldn't have kidnapped his own daughter" he say.

I sigh and rest my head on the table.

"You're clever, hey" I say mockingly.

"No babe who ever it is is on a mission. Eventually Biyela is going to turn his eyes to me. We don't have a good history"

I lift my head up and look at him, "I'm worried sick about my sister and you're worried about your head speculations" I say angrily.

"No babe last week I was informed that a former friend left the US.I'm wondering why he haven't told me he is back in the country"

Now I want to watch Imizwilili or listen to Ukhozi FM Abasiki Bebunda.

He doesn't care how bored my face is he continue with his speech.

"Biyela wanted him dead,he left the country. Then Biyela killed my cousin,we became enemies. Then I fell in love with his daughter,we started afresh.Whoever it is want revenge on Biyela but his other purpose is for Biyela to turn against me" he say.

"Who is that?" I ask.

"Lebo"

I've never heard of him before. He look troubled by his own thoughts. Maybe he is correct, I don't know my father's enemies.

"I'll tell dad, he will look into it" I say.

"No,don't. I will handle this myself, I'll tell him once I got enough evidence"

I nod.

He stand and walk away brushing his hands together. I hope he get to the bottom of this.

He walk back after a while with a big smile.

"What happened?" I ask.

"It's him"

"You sound sure now" I say raising an eyebrow.

"It's the only bastard that can create computer viruses and damage cameras in Checkers without anyone noticing" he say smiling.

"Why does it make you happy? My sister could be dead"

"He won't kill her yet.He love stupid mind games" he say.

I take out my phone, "I'm telling dad"

"I need to go man hunting" he say kissing my lips lightly.

He walk out with determination. Unfortunately I can't reach my dad,I send Sbu a text message.

I haven't apologised to them.I badly took my frustrations out on them. They don't need us turning against them, making them feel like failures. I have to send them apology gifts.

My phone rings.It's my mom.

"Hey Ma" I say picking up.

"Come to Senamile's house now" she says.

"Why?" I ask.

"I need extra hands,these couches are heavy Lwazi is not here"

Sigh!

"Ma there are security guards there walking up and down I'm sure they won't mind lending a hand" I say.

She chuckles, "Nana,hey get your ass here now"

What is wrong with this woman? Why must she fight everyone? Fighting won't bring back Ziphelele.

"Okay" I say and drop the call.

Why it is my duty to push Sena's couches? Where is she?

Who even asked my mom to clean that house?

I fetch my sunhat,sunglasses and bag and go.

I find her vacuuming the carpet.

"Hey mom" I greet.

The vacuum is blocking her ears.I go stand in front of her.She stop vacuuming.

She smile, "Your advice worked, a security guard helped me"

I sigh, "So I drove here for nothing?"

"Not at all. I'm going to teach you how to roll a steambread" she say.

"Mom I have important news to share" I say.

The door burst open as she is about to say something.

It's Sena.

Why is she running?

"There is a letter" she say.

"What letter?" I ask.

She have a brown envelope on her hand.She open it with trembling hands.

"It's doesn't have any address but it's Ziphe's handwriting" she say sitting on the couch.

My knees start trembling. Only people who have committed suicide leave letters.

"Read" mom say breathing heavily.

"Dear family, this is me.

I don't know where I am but I'm safe. The guy who delivered this letter is the one who saved me. I was kidnapped after buying fruits for Thapelo on my way to the hospital. I don't know who it was but he was on the phone with a woman who had Phumlile Miya's voice. I'm not accusing Phumla of anything, I've done enough damage with that style. Dad must find out about that guy he is on mission to destroy his legacy.

I hope my husband is healing, as well as his niece. I hope one day they can forgive me. Unfortunately I can't be there with you. I found peace I've always yearned for. Maybe staying where I am will make me heal from everything I've gone through.

I love you so much guys. I love my husband. He is a great man, I know I don't deserve him.

Don't try to find me.

Z, Mokoena"

"This is a scam" I say.

"She was forced to write this. My daughter can't just leave and want not to be found" mom say standing on her feet.

Sena take out another small envelope inside the big one.

"What is in that?" I ask.

She open it, "Her picture"

It is indeed Ziphe.

Her hair is cut, she is smiling, wearing a green dress I've never seen before. The only surroundings I can see behind her are big trees, a little boy facing the other way and animal-skin sandals lying on the ground.

The picture have yesterday's date on it. So she really is safe, judging by her smile.

Why would she want to leave us? Drop out of varsity on her last year? Desert her marriage?

"Thapelo needs her. This is selfishness on higher grade" I say.

"Why she doesn't want to come back? We all need her" mom say crying.

I brush her back "Don't cry mom, she is safe at least"

Sena put the contents back in the envelope and look at us deep in thoughts.

"Unless they did something bad to her before she got her escape. Something that disturbed her state of mind, in consolation she escaped reality and went to start over" she say.

"Sena don't even start coming up with excuses for her. She was kidnapped, got help and should've returned home to her ill husband and her troubled family" I say angrily.

"Her choices, her life. We have a mysterious guy on our backs" she says.

I exhale, "Who is he?"

"Muzi go around creating enemies now my kids have to pay" mom say wiping her tears.

Sena play with her ring, "Phumlile is our link.I need to call dad"

She walk away.

If it's that guy Tyson was talking about, how would he know Phumla?

I'm confused. I also need to call Tyson.

Chapter Ninety-Four

Nkabenhle (highlights)

.

A loud scream come from one of the huts at the back.

Shattering screams follow.

When I first came here this is what made me consider going back home.Then I would remember why I fled from home.

I persevered until I got used to it.Now I don't wake up,no matter how loud she get.She can even circle my hut,singing, beating drums,I don't shriek.

Her name is Ngqongqokazi.They say she is from the Eastern Cape.This is supposedly her place of calling where she has created world of peace.

She is not close to anyone,she only show up on your door when she have your future prediction or sensing a dark cloud over you.She spend most of her times in the forests,searching for certain herbs.She is the goddess of this place although Mkhululi is the chief in command of the place.

It is a place called Phakadeni.It's far from anywhere.Near the river called Nondwengu.It's serve as source of freshwater,fishes and cleansing noble river to our community.

Nobody is related to one another, we are a group of people coming from different places.Here to escape real life, miseries and disfigured personalities. Each time a new member comes,Ngqongqokazi sense it.Men build a new hut for that person.

Men are in charge of building, hunting,fishing and training boys to fight.They'll need those lessons when they go out to big cities,where real life happens.

Women sew,cook,plough vegetables and train girls.

We do travel to towns to get what we can't get here.

It's a bit of a struggle when you're new,as time goes by you enjoy and think less about electronics and modern colourful life.

Today we are going to board Nondwengu with fishing nets. We usually go when the sun is up and heating.

I hear several voices outside. We have some early birds. I glance at the old watch on my wooden table I made three years ago. It's two ticks away from six o'clock.

I get up and pour cold water in the basin to wash my face.

There is a low singing at my door. My palms sweat.

Ngqongqokazi visits are never of good news. It's either something bad has happened at home or your time at Phakadeni is over.

I wipe my face and go to the door. She has her head bent downwards. Her bare, cracky foot is tapping down.

"Ngqongqokazi" I say.

She look up immediately, "Nkabanhle"

We've talked about this, over and over. Almost with everyone in this place.

"It's Nkabenhle" I say.

She groan loudly and clap her hands.

"The girl is in danger"

My mind run back home.

Is she referring to my sister, Phindile?

"The car will be speeding by the main road at 11h45. She will be inside" she continues.

I'm more confused.

"What girl Ngqongqokazi?" I ask.

"You don't know her, neither do I. Her ancestors has spoken to me. She isn't alone, there is someone with her, someone she can lose should she go back home."

So it's a new member.

"So how can I help?" I ask.

"Go to the main road, there is a palm tree you will sit under. You will be guarded by the holy spirit"

The main road is miles away.

"You can drive, is it?" She ask.

I nod.

"That car will not make it past the tree, while they are gone to get mechanical help you will take the girl out and bring her here." She say.

I sigh, "You said she is in danger, which means she is with dangerous people?"

"Ask no questions. Go there in a bakkie, wait for the car, while they're gone take the girl. Only the girl, nothing else" she say.

I know better than to argue with her.

She turn back and walk away. I'm left with many thoughts.

Why she isn't asking other men to accompany me?

Everyone who come here is usually guided in dreams.

Why didn't this girl come here willingly like everyone else?

Why must we go save her?

My big worry is those dangerous people. I'm here because I don't want to involve myself with what happening in the big world.

It's peace I followed here. There is no crime. No patrolling police vans. No crowd. It's just us, we are almost fifty now and wild life.

If they are coming by 11h45 it means I should leave here around 09h30. It means I'll miss the fishing session.

Thobile knock, a girl who came three weeks ago after being violated by her own family throughout her life.

I nod for her to come in.

I'm not a friendly person. My past may have something to do with it. That has made me the most feared person in this place. I don't laugh but I don't bite.

She put a plate of food on the table.

"Thank you" I say.

She smile, "My pleasure"

She walk to the door, she turn back and look at me as she is about to walk out.

"Bhuti Nkabenhle" she say.

I think she is four years older than me, around 28/29 years. The way she address me symbolise her standard of respect.

I look at her expecting whatever she want to say.

"I hear you are from Eshowe, I'm from there too" she say.

"Really? That's good"

"Umhhh.. have a safe journey I hear you've been sent by Ngqongqokazi" she say.

I nod.

She walk out.

I take the plate and eat.I finish eating and go fetch warm water in the bucket by the fire place to bath.

I bump into Zwelibanzi,another member.

"I hear you are going to get a new troubled soul" he say.

I don't know where they took him from.He have no manners,no common sense and lot of broken sense of humour. Fortunately everyone understand him, we don't get offended anymore.

I ignore him and walk to my hut.I bath and put on my new trouser that MaMsomi sew for me and my navy tshirt.

I walk to the younger boys hut to pass the time.Most of them are orphans, some had a problem with their parents. There is also a few who struggled in the drug world.

I find them playing Mlabalaba game.

"Bhut' Nkaba" some say as I walk in.

"So who is winning?" I ask.

They argue and laugh at each other.They bring life to me.I watch them play and guide them.

Here I forget that I once abused a young innocent girl.The bad dreams and her painfully screams go away. I see myself as an equal and renewed young man.

When I finally walk out of this place,I will find that girl and apologise. It won't matter if she forgives me or not but I'll let her know I'm sorry.I will find my former friends and persuade them to change their ways.

I regret that January morning. After that day my life became a living hell with lot of nightmares. I was young,stupid and peer pressured. It is the main reason I came to seek for peace here because the girl was nowhere to be found.

By 09h20 I go to my hut and get ready for the journey.

I walk to the royal hut to notify Mkhululi that I'm leaving. He give me two roots to chew before I leave.

I find Ngqongqokazi waiting for me by the white bakkie.She give me the keys and clap her hands chanting unclear names.

I drive out.

Women are already preparing one of the empty huts.

I find my spot, park the bakkie two yards away and wait for the car.

A few minutes later a black car come speeding.It pass and stop just ahead of the tree.

So it's the car.

The driver get out and look at the tyres.He return back in and come back a few minutes later with a shining tool.

He bend over the front, right tyre for almost twenty minutes.

He take out an object out of his pocket and put it against his ear.He is making calls.I watch him as he shout over his phone.

He look around, put his hand up checking for signal,I guess.

He walk away from the car,his hand going up to the air and down.

He goes until he disappear by the corner.He must be going to the hill just around the corner.

This is my chance.

I look around and run to the stranded car.

The moron didn't lock, I see the girl in the backseat. She has a black tape around her mouth.

I take off the seatbelt, untie her hands and scoop her out.She is looking at me,fear written all over her face.

I run as fast as I can.I get to the bakkie breathless. I put her inside and get in the car.

I drive away.

She slap my shoulders,speaking beneath the tape.I make sure I'm out of sight before I stop the car.

"I will not harm you" I say untying her mouth.

She start breathing heavily, tears running down her face.

She is just a young girl,around my age. From what she is wearing I take it she is one of those stylish girls from the surbubs.

"You're safe now" I assure her.

She shake her head.

"I promise you" I say.

Where is this begging bone developing from in my body?

She is new, hey.

"I want to go home please,help me" she say,her voice wobbling.

"You'll go home.For now Ngqongqokazi has been chosen by your ancestors to protect you.She will let you go,once she is sure of your safety" I say.

"Who is that?"

I start the car, "You'll find out soon"

When we arrive, women are up and down in the yard. Men have already left.

"I know her" Thobile scream in joy.

She get warning looks from elders. She pull herself together sheepishly.

Ngqongqokazi come forward and touch her hand.

"The ancestors are not pleased with you. Your marital ancestors. But that's not why you're here." She say.

I notice the wedding ring around her finger. She look frightened.

"This will be your new home. The new life inside of you is in danger. You can't be home until he is out and strengthened. He is a special someone"

The girl frown, "What are you saying? Where am I?"

"You're in Phakadeni, the place of sanity and peace. In a few days you'll feel like you're home" she say.

The girl look at me. I give her an assuring smile.

"Welcome" a deep voice say.

It's Mkhululi.

He have both his hands balanced on the walking stick.

"You're safe here"

I haven't seen that girl ever since. I was resting when the introductions were done.

Today I woke up to Zwelibanzi banging my door.

"Come out, we are going to the bushes" he yell.

After a long day of hunting we go back with three bucks.

We get served lunch and go to the river to bath.

When we come back there are hallucinations.

"Hey Thobile, what's happening?" Zwelibanzi ask.

Most of us walk to our huts. We will be informed if it's something that concern us.

MaMsomi walk in as I'm lying on the floor, tired.

"Nkabenhle" she say.

I sit up, "MaMsomi"

I haven't been able to call other women 'Ma' after I disappointed my own mother and got disowned.

"The girl you brought yesterday is from a rich family. They are worried sick about her" she say.

"Every caring family would" I say.

She chuckles, "If the word goes out that she is somewhere around here trouble will bombard our place"

I scratch my head, "Ya,you're right"

"The girl is here for a specific purpose. She is getting used and gaining comprehension of it. She need to be here, her family must be acknowledged that she is fine"

I frown, "How?"

"We will talk with her and make a plan"

(We will be keeping up with the divas,except Ziphe's life in Phakadeni to avoid confusion unless it is important. I hope you won't get mad loviess)

Chapter Ninety-Five

Simtho Biyela

.

It's my first day inside my house after losing my baby.I'm scared to even walk in.

"We can go back to Sbu's place if you want" he say.

I put on the brave face.

"I'm good" I say.

He push the door,I walk in.The last time I was here I got out scooped in his arms, crying my lungs out.Her heart stopped beating in this house.

"Sit here" he say pulling me to the couch in the lounge.

I've talked to him about the hand-pulling,he doesn't stop.I'm not sick,the stitches are not even painful.

"Do you need a drink?" He ask on his feet.

"No"

He sit.

"I can call a hairdresser to come over" he say.

"My hair is fine"

"Nails? Eyelashes?"

I give him a look.He look down,disappointedly.

"You're here by my side,that's all I want" I say.

"I'm sorry that is the only thing I could do,I wish I can carry the pain for you" he say.

I put the cushion under my head, "How are you?"

He look at me blankly.

"Don't you can't pretend as if everything is okay. You were connected to her, we bought clothes for her together, you gave her a name. Geez! Her room was ready for her. You are also in pain" I say.

He shrug, "I'm used to it"

"So being used to it make you feel better?" I ask.

He sigh "Simtho I don't want to talk about it"

He have this tendency of choosing to forget about certain painful incidents. He just push everything to the back of his head and carry on with life. I want him to be happy, not to be happy for the sake of being happy. I want him to deal with things.

"When I've completely healed I need to go to Loyiso's home and do things right by her soul" I say.

"I understand"

Of course he does.

"A part of me believed that it was your baby, you know. She'd get excited and kick whenever you were around"

He smile, "Yeah, she loved me. I would've made a greatest father to her"

"I guess babies kick to the feeling of affection"

He stand up, "We need to donate the clothes and toys"

Is he kidding me?

"No, they are my baby's clothes"

He stop and look at me, "But babe..."

I put my hand up, "They're not going anywhere. They are the only memory I have of my baby"

"Okay I'm sorry, I just thought that maybe because she is gone we can give them to those in need"

"Well I'm also in need of them" I say.

He sigh and sit down.

He offers to cook supper. I go to the kitchen with him. This I need to see.

He rub his hands together, "Where do I start?"

I smile "You wash the pots"

His eyes pop out "You're kidding"

I laugh, "Okay, grate the onions"

He put the apron on. He is taking this to another level.

"I need to cover my head" he say opening the drawers.

I shake my head and sip on the glass of water.

"Hello"

I don't even turn,I know it's Sbu.

"Is this a joke?" He ask walking in.

Don is minding his onions, humming a song.

"It's a treat" I say.

"He can't cook,he lived on pizza all his life before he afforded a cooking lady" he say.

"Where there is love there is a way" I say.

"I guess.Just don't come running to us when your kitchen is burnt or you catch a stomach bug"

"Shut up jail bird" Don say.

Sbu laughs, "Don't remind me that,worse days of my life"

Don stop and look at us.

"Things always work out miraculous, hey" he say.

Sbu scratch his chin, "Ya man.Eventually everyone find their joy,the hardships on the way are just tests"

"Don't give up" they say together.

I smile "So does this mean my big brother is approving of my relationship?"

"Well I can't go against nature, can I?" He say grinning.

"Before my onions burn" Don say turning back to the bowl with grated onions.

"They don't burn before you cook them, I think" Sbu say mocking him.

"How many minutes does it take to boil an egg Sbusiso?" Don ask.

Sbu look at me questioningly, I shrug my shoulders laughing.

"Two minutes for half boiled, five minutes for fully boiled" he reply.

I stop him with my hand, "I have stitches Sbu,stop"

Having them here make me forget about unfair life and its miseries.I know Sbu is also hiding his own pain with a good laughter.We still don't know where Ziphe is but the picture my father showed us shows that she is fine.We have so many unanswered questions but have decided to take my father's word.He will get to the bottom of it.

"Hunny I feel for you" she say striding in.

I was with them yesterday,I guess I'll be seeing them frequently until they get it in their tits that I'm fine.

"Hello you" Sbu says.

She kiss his cheek and go peek at what Don is doing.

"So how long are you going to wear dull clothes?" She ask.

I sigh, "A month"

"So it's long dull dresses,doek and scarf over your shoulders for 30days?" She say.

I love the sad Zethu,she is calm and beautiful. I don't know who told her everything is fine,we can go back to our personalities.

"Why are you dressed like Madonna?" Don ask.

She smile, "Because we are going to have fun somewhere"

"It's too early,we don't know where exactly Ziphe is and reasons behind that.Simtho is still mourning"
Sbu says.

She cock her head to the side and straighten her hair.

"Well we're going to have fun, kick some asses if we have to but the fun we are going to have is not the one you have in mind,which include music and cocktails"

I look at her, "Who are you going with?"

"Sena,Fiki have something urgent to attend businesses bla bla bla.I need that paint you left after painting the room,you know"

She think I'm going to cry if she mentions the baby.

"It's in the garage, why do you need it?" I ask.

"I think some people need a written warning to stop messing with others"

I shake my head. I feel for whoever that has stepped on her toes.

She walk away,swaying her hips side to side.

"And then?" Don ask.

"Long story,Phumla is involved" Sbu says.

I look at him shocked, "Is she fucking Tyson?"

He shake his head, "No,something in the letter Ziphe wrote included her involvement in the orchestration of her kidnapping but dad told them to leave her to him"

Why am I only hearing this now?

Wtf is wrong with that girl?

What was she hoping to gain by taking Ziphelele?

"I wish I could join them" I say angrily.

"Don't wish on it,they are going against Biyela and meddling" Sbu says.

Zethu walk back in carrying a 5l bucket of paint and painting brush.

"She is not going to speak the truth, you should let Biyela handle her" Sbu warns her.

She chuckles, "Trust me,she will speak the truth the good way or the bad way but today"

We watch her walking out determined.Phumla need to be handled by other bitches.I pray they cut her hair with a scissor.

"I've never seen such a yellow stew" he say from the stove, with a pot lid in his hand.

We look at him.There is a packet of tumeric powder next to him.

"How much turmeric did you put?" I ask.

"Three spoons,I thought it was a spice"

Sbu hit the table with his hands dead with laughter.

There goes the supper!

Chapter Ninety-Six

Sena Biyela

.

She open the door.Roll her eyes and walk back in, leaving the door wide open for us to see ourselves in.

She sit her big ass on creamy white chair then pick a glass of red wine.She sip while looking at us,silently saying 'hey dummies'.

"Mrs Zungu" Zethu says.

I look at her with my eyebrow raised, "Where were you four years ago? It's Miss Miya now,again"

Zethu make a shocked face, "You lie, what happened?"

I smile and look at her, "She couldn't stick to one dick"

"Say whatever you came here to say and get out,before I lose my cool" she say annoyed.

My eyes dash to the cellphone next to her.It seems like Zethu is fast than I am,she hurries and grab it.

"That's my phone" Phumla say getting up.

Zethu get to the door and throw it to Ben,our guy.They bump onto each other by chests.

Phumla try to push her out of the way but Zethu give her one hell of a slap.

"You took my sister!!!" She scream at her.

She look at me astonished,before I can blink Zethu has sent another slap.

This is not how we planned to do things.

I pull Zethu away.

"Babe calm down,okay" I say.

"You and your boyfriend kidnapped my sister, now we want to know where she is and who is that man you were working with" I say glaring at her.

She laugh out loud, "Is that why you came here dressed up in Halloween costumes? You're here to throw accusations"

We are not dressed in Halloween costumes. We look good,she will be the one looking like a clown at the end of the day.

"Our time is precious, talk" I say.

She roll her eyes, "Precious like your man"

I frown, "Excuse me?"

"Nothing"

Zethu is uncontrollable,I don't know when she pushed past me and pushed her to the floor.I hear a thunderous sound as her head meet the tiles.

"Zethu!!!" I scream.

We rush to her.Her heart is beating,she is breathing softly.

"Is she dead?" Zethu ask.

"She fainted,I don't know"

Zethu click her tongue, "Pour cold water over her"

"No,you're the one who pushed her,you get the water" I say.

"Everything okay?" Ben ask.

He see Phumla on lying on the floor and rush to her.

"What did you do?" He ask.

"She fell" I say.

Zethu look at me,I wink at her.

"She is acting" Zethu says.

We laugh.

Ben get water and sprinkle it on her face. I'm not surprised when she wipe a drop of water from her long artificial eyelashes.

"Get up, are you okay?" Ben ask.

"She is fine, just thinking about where she is going to get her next fuck partner" Zethu say.

I laugh.

"Ben get her laptop, it must be somewhere in her study or bedroom" I say.

While Ben is searching for a laptop we destroy her cupboards. Zethu pour water with sunlight liquid on her defreezer.

"Are you guys crazy?" He ask walking back with two laptops.

"Did you bump to any dildos? Askies I'll book you a counselling session" Zethu say chewing an apple.

"No I'm talking about this mess" he say looking around.

"Oh this! Do you know how to switch bathroom pipes with kitchen sink pipes?" I ask looking at him, tearing a book of recipes with a scissor.

He sigh, "This is going to end badly. You are destroying her personal belongings"

I don't know where Zethu found this sissy man.

"Just go look for the information we need" I say.

He look at Phumla with pity and walk out.

"This will end up badly" he say.

I roll my eyes. He walk out.

"This house need repainting" Zethu say.

We paint her furniture and walls. I write bold BITCH letters on the front door. Zethu destroy her curtains.

My sixth sense tell me to look back. There is a flying pan coming my way. I duck in time.

"You'll pay for this" she say looking at her recipe book in pieces on the floor.

She is trying not to cry.

"Where is Ziphe?" I ask.

She click her tongue and turn away.

"Let's go" Zethu say.

I look around to see our good work. I'd give us 100% for this.

We find Ben in the car. He looks relieved to see us.

"Found anything?" Zethu asks.

He looks at me, "Well, I found more"

"Out with it" I say.

"The guy's name is Lebo, the texts between them show nothing about your sister's recent location. They are as clueless as you are but I can confirm that they initially kidnapped her in town. The aim was to hide her in Transkaai and accumulate their plan of destroying your father's legacy while he is at his weakest."

Lebo? It clicks back to my mind. The dark guy in the restaurant.

Why did I undermine them?

I should've looked into it deeply, obviously it was beyond just getting Fiki to marry Mvuse. Maybe none of this would've happened if I had told dad about it.

What does this Lebo guy want from us?

What's his story?

"Where does he stay?" I ask.

"Renting in Pinetown" he says.

I exhale, "We should've sliced her throat"

He looks at me, frightened. Zethu clicks her tongue and looks out the window.

"She has been sending nudes to your husband"

I look at Ben, taken aback.

"Huh?" I say, lost.

"There are pictures of her, naked, sent to your husband, Lwazi" he says, showing me a folder of nude pictures sent via WhatsApp.

My armpits start sweating and itching. I get the phone from him.

Indeed it was my man being flooded with these pictures. Some were sent three days ago.

There is no response from Lwazi, except the exchange of greetings.

But why didn't he say anything about the pictures to me?

"Ben drive" Zethu says.

"No, I need to sort out that slut" I say.

"No, you sit your ass in the car, we have a guy we don't know on our heels. He could be tracking Ziphe down, wanting to finish what he started as we speak" she says.

Ben start the car.I give Zethu an angry look,she give me an apologetic look.

Why would Phumla send her big naked butt to my man? Mostly why would my man keep quiet about it?

"We need to get Ziphe before them then we will sort everything out" she say squeezing my hand.

We keep Phumla's cellphone and laptop for further investigation.Zethu decide to accompany me to my house just in case I lose it.

I find the whore-adorer watching TV with Quinton on his lap.

"I was worried about you guys" he say.

Zethu pinch my arm,I cringe.

"We had to sort out something" Zethu say sitting next to him.

"I'll take him to his room" I say picking Quinton up.

"I don't mind having him on my lap" he say smiling.

"You don't mind,that's all you do.You just don't mind,you don't mind them" I say walking away.

I put Quinton on his bed but he open his eyes as I'm about to leave. Now I have to pretend to be sleeping with him.

I lie next to him and close my eyes.He put his hand on my cheek,brushing it.I feel the brushing getting softer and softer until it finally stop.

I open one eye,he is asleep.I slowly remove his hand from my cheek.I kiss his forehead and tiptoe out.

I smell like a painter. I'm glad he didn't catch that up.

"Hey"

I look at him.

Why is he sneaking on me like this?

"I thought he is striking" he say.

Why are his eyes running away from mine?

"Oh" I say.

He stop me by his arm when I walk past him.

"What?" I ask angrily.

"I know you know.I'm sorry" he say.

I exhale, "Not now"

He hold my hand, "Babe"

I look at him,

"What?"

"I swear to you nothing is happening" he say.

I fight back tears, "Why?"

He doesn't answer.

"Why did she send you naked pictures?Why are you contacting each other?" I ask.

"It may sound stupid but I don't know why she sent me the pictures. I was shocked when she first sent them"

I shake my head, "Lwazi Madlala why are you in contact with her?"

"I don't know how she got my cellphone number, it's true to God."

"You don't know anything, do you know at least why you entertained her shit and keep it away from me?" I ask.

He look like a wet puppy, glaring at me with hungry cat eyes.

"Do you?" I ask louder.

He exhale and look down.

"Say it. You enjoyed watching her body,it turned you on" I say.

He look at me, "Babe you know that ain't true"

I chuckle in disbelief and walk away.

"Did you kill him?" Zethu ask.

Her feet are up on the couch.She is eating grapes.

"Why did you tell him?" I ask.

She roll her eyes, "This is exactly what Phumla wanted.Look at you,breaking apart"

I sit down hopelessly.

"I trusted Lwazi.I thought we told each other everything" I say.

"I just uploaded the pictures online" she say chewing.

"What?" I ask.

"Hashtag-SlutQueen" she say.

I reverse my emotions. Angry to happy and laughing.

We both break into big laughter. The newspapers' headlines tomorrow will make me sleep like a newborn baby at night.

Lwazi walk to us.It's too early for him to look like earthquake survivor.

The intercom ring, he pass to get whoever it is.

"I should look for her videos,she must have one of herself masturbating" I say.

Zethu laugh, "Or fucking a toy"

A throat clears behind us.We look up from Phumla's phone.

Police!!!!

"We are looking for Ntombizethu and Senamile Biyela" the tall one say looking at us.

"Wait sir,what's going here?" Lwazi ask.

"Did they tell you they attacked Miss Phumla Miya and vandalised her house and furniture?"

Lwazi look at me, "What?"

"You rich people think you can do anything you want and get away with it.Well,you are not above the law.You are under arrest" he say charging toward us.

Zethu jump over the couch and run away.The other one chase her.

I'm caught by my arm,Lwazi is trying to stop them.

My mind is in the bedroom upstairs. My son!

I'm cuffed. I'm an official criminal.

(I'm typing...)

Chapter Ninety-Seven

Fikile Biyela

.

I know it's too early and there is still more going on in my family but can I put my heart on hold?
No.That's why I'm here in the cold night, wearing a jumpsuit and sneakers.Don't ask me how I look, I never looked at the mirror. I just pulled what was on the front and put it on my body.

I'm cold.Geez!

I knock like a police officer.

"Okay okay I'm coming" the voice say from the inside.

I have my arms covering my shoulders,swaying left to right with my teeth tightened together.

As soon as the key turns I push my way in.

OMG! The faces.

Who are these people?

I find him with my eyes. I don't know whether he is shocked or experiencing stroke.

"Girl" Lungile say looking at me amused.

I can't wait to be an official girlfriend of his cousin. That way I'll get to have a say on what she wears. Where did she buy this orange dress? Or is it an overall?

There are about six men, wearing camouflage pants and leather jackets. Skhumbuzo is also wearing the same.

I feel like running out the door.

Okay I need to greet, Lungile's big stupid smile is making it more awkward.

"Hi" I greet.

Silence.

You're kidding me!

"I said hi people" I say.

Laughter.

So they are a bunch of laughing leather jackets-wearing fools.

"Hi Sisi, there is sun outside?" One ask.

Sun at this time? Before I can answer him I have a leather jacket over my shoulders.

"Make coffee for her" he say to Lungile.

His hands are on my shoulders. The bunch is watching me like I just performed some sort of magic.

"Madoda" he say to them.

They stand up.

"Sunday Nkosi" one say as they walk out.

The last one close the door, Lungile is in the kitchen. Now it's me and him, his hands are still on my shoulders.

He comes in front of me, "Hello"

"I'm freezing"

He pull my hand.

Boom! I'm in the yellow bedroom.

Everything in here is yellow, except the walls. I want to think this is a kid's bedroom but the gigantic bed tell me otherwise.

"Climb on" he say.

I want to laugh at this but I'm too cold. I get on bed.

Why am I here again?

"I'll be right back" he say.

One day I will have time to walk around this room and get the explanation behind the yellow theme for an adult's room. I will ask who is who on these pictures hanging on the wall. I will ask why there is no TV and the shoes stay lined by the wall.

Minutes later he come back with a cup of coffee.

"Why didn't you call?" He ask looking at me sipping on the coffee with shaky hands.

"I don't know" I say.

He is standing next to the bed, looking at me with pity.

"Do you have warm clothes?" He ask.

Who doesn't have warm clothes? Of course I do I was just stupid to forget to wear them.

"No" I return the sarcasm.

When I look up at him I find him staring at me.

"Who were those people?" I ask.

"My group" he say shrugging.

"Group of what?"

"Indlamu" he say.

I choke on the coffee, "What?"

"I'm their leader, there are other groups from Umlazi and KwaMashu hostels" he say proudly.

So they are a bunch of indlamu dancers.

"What is it that you do? For what?" I ask

He smile "You'll see for yourself next week"

I widen my eyes "What do you mean? Will it appear on TV?"

"No I'm taking you to the practice"

Get out of here! Say what?

"Skhu!!" I say disbelievingly.

He take the empty cup from me and sit.

"You're warm now?" He ask.

"At least I can feel my fingers now. So what's up with yellow?"

But I promised myself I'll ask one day, not today. I don't believe anything I say or think.

He looks around with a big smile, "Do you like it?"

I laugh, "Of course not"

"I will change it then"

I sigh, "I'm kidding, I love it"

I know he means it. He will change his bedroom to suit me, I mean this person had his silver tooth removed for me. I need to cut him some slack.

He smiles, "I love it too"

"So hey" I say looking at him.

"Hello"

I flash him a smile, "Long time no see"

He laughs "Long time no talk"

We are a pair of crazies.

"So what were you up to while I was absent?" I ask.

"I was thinking about you, wishing I can come share your pain. I've been missing seeing your beautiful face"

That makes me blush.

"So how is everything?" He asks on a low serious tone.

"I don't know, I'm just trying to live with the situation and hoping my sister is alright wherever she is"

He brushes my right shoulder "She is"

"I hope"

"How is Simtholile?" He asks.

I nearly forgot that they once had a buddy session.

"She is getting there, thanks to Don for always being there for her" I say.

"Who is that?"

"Her boyfriend" I say.

"Mhhh..And you?" He asks.

"I'm good" I say.

"Welcome to my bedroom" he says.

I'm already in his bedroom, somebody remind me please!

"I know what you're thinking, you're only here because it's warm" he say looking at me.

I chuckle, nervously.

"I know"

"You are my girlfriend" he say.

I frown "Is that a statement or what?"

"A personal reminder" he say.

"So you tend to forget that sometimes?" I ask.

"Yes, some days I feel like going back to Mandeni and see you for the first time. First time I saw such a beautiful woman and fell in love that instantly. Sometimes I reread our texts to assure myself I'm not dreaming" he say.

"Well....."

I end up just smiling without saying anything.

"I'm so happy you came" he say.

This room is suffocating me. His voice keep getting deeper and lower.

"I just wanted to check on you" I say.

His hand is behind my back now. The other hand is brushing my hairline.

"I'm glad you did" he say.

I let out a huge breath and keep the eye contact.

"So can I get my first kiss?" He ask.

This is awkward!

"I'll take your silence as yes"

First time his forehead link to mine. We are exchanging breaths, my intestines are turning. Then his cold lips take my lower lip. His kiss is an opposite of his looks. He look like Umbhaqanga leader, no he actually is Umbhaqanga or Indlamu leader, but he kiss like Neymar Jr. Not that I know how Neymar Jr kiss but his lips declares him the world's best kisser.

It's not the kinda kiss that leave you breathless, it's the kind that make your heart speak.

"I love you"

Crap!!

He look surprised by my reaction. Now I want to take back my words, I don't like being stared at by such chinese eyes. My stomach can't take it, it get bubbles.

"I'm sorry" I say.

Right now I don't know if his eyes are opened or closed.

Oh they're closed!

"Do you mean that?" He ask in a cracky low voice.

"Yes,I don't mean to rush us into being Romeo and Juliet" I say.

"Do you love me?" He ask.

Of course I love him. He is cute,the cuteness in him is cute,him being cute is making me find it cute being in love with him.

"Okay" he say.

"What do you mean 'okay', I haven't answered?" I ask.

He flash a sweet smile, "Your face did answer me.I love you too"

He must get off that high horse!

"Say whatever you want to say" he say smiling.

"You are a gorgeous kisser,I wouldn't mind a recap"

I can't describe the sef-satisfied smile on his face.It says "Winner".

We do it again. It feels so right but the reality is every time I think I have 'him' he always let me down.With me they never stay for long.

"Are you okay?"

Omg! I'm such a mess.

Who shed tears during the kiss? Why am I suddenly an emotional wreck?

I nod and look away embarassed.

"My Chocolate" he say.

I don't know how it's possible that I'm silently laughing at this.

"Sugar" he say.

His voice is filled with concern.He doesn't think the pet names he is using are hilarious.

I turn my head and look at him.He look really worried.

"I'm okay,I love you"

Here I am,being Juliet again.

"You want to go?" He ask.

Do I want to go?

I shake my head.

"Why are you crying then?" He ask.

"Because you may disappoint me.My heart is falling in love with you stupidly.I'm scared of getting hurt again"

He push his sneakers off and get on bed. He make me lie on his chest.

"You wouldn't understand, I want you more than anything in life. I will never ask for second chances, this one chance you're giving me is for the lifetime.I'm capable of loving a woman" he say.

"Many say so but they don't actual know how to keep a woman. It's about loving her and keeping her" I say.

Remember how I've been let go all my life.

He keep quiet.

"Great" I whisper.

I choose to be quiet too.I enjoy the tapping of his finger on my back.

I know what my conscience would love to know.I'm also curious.Am I sleeping over here?

The warmth of his bed and the comfort of his chest say 'Glory to sleep over'.

"I'll do whatever it takes" he say out of the blue.

"What?" I ask in a sleepy voice.

"To keep you"

So he was still thinking about that? Slow.

"I'm not going to let you go,not another piece of my heart, not another crashed dream.I'll make it worth your life being with me.You will stay,I'll make it a priority"

That sound attractive.

"Mhhh"

"I'm not going to fail you" he say.

He doesn't mind that I'm fully dressed.He rub my back,play with my hair and exhale cute breaths until I doze off.This is perfect, too perfect.

Chapter Ninety-Eight

Nozipho Biyela

.

I don't know how it works in this family. Just a few days ago she wanted nothing to do with him, she was swearing at him and killing him with poisonous glares. Today she is here, serving him on the tray, smiling at him like nothing happened. He is also smiling at her, looking at her like she is the only living creature on the planet.

My own Sbusiso would be in his study with a sealed mouth waiting for my formal apology speech with formulated table of all my wrongs and bar graphs of effects it made.

Only if he took after Biyela. Just forgive and move forward.

We tolerate a lot of secret laughs, hand touchings and whispers during dinner. Come on they're grown! Their first grandson will be in high school soon.

The dark cloud is still here in the family, that's what Aunt Lydia calls it, but we're choosing to enjoy this evening. At least there is some light. We can have a bit of normalcy.

I can have sex too!

Gosh! I even forgot there is something like that.

Sbu offers to put kids to bed. I take an opportunity to find something sexy to wear for the night. I've gained a lot of weight but that shall not stop me.

I go through a lot of trouble trying to find the appealing lacy fitting outfit. I eventually decide to be on my birth suit with his favourite black tie on, you know to give him the green light.

"Babe did you find my..." he stop right there.

See ladies you don't need Elite Occasions or DIM. He is exactly what I wanted. Drooling!

"Does it look better this way?" I ask.

He smile, "It was made for your pregnant body"

He is a joy killer but I'll let nothing take away my night.

I take the tie off my neck and put it between my thighs. It cover a piece of my front and butt.

"How about this way?" I ask.

"I like it better"

Now he is walking towards me with a huge smile on his face.

"I want my tie" he say.

Both my hands are holding the tie, back and front.

"Okay" I say.

He remove the hand at the back first, "Now you need to part your legs"

My smile is short lived as I hear someone shouting his name downstairs.

Who is the lunatic?

"Who is that?" He ask.

"If it's not Don I don't know who else is having a 'moment destroying' capabilities." I say.

He sigh, "Don't put anything on"

Once there is a little break in the romance the fun is gone. Whoever it is will not see heaven, okay Paris.

I decide to put on my gown. It's cold today to be waiting naked, we will continue what we started with less enthusiasm though.

"You need a slice of polony" a little voice in my head says.

I obey that little voice.

Guess who the moment-destroyer is! Lwazi.

"Good to see you. No excited and over the moon, thank you for coming" I say passing them.

Oh wait!

In this family you do not take people standing on their feet with such expressions on their faces lightly. Something has happened.

What happened to peace?

"Guys what's going on?" I ask.

Sbu exhale and walk away. They better update me.

"Lwazi" I say glaring at him.

"Sena and Zethu were arrested"

Somebody give me a chair please!

"You're kidding, right?"

He bite his lip and look at me blankly.

"What happened? Why were they arrested?" I ask.

One girl's whereabouts are still unknown then the other two are in a cell?! God have mercy.

"They attacked Phumla in her house, beat her and destroyed her house" he say.

They are guilty as charged. They shouldn't even stand as accused they are the guilty ones. They are more than capable of doing that. They did it.

"This will cause public scandal and unnecessary drama, we need to get them before morning" I say.

He nod, "Our lawyer is on his way"

Biyela and Sbu walk to us.

"Madlala" Biyela greet Lwazi.

"I'm sorry to disturb your night baba,something has happened"

Biyela's expression change, "What happened?"

Sbu didn't brief him I guess.

"Senamile and Zethu were taken by cops" Lwazi say.

I don't know if that's a smile on Biyela's face or what.

"What did they do?" He ask.

"They assaulted Phumla Miya,destroyed her house and took her personal belongings"

"Okay"

I chuckle disbelievingly, "Baba!!"

He look at me, "What? Assaulting someone and destroying one's property is a crime in South Africa"

"I know but they can't spend the night in a cell" I say.

"Do you still have that Grandeur bottle son?" He ask Sbu.

He is kidding right now.

"Yes"

"Listen my dearest daughter, you go to your bedroom and rest" he say.

"Baba we need to get Sena and Zethu out" I say.

"Everything happens for a reason MaZungu.I warned them, all of them,not to do anything to that girl.I told them to leave things to me. What did they do? They grew big,out of their boots and became Chuck Norris"

I let out a deep breath, "But we can't afford this"

He chuckles, "I'm so happy someone took the honour to sharpen their ears for me"

I can't believe this.Lwazi is just standing on the same spot, appalled.

"Those police need a reward for making a difference.I've always thought of ways to put my daughters in line but couldn't come up with a single idea.A day or two in a cold cell shall be enough" he say.

Now I'm starting to think he is losing it.Biyela is protective of his family, our security and comfortability is his priority.

"Sena have a son,who will wake up and enquire about his mother" Lwazi say with evident anger.

"We will tell him they are on a vacation, which is entirely true"

What got into this old man's head?

Sbu crack up laughing, "Baba that's inconsiderate you know"

"I know Madlala you're frustrated and angry right now, I assure you this will have a positive impact on our lives" he say to Lwazi.

Lwazi nod, "Okay thanks for your time. I will have to do this on my own, my love can't spend the night in a cell"

He walk out angrily.

I sigh, "This is not okay"

"Where is that vodka son? I need a shot to celebrate"

I look at Sbu hostilely.

"I'll get it" he say walking away.

So he is escaping from my killer look? Coward.

"Go sleep, you deserve it. Everyone is getting what they deserve tonight"

I don't argue more. I walk away leaving a good laughter behind.

I know Sena and Zethu were out of hand but they deserve to be on their beds.

I need to let Tyson know. I take my phone and search for his number.

Wait....my polony!!!

Chapter Ninety-Nine

Fikile Biyela

.

"Where are you coming from?"

I'm 32 years old! I own this house, it's a private property. I deserve to go as I please but I have zero peace in my life, so here I am standing like a frozen chicken with 'his' leather jacket on my shoulders.

"Hi dad" I say ignoring his question.

"You use Dolce Gabbana now?" He ask.

I'm bursted. It's over just when it's starting. The secret is out.

"I was visiting a male friend" I say.

He should read between the lines.

He clear his throat, "Your sisters were arrested yesterday while your male friend kept you busy"

My eyes pop out, "What are you saying?"

"I'm saying we tried getting hold of you 'friend' and you didn't pick up all night. Senamile and Ntombizethu are having white bread and black tea for breakfast as we speak"

If it wasn't for my uncontrollable heart I'd be with them.If I was with them they wouldn't have spiralled out of control. They are both crazy, I can imagine what they did to her.

"Go bath,I need you to go to Mokoena for me" he say.

"Aren't we suppose to be trying to get my sisters out?" I ask.

"I have serious matters to attend,hurry up"

I can't believe my dad look this less worried about his daughters.

"Well I don't, I'll contact Tyson and have them released" I say walking past him.

"They are learning a lesson,I need to find clarity about Ziphelele.Go to her house and take her dress or anything she usually put on" he say orderly.

"How is that going to help?" I ask.

"My brothers believe consulting isangoma will give us answers"

I roll my eyes. This is the dumbest idea I've ever heard.

"Personal Investigators are failing,duh!"

"I'm not your male friend" he say with an expression I know very well.

"I'm sorry"

"Go bath, I'll prepare you something to eat then you can go"

I blow him a kiss and walk away.

I get in the bathtub,relax and play back my first morning with him in my mind.He surprised me.I expected him to be totally different from what he was.

He was a gentleman,he didn't touch me inappropriate. He prepared me a warm bath,borrowed his cousin's ugly dress for me to change with, gave me bread,rama,cheese and polony for breakfast.That attracted me even more to him,especially when he offered to tie my hair.Now I'm convinced I'm in new love and it feel so damn good.

"I love you" these words can change a lot of things coming from the right person, which is him.

He mean it when he say it.His eyes mean it.His voice...let me stop right here.I need to hurry up before dad come here knocking with his gun.

"Fikile!!"

I thought so.

I dress up,put a headscarf around my head and apply make-up.

"I'm here" I say.

"Were you bathing or counting water?"

How does one count water? Oh he is him.

I sit down, "I thought I'd be back at work today"

He pass me a breakfast plate. I know Skhu and my dad come from the same neighborhood but they can't have inherited same breakfast-making skills.

Bread, rama and polony.

"It won't eat itself" he say as I watch the food stunned.

The only difference is here I'm having it with a glass of Lemon Twist, yes Lemon Twist you heard me, and at Skhu's place I had it with a cold cup of tea.

"You're a breakfast expert" I say taking the first bite.

I'm trying to get hold of Tyson with no success while driving to Thapelo's house. I hope my mom isn't enjoying the show like my dad and doing something.

I find the door wide open, it is still quite. Not even a TV sound.

"Hello" I say.

I hope Mandla is here, I don't want to face Thapelo alone. I'm scared of seeing someone hurting when there is nothing I can do to better his situation.

"This side" his voice say.

I take a deep breath first and walk to where he is. He is indeed alone. There is a glass of water next to him.

I don't know if I must hug him or not. He have his injured leg on the coffee-table.

I give him a sympathetic smile, "Good morning, how are you feeling?"

See this is why I didn't want to be alone with him. The intimidation!

"Hi Fikile" he say with no enthusiasm.

I feel bad I haven't checked on him since he came back here.

"How are you?" I ask again.

He grin, "Is that a serious question or a tradition of greeting?"

"I'm serious, you look awful. Do you eat?"

Oh shut up Fiki! Why did I tell him he look awful when he really does?

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean that" I say remorseful.

"No it's okay"

I wonder how Ziphe keep up with him when he is angry. To me if he is quiet he is angry. His face isn't ugly but it's not exciting, with that scar on it.

"Sometimes I wish I was never born" he say after a while.

I'm shocked by that. I know life haven't been fair to him but that's a drastic thought.

"Thapelo!" I say in awe.

He rub his wrist, "You know when you put up with pain thinking it will get better but it never does"

"It will get better, you'll soon walk on your own"

He shake his head, "I'm not talking about physical pain, that I don't mind"

I look at him. Everything is visible. He is the most hurt man on the planet. His eyes have no hope, no enthusiasm, no energy.

It dawns to me, nobody in my family have cared to check up on his niece. Nobody beside my dad's in-touch guys.

"How is Tamika?" I ask.

"I don't know, fine I guess"

How come he doesn't know?

"You guess?" I ask looking at him.

He shrug, "I'm out of their lives, I had to choose between my sister and my wife"

Is it a joke?

"What?" I ask.

"Yeah and I chose my unknown wife. So my sister cut me out of their lives" he say.

I mean after all he did for his niece! He doesn't deserve this. I understand they hate Ziphe with all their hearts but Thapelo stood up for them.

"I don't know what to say, you are going through a lot and you deserve none of it" I say.

"I don't know where she is Fiki. Why she doesn't want to come back? We should be working things out. She knows I cannot not forgive her, no matter what she does."

I exhale, "Dad want her dress, they are going to consult isangoma with my uncles"

He chuckles, "Those people killed my baby"

"I know but this is a different case" I say.

"I don't believe in them" he say.

I nod, "Right now we have to put beliefs aside and try all the possible routines"

"Maybe it's me she doesn't want" he say.

I sigh, "I'm sure she have some good reasons,she cannot abandon you.She love you too much"

He keep quiet and look at his leg.

I need to take what I was sent here to take and leave.

"I don't want you to bother your leg,is it okay if I go to your room alone?" I ask.

"It's fine"

When I walk in their room everything is perfectly clean.The bed look untouched. Is he not using their room anymore?

I go to the closet and take what I came to take.

When I walk back I find him limping around.

"I got it" I say slowly.

Why is he troubling the leg?

"That's good" he say with a grin.

"Did you eat?" I ask.

He balance by the wall and take a deep breath.

"I will eat" he say.

I check the time, it's almost ten o'clock.Mandla may have left to attend his pregnant girlfriend, he could've ordered breakfast.

"Don't you have medication to take for that leg?" I ask.

He give me a look and limp away.

I put the dress on the couch and go to his kitchen.I fix breakfast for him and make coffee.I set the table and go call him.

"You're still here" he say.

"Breakfast in the kitchen, come" I say taking his arm.

He doesn't argue he stand up and walk with me.

While he is eating,I clean up the kitchen and take notes of what short in the fridge and cupboards.

"Where is the medication?" I ask.

He point, "That drawer"

All the tablets are still sealed in their containers.I have them in my hands and glaring at him.

He just look at me.He don't think they matter.

"You're taking a life risk and it's not okay" I say.

He sigh, "Thanks for breakfast although I have to drink pills in return"

I roll my eyes, "Set the alarm on your cellphone, for every hour you need to take them"

He narrow his eyes.

"Or I will drive here every time you need to take them. I won't mind after everything Ziphe has done for me in life generally" I say.

He exhale, "Fine,I will set alarms"

"I will bring grocery later, you need to be eating healthy food.Please do use your cellphone when you are hungry and no one is around"

He nod, "Yes sister"

"Lastly please stay positive"

He sigh, "Your wish my master"

I give him a look,he point me with a fork and smile.

That's what I wanted to see.I hug him goodbye and take Ziphe's dress and leave.

I know dad has been calling his man,the one that's driving me, and asking if I'm still alive.

When I come back my brother is also in my house.I have nothing to hide but I'm not comfortable with people wandering in my house without my presence.Especially people like Sbu and my dad.

They are laughing at something. I greet and sit.

"You just missed the call from jailbirds" dad say laughing.

I even forgot we have that problem too.

"We need to go" I say.

"In time baby, right now tell me how is Mokoena" he say.

They are not on good terms.Thapelo is still angry at him for what he did to Tamika and I don't blame him.

"He is going to get there" I say.

There is a knock on the door.I motion Sbu to go.

"This is not my house" he say.

"I'm older than you saarn,go open the door" I say in an ordering tone.

Dad chuckles,he stand up and go.

All of them forget that I'm older than them. Well I am a big sister and will order them around if I want.

He walk back with six Woolworths bags.

"What is that?" Dad ask.

"Delivery for Miss Fikile Biyela" he say putting the bags down.

Guess what? My father's son start opening the bags.

Cotton coats, jerseys, jackets and polonecks come out.

"It's not winter yet Fikile" dad says.

I know exactly who did this. He wasn't being sarcastic when he asked if I don't have warm clothes and didn't see how irony my answer was.

This is going to be a long road for me. My man take anything I say to the heart.

"So Woolworths deliver clothes now? Pecks of being Fikile Biyela" Sbu says.

I give him a look, "Shut up"

When I turn my head dad is roasting me with his eyes.

"Oh there is a chocolate under" Sbu says.

It's one of those R60 chocolate you get at Shoprite. He upgraded this time.

He open the chocolate and pass a piece to dad while he is stuffing one in his mouth. Dad shake his head and slap his hand.

"Sbusiso!" I say.

He put another piece and chew, "Woolworths have taste, damn"

I'm defeated! I can't handle him or my father's look.

Chapter One Hundred

Zanda Dlamini

.

It's been a long time since I last spent the night with him. It is a misfortune that we couldn't spend the night the way we planned to. We had to get up by 23h30 and rush to Phumla's house.

When we got there the house was a mess, everything was broken. Phumla had bruises. She was attacked by Sena and Zethu. She refused to tell us why but swore that they will get punishment for what they did to her.

We came back around three in the morning and have a piece of sleep. I haven't contacted the Biyela's so I'm still clueless as to what is going on.

The Biyela's seem to have a beef with every family. The Mokoenas now us, The Miyas. I'm not going to take sides without hearing a full story though.

"I doubt Thapelo ate today" he say as we eat breakfast.

"We need to go over his house" I suggest.

He clear his throat, "I was wondering if it would be possible for us to be in one place. You both need my special attention"

I frown, "Explain"

"If you don't mind coming with me to his place, until he get better" he say.

"No babe. He need his space, that's why he chose to stay in his house alone"

"He need a lot of support, he is not aware of how emotional and physical damaged he is. We need to be by his side, especially me. He has always been there for me"

I exhale, "I don't know rather have this conversation with him and see if he want that. I don't want to crowd him"

He nod, "Okay"

After breakfast we clean up and take a warm bath together. I have missed him.

We've been so intimately busy that twelve o'clock tick before we even pack food for Thapelo. On the other hand Phumla is enquiring a special attention. She need me asap. Now I have to be a ghost.

I prepare food for Thapelo, pack it and wait for Mandla to get ready.

Thapelo doesn't look okay. He is alive for the sake of breathing. His kitchen is clean and he is not hungry. Apparently the Biyela big sister was here, she made him food and forced him to take medication. Bravo to that because now I can hurry to Phumlile.

I leave the two friends watching boxing. I don't know why Phumla needs me, she is bruised nothing much.

When I get to her place there is a black car I don't know. I guess she have a guest.

I let myself in and find the dark guy I've never seen drinking a Heineken.

"Hi" he say.

I'm looking at him, not saying anything.

Who is he?

He hawk me with his eyes, "I ain't even gonna ask. The pretty face, eyes and ass tell me you're the little sister"

He got an American accent and stupidity.

"Where is my sister?" I ask.

"She is taking a lady's shower, you know how long that shit take"

He is handsome but the attitude stinks.If he is my sister's new boyfriend I pray they break up within a week.I don't like him.

"I like them full-figured.How about we hook up some time?"

My goodness! Is this some kind of trap?!

"Excuse me?" I say.

He smile, "Like I won't mind tapping that ass every day,fresh pussy and suck those big tits"

I feel sick in my stomach, I pick a magazine and throw it to his face.He duck it and look at me shocked.

"Are you mad?" He ask.

So the numbnut is asking me if I'm mad!

"I'm not your cheap slut" I say angrily.

He smile, "I like expensive sluts"

He lick his lips and stand up.My mind freeze.My senses only come back when I feel a hand squeezing my breast.

I don't scream,no I've done that before.I take the bottle of Heineken he has been drinking and smash it across his forehead.

There is a groan,blood and curses.

"My God!" Phumla say running to him wrapped in a white towel.

"Lebo!!" She scream.

She take the towel off and wipe the blood off his forehead. She is left on her underwears only.

"Your sister is nuts" the burstard say.

I try getting my fist to his bloody face but Phumla block me.

"Get out Zanda" she say.

"Oh so you not going to even ask what happened?" I ask astonished.

"What happened is you hit my business partner with a bottle.Zanda we all have love problems but we are not taking it out on anyone" she shout.

I frown, "So I have love problems sister?"

"We all know lack of sex cause anger but..."

She doesn't finish that I shut him with a slap.I'm tired of her shading Mandla every chance she get.She must get over herself. Mandla is a good guy,if not compared to any hooligans he is great in bed.

"Don't ever talk about Mandla like that, you hear me?" I say.

She hold her cheek, "So now I can't talk about my ex-husband?"

"It's a warning" I say and walk out.

There is someone by my car. I've seen him before and I've suspected that there is always someone following me. This has Biyela written all over it.

He walk away when he see me approaching. I have a second thought when I'm about to get in the car.

I walk back to the house. They are nursing each other. I take a jug of water and pour it on them.

"Zanda don't test me" she shout.

I give them my middle finger and walk out.

I'm so angry, my hands are shaking. I don't take sexually comments from a stranger well. I feel like I attract males sexually and have an unknown body feature that make them think it's okay to have their way with me without my consent.

"Get in the car Miss" the man say.

Oh he is back!

He open the back door for me, I get in. He have the same Gala badge as all of them so I'm not worried.

He get in the driver's seat, "Your next destiny, miss"

"Ziphelele's house" I say.

He start the car. I'm grateful he was here, I doubt I would've managed to drive with all these emotions.

How is he going to get his car at Phumla's place?

He hand me the car keys and take out his cellphone. I guess he does have a plan.

"Thank you" I say.

I walk in holding a big lump on my throat.

I sit on the couch and bite my lips to stop myself from crying.

"Babe" he say fearfully.

"Zanda you have blood on your dress" Thapelo says.

That get Mandla's attention. He get on his feet, hands on his head.

"No no no!!"

"Stop crying Mandla damnit! Hurry her to the hospital" Thapelo say fighting to get up from the couch.

"I'm not hurt" I say.

"Is the baby okay? Have you seen the doctor? Please don't take that risk" Thapelo say.

Geez! He think I'm miscarrying.

"No I had a fight" I say.

Mandla sit, "What?"

They both look at me like I just said I killed someone.

"Phumla's boyfriend. I hit him with a beer bottle on the forehead" I explain.

Thapelo settle his leg first then burst into laughter.Mandla is looking at me disbelievingly.

"Did anyone record?" Thapelo ask.

I don't know when was the last time I saw him this amused by anything.

Mandla stand up,"Come here Zanda"

I follow him to the dining room.He sit and motion me to do the same.

"What did you do?" He ask.

"I smashed a beer bottle against Phumla's black American boyfriend's forehead" I say.

"Why?" He ask with 'stop nonsense' facial expression.

"He said stupid remarks about my body" I say.

He glare at me, "And?"

I exhale, "He pissed me off"

"Zanda what did he do? I know you are not violent"

Tears threaten to come out.I breath heavily trying to calm my nerves.

"Babe" he say.

"He squeezed my breast"

"Excuse me?"

I exhale, "He squeezed my breast,Phumla came to his defense I slapped her and poured cold water on them.Luckily Biyela's man was outside following me,he drove me back"

He take off his wrist watch and rub his face a numerous times.

"What do you want to do now?" He ask.

I frown "I don't know,maybe I need to hit the library"

"Do that" he say.

"Are you okay?" I ask.

He nods, "Yeah"

I leave him there and walk to Thapelo.

"Hey Maryson" he say.

He is still amused.

"Please look after Mandla,I'm going to the library.I need to breath a bit" I say.

"Shouldn't he be the one looking after me?" He ask.

I sigh, "Trust me"

He nods, "Okay, be safe"

I walk to the dining room again.He hasn't got up from that chair.

"I'm sorry"

He look at me, "For what?"

"I don't know"

"Zanda I love you okay,please go change that dress and throw it in the bin" he say.

This is my favourite dress, he bought it for me.

"The blood stains can be removed" I say.

"I don't want to see it"

Alright!

"I think I need to leave" I say and walk out.

I'm not in the mood for arguments. I drive to my house to change to clean clothes.

I soak my dress and drive to the library.

A call disturbs me,it's Thapelo.

"He left with a golf stick, what is happening?" He say.

I close my eyes, "Thapelo I asked you to look after him"

"I couldn't run after him,he ignored me and walked out" he say.

I pray he doesn't do anything that will lead him to Sena&Zethu's temporary home.

"Okay I'm going to find him" I say.

I rush out to my car and drive straight to Phumla's house.His car is outside.

I run inside and find Phumla shouting at him.They both don't see that I'm present.

"You are a sick witch" he say.

"A witch you fucked for decades" she say proudly.

"Pass the message to your boyfriend. He must pray our paths don't cross"

She laughs, "I doubt he'd do that. Tell your girlfriend to stay away from Lebo"

No man, wait a minute!

"Isn't Lebo the same guy who kidnapped Ziphe?" I ask from the door.

They both look at me shocked. Phumla opens her mouth, words choke her.

"You are sick Phumla. How do you associate yourself with him? How do you even know him" I ask.

"I see" Mandla says.

"You see what?" She asks.

"You know what Phumla, go drop the charges on Sena and Zethu" Mandla says.

She chuckles "In your wet dreams"

"Zanda can file a case against your boyfriend for sexual harassment" he says.

Well I could do that but I won't. I don't have that energy, I did myself some justice.

"Do that ex-wife" Mandla says.

Phumla starts sweating, "Don't call me ex-wife"

Mandla laughs, "You are the past so you are an ex. This is my future, right here"

I snuggle on his arm and smile, "And I must say I'm happy"

She glares at me, "Get out of my house, both of you"

We share a kiss and walk out.

"They must be back before dinner Exiey" Mandla calls.

I guess sometimes family is not who we share blood with but who care for us the most.

Now I know who I can count on. The real divas.

Chapter Hundred&One

Nkabenhle (Another Glance)

.

The sun is fading, warm air is breezing. There is a lot of noise coming from one of the huts. Everyone is gathered there, enjoying MaMsomi's earful stories and advices. I should be with them, it's a compulsory. I chose not to attend. I have a meeting with the inner me. Sometimes being alone provides essential answers and peace.

I'm the first born, supposedly the next breadwinner and current head of the family. I don't know how my mother and sister are without me. When I finished my matric and passed it with a Bachelor's symbol they rejoiced. There was hope. Everything was soon going to be okay. There was a light at the end of the tunnel.

I failed being my mother's son, Phindile's brother and failed being an individual.

You know when you fail being an individual you become a member of the crowd. You follow the routines made by whoever walking with his own different shoes. I followed the path I didn't know, I encountered loopholes along the way.

I failed being an individual that's why I'm here. That's why my past is darker than winter's night.

There is a loud burp at my door. I know who it is.

I open the door and bow at her.

"Ngqongqokazi"

"Nkabhle you didn't attend the session, is it meaningful for you not to?" she say her head bowed to the ground.

"I wanted to be alone ,this time" I answer.

She clap her hands, "You are almost there, the road should be shorter now"

"So I'm going to leave?" I ask.

"When she has received her gift you'll be free as well" she say.

"Who?" I ask.

"The girl you brought"

Why does my freedom rely on someone else?

"I came here as Nkabhle I shouldn't have my journey linked on someone else?"

She sigh a deep one, "You are the only person she can trust. Here we help each other, she is going to need you on the delivery day"

The new girl is pregnant. I have seen her around but we didn't share any word. She is keeping up very well with the life we live. I've seen her collecting wood with Thobile. I underestimated her when I learnt of the life she was living in the city.

"I understand Ngqongqokazi" I say.

"Don't be a stranger, you'll need to interact with people in order to make it" she say and walk away with her hands clasped together.

I decide to walk out the yard and lie under the mango tree. My body cool down, all the troubled thoughts I had today fade away. My eyes slowly close themselves.

I hear a female voice saying my name from miles away.

"Nkabenhle!!"

I have a cold thing on my cheeks. My eyes open, I realise I fell asleep under the tree.

It's starting to be really dark. I look at the female figure standing next to me.

"I'm sent to fetch you" she say.

I get up and sit on my butt, I have no shoes on.

"Okay" I say.

"Then get up" she say in a bossy tone.

I understand she is from the city and believe the world revolve around books and technology but I won't tolerate being ordered by girls.

"Don't use that tone with me" I say.

She does what all city girls do. Roll her eyes.

"Just get up"

My goodness! This girl.

I stand on my feet and look at her, "You look better than the first day"

She have an innocent smile when her lips part.

"It's good to be here, I thought heaven was the only peaceful place" she say looking around.

"Do you miss home?" I ask.

She exhale, "Yes. Every minute, every hour"

"You only have eight months before you see them" I say.

She frown "Is that some set kind of rule? Being here for eight months"

"Applicable only to you, you will only go after giving birth"

Her eyes pop out, she put her hand over her stomach.

"What do you mean?" She ask.

I laugh, "You are here simply because you are pregnant and your baby need protection, Ngqongqokazi told you"

Tears emerge from her eyes, she cover her mouth with a hand.

"No, it can't be. I have miscarried two times, one was about two months ago" she say.

Now I understand why she need to be here. If she is not under strong ancestral protection the babies die before birth.

"That's why you're here" I say.

She start jumping, "Oh my Lord! I'm going to hold my baby this time"

I smile, "Yes you will,trust me"

She is too happy,she is laughing non-stop.She look too young to be married though.

"I hope your husband will be thrilled as you are" I say walking toward the homestead.

"I need to find a way to let him know the good news,this is going to pave a new journey for us.We can bury the past"

I doubt that is allowed.We can't be in contact with people outside. The one incident that happened was because it was crucial and of security importance.

"The only way he is going to find out is when you go back to your home" I tell her.

She sigh "I understand and respect Phakadeni's rules"

"I'll see you around" I say as we reach my hut.

"Okay, you saved me that day so I want you to be the baby's godfather"

I laugh, "Does godfather buy nappies?"

"No,the godfather love and protect" she say laughing.

I nod, "Then I'm godfather to be"

I get in my hut smiling.It's been a long time since I held a good conversation that made me smile.Everyone has failed trying to befriend me.

A knock disturb me when I'm about to lie down.

"Come in MaMsomi" I say.

She let herself in and sit on the floor.

"I see someone finally made you smile" she say.

"Okay"

She look at me joyfully, "You are about to get out of here.As soon as someone start giving you hope it means you are finally getting the light you've hunted"

I nod, "We only had a single conversation"

"And it only take one conversation to find peace.So how are you feeling now? I heard you were feeling down a bit earlier. Is there any difference now?" She ask.

I smile, "You know what,there is difference."

She smile "Why is that?"

I shrug my shoulders. She narrow her eyes.

"Maybe it's because she trusted me enough to ask me to be her baby's godfather. She saw me as a protective, loving person"

"You needed exactly that. Someone to see you for who you are now, not based on your past. You are a loving, protective person. Your past doesn't change that" she say.

This is what she has always told me, I didn't believe her before but I do now. There is a decent person in me and that person is recognizable.

"Don't allow your past to determine your future or who you are" she say.

I may have skipped her advising session but I can't skip it now.

"I understand that" I say.

She smile, "So?"

"Be positive, believe in yourself and stay true to the inner you" I say.

She nods, "Exactly. I'm glad you are coming around, thanks to Ziphelele"

"She have a good name" I say.

"Just like Nkabenhle"

I smile, "And people confuse it with Nxumalo's clan name, Nkabanhle"

"We can't be paying attention to minor differences, that's one and the same thing" she say laughing.

I laugh "Trust me my mother told everyone who confused me for Nkabanhle where to get off"

She stand up to go, "Eat before you sleep Nkabanhle"

I laugh "Okay, I won't argue"

She walk out laughing. I take my dinner bowl which is amadumbe and sweet potatoes. I down them with fresh rain water.

Early morning we go hunting down the mountains. I take a different lead from everyone because my instinct tell me I'm going to find something. I keep whistling for the dogs. Only one is following me. His name is Cuba. He is a strong, active dog.

There is a small bush we have to go through before we meet others.

Cuba lead the way. I follow him, looking around cautiously. He stop next to a huge rock and bark.

"Cuba are we hunting stones now?" I say brushing his fur.

He keep barking, I end up kicking him but he still refuse to move.

I get on my knees,

"You'll see this rock isn't hiding any rabbit, okay" I say pushing the rock.

When the the rock rolls off, an old bone appears.

I can't believe Cuba's smelling sense is this sharp.

He happily take the bone with his teeth and sway his tail.I laugh and walk away.

My sandals!

I took them out when pushing that rock.Fortunately I'm not that far from where the rock was.I walk back.

I pick my sandals and notice two glittering stones.They look precious. I pick one and look at it. It look like a beautiful glassy stone.

"Beautiful than marbles" I say.

I pick the other one and put them in my pocket.I carry on with my journey.

"You are empty handed nsizwa"Nkosi say as I join them.

I keep quiet and join the crew. We return home when the sun is up and heating.

I get in my hut and bath in a basin of cold water.I change into another short.

"Knock" a voice say.

I don't tell her to get in,she let herself in.

"Only you can knock verbally" I say.

She smile, "Your food Mr Hunter"

"Thank you" I take the plate.

Her eyes pop out, "Who own those?"

I look where she is looking, "Oh! The stones.I picked them on my way to the hunting and decided to keep them"

"You are filthy rich,are you serious sitting in this hut like you don't owe God a thank you prayer?" She say jumping up in joy.

I frown, "What?"

She slap my shoulder, if it was any other day I would've flipped.

"These are diamonds" she say.

Say what?

I lift the stones again, "No it's not"

"Damn you lucky man!" She say and walk out.

I'm left shocked, excited and not believing.

Ngqongqokazi sigh at the door,I remain standing like a statue.

"You are in awe" she say.

"Ngqongqokazi" I say.

"Your mysterious future has been solved, you can correct the past now."

So she knows.

"What does this mean?" I ask.

"Your father heard your concerns, your ancestors have responded. You wanted the ability to be a good man to your family" she say.

I nod, "Yes"

"Right there that ability has been given to you"

"Wow!" I still can't believe it.

"Don't spread the word, you are staying here until she give birth.You'll protect her throughout, that will also open doors for you" she say.

I nod, "I understand Ngqongqokazi yeNdlondlokazi"

She burp and walk away.

Chapter Hundred&Two

Sena Biyela

.

My family haven't done anything to get us out.I'm not only disappointed, I'm angry at them. They think life here is fun, well it's not.I will never forget last night.

We slept on the cold floor with a buggy light blanket that stinked more than a toilet.There were no pillows. In the morning they gave us two slices of brown bread and black cold tea.They said it's a called-in favour,we aren't supposed to be eating.I did eat it,Zethu refused.

She has been silent ever since dad laughed at us on the phone.I know we crossed him and disrespected his rules but it all was good intentions.

Now I have to keep comforting her, telling her everything will be okay.I don't know if they will be,Tyson promised to get us out early morning but we're still here. I heard my lawyer was here with my fiancée but I'm still here which means everything is failing.

I can say everyone look amused to see us here. We've received a numerous mocking laughs and hate speeches from police officers.The one guarding us keep telling us how he hate rich people because they think they are superior and can do anything they want.

Zethu is falling asleep on my lap,unfortunately I have to be a big sister and let her be.

"Trust-fund brats come out" he say opening the burglar's gate.

I shake Zethu, "Get up"

I have little hope that they are letting us go.

Zethu grunt,I pull her up and follow the police officer.

"Someone I can pay double his salary a week is nose-pulling us" she say loud.

I pinch her,Mr police turn and glare at us.

We get in the captain's office,who hate us with passion too.

"However you blackmailed Miss Phumlile Miya worked on your favour. Each and every dog have its day,so count your stars" he say.

"Yes Sir" Zethu say with an attitude.

"If it was up to me you were both to be sentenced to lifetime in prison,unfortunately the charges have been dropped"

"Only if you were more powerful Officer but sadly you only own a PhD in policing...Uh-huh there is no such, you are only a matriculant" Zethu say.

I wish she can lock her mouth,we are already in hot water with the law.

"You have a big mouth,don't you?"He say.

I jump in, "Excuse her, we are grateful for the 'dropped charges' and will stay on the right lane from now onwards"

He nod, "Okay, I need your signatures"

"For what?" I ask.

He give me a look, "Either you ask questions and spend another night here or you sign the papers and go"

I sigh, "I hope there is no trap in this and it doesn't mean we are signing our criminal record agreement contracts"

He chuckles, "Little intelligent you are Biyela's children"

We sign the damn papers and walk out to freedom.

.

Tyson Givanston

.

I still don't understand what is it that they did to their father that would make him so heartless.His daughters have spent a night in a police cell and he haven't done anything to have them released but

instead he have blocked every possible way for us to try getting them out.I don't know who he paid or threatened.

I went there with Sena's fiancee,Lwazi, we weren't even allowed to talk or see them.Lwazi seem broken more than I am.I'm not okay too but I know my babe will slay in that cell.She is strong.

The only good thing that has succeed so far is keeping the news from the newspapers. I mean that would've became my father's breakfast news and lunch joke.After all the doubts they had about her I don't want them to have more reasons to judge her.

After checking in the restaurants I drive to Lwazi's place. We are not friends or that close but times like this need us to lock our heads.

They have a beautiful house,I can't start to question their financial stability. The interior design,cars and furniture speak volumes.

I find him feeding his cute son on the kitchen table.

"Gentlemen" I greet.

"Hey man"

We shake hands.

"Any good news this side?" I ask.

He sigh, "With Biyela against them nothing is working out.I was told to wait till the trial"

I let out a chuckle "That's a joke"

"Well it's not"

He lift his son up, "Let me put the champ in front of the TV there"

They look alike and have an amazing bond.The little guy doesn't seem to mind that his mother isn't around.

"So he is not asking any questions?" I ask when he come back.

He smile "There is going to be a fight when she comes back without Mr Puzzle Me"

"What is that?"

"Family robotic games,you cannot understand. How is it going in your side?" He say.

I don't answer that question, the door burst open.

They walk in.

I'm confused.Did they beat police and escaped?

They look like a mess.I'm not sure there are showers there.Their faces are evident of anger.

We are startled and looking at them.

Sena walk past us to her son.She hug him tightly.

Zethu is in front of me,glaring at me with so much hate.

"I can't believe you guys are hanging out having glasses of champagne" she say.

We don't have glasses of anything nor hanging out.

"Hello to you too babe" I say.

She click her tongue, "Do you know how ugly it is there Ty? Do you?"

I can't believe after all the sweat and running I did trying to have them released I'm here accused of relaxing.

"Aren't you hungry?" Lwazi ask.

"No,I just had a five course meal in prison" she say.

Was she in prison?

Lwazi must know her very well,he walk to the kitchen and open fridges and cupboards.

"I can't believe you Tyson" she say,her hands on the waist.

"Blame me if it comforts you but I tried my best your father made it mission impossible" I say.

"That devil" she say.

So the lesson she was supposed to learn by being there she didn't learn? Here I'm seeing the same old Zethu.

"Fill up my plate and get me those big glasses Sena bought and a bottle of wine" she yell at Lwazi.

"I'm going to have a long bath sweety" she say and walk away.

I'm still sweety, okay.

So Sena isn't speaking to us.She is talking with her son and smiling.

The eye she is giving to Lwazi will give me nightmares.

"Hello guys" she say after a like long time.

I did say this girl doesn't give me peace of heart,I wasn't kidding.She is beautiful, sexy and all but she have that 'don't mess with me' aura around her.

I nod,Lwazi keep quiet.

She walk to him and smile.

"Babe where is your phone, sometimes not checking the time causes problems" she say.

Lwazi swallow, "It's on the couch in the lounge"

She blow him a kiss, "Checking the time, bathing and coming back to eat.Take care, I love you"

Lwazi stare at her until she disappears. I sense trouble in paradise but that's not mine to sense.
Is my paradise not troubled? I'm yet to find out.

Chapter Hundred&Three

Sena Biyela

.

I stink and I'm hungry but food and bath can wait I have an investigation to conduct.

I get inside my bedroom and push the door. I sit on the bed and swipe the screen.

This is what I swore I'll never do in my relationships. Searching my partner's phone.

I guess we all get to the point where we break the rules. The trust I invested in this relationship is making me like this. Never, even in my wildest dreams had I thought Lwazi could be entertaining bitches. I trusted him too much.

I start on his Messenger, there are a few ladies he is chatting with. Nothing to raise my eyebrows about though. It's just those 'I love you and your family' kind of messages.

The real deal is on his WhatsApp, he is texting with his Switchboard lady. This lady talk unnecessary work staff and end it with funny emojis and lovely goodbyes.

Down the chat logs I see the desperate divorcee, the chat history has been cleared. I block her and delete her numbers.

"Sena"

I lift my head up.

Oh the bitch ass nigga is here!

"I'm not done" I say.

He walk and sit next to me, "You are still checking the time?"

I look at him, "No I'm going through your infidelities"

He exhale, "Am I unfaithful?"

Like really bhuti?!

"Not really. Shift I'm stinking" I say.

He doesn't shift,

"I know you're angry, I've broken the trust you had in me. I just didn't know how to tell you, I mean what kind of a man run to his woman whenever a certain girl hit on him?" He say.

"Phumla is not a certain girl, she is Mandla's ex-wife, my undercover enemy. I fail to understand your cooperation in her schemings. I said SHIFT" I say.

He sigh and get on his feet, "I hate fighting with you"

I give him a look, "Okay let's not fight then, shove your ass outta here"

He chuckles, "No Sena you don't speak like that with me"

I laugh "Oh! He have a backbone to stand up for himself now. You should've done that with your white stepfather and mom"

He look at me blankly

"I understand you are angry but I'd rather for you to keep them out of this"

I throw his phone at him, "Yeah right! Let's keep the white parents that turned you into the little piece of shit that you are and discuss Phumla's big ass instead, right."

He turn pink, "I'm what?"

"I'll need to sit down and come with one descriptive word. Between a bitch, weak ass of a man and dog. You know what? I haven't concluded yet" I say.

He throw the phone back at me and walk out.

I sigh heavily and strip my clothes off.

I take a long cold shower. I need to calm down, I don't need this anger. Not when my son is around.

I put on a tracksuit and takkies. The style is motivated by my current mood.

I shove his phone in my pocket and head to the kitchen to eat. I'm very happy to find Zethu gone with her boyfriend. That would've meant an update to everyone that 'the engaged birds' have clashed. Imagine Fiki's happy face to that.

There is food on the table. Zethu left a messy plate and half bottle of wine.

No matter how hungry you are you can never eat with a broken heart. I'm not sure if I'm heartbroken or angry but the food is not going down.

I look for my phone. The battery has died, I put it in the charger and clean up.

There is a knock at the door, I wipe my hands and go open.

It's Mandla.

"Hello bhuti" I greet.

He smile, "You are back"

"I wish they locked me in forever and threw away the keys"

He frown, "What's up?"

I fold my arms, "Isn't your ex-wife is trying to get her claws on my man"

He laughs, "Shit! You're not real, come on"

"I don't know how come you married that witch in the first place" I say walking back to what I was doing.

He sigh.

"You guys need to deal with her the SimDon way, you know putting highlights on the boundaries" he say standing in front of me.

"Lwazi is not Don, he is too weak for that" I say.

He close his mouth, "I'm so glad he is not here to hear you saying that"

"He knows, I told him" I say.

He take out his phone and type something.

"What is that?" I ask.

"I was cancelling the suit order"

I frown, "What suit?"

"The one I was going to wear at your wedding. Isn't there is no wedding anymore?"

Is he nuts?

"Who said that? There is a wedding, we are still getting married" I say stunned.

He chuckles, "No sweetie, you don't tell him he is weak and compare him to your sister's man and expect him to marry you"

"I was angry" I say.

"Not justifiable. Nothing mend a dented ego. Why do you think Phumla and I divorced? She told me I'm weak in bed. I needed someone who was going to recognize me and compare me to nobody else. And your Lwazi is also going to find that someone, who will see him as her strong man and accept who he is and understand his personality"

I wipe the escaping tears, "I was emotional, okay. I meant half things I said"

He shake his head "Never underestimate what a person says when she is angry. It's always 99% true"

I let the tears flow freely, "Are you done?"

"Yes. Welcome to single divas, the world of Fikile"

He is so cruel. I cry out.

He pat my shoulder, "Keep well, I will be your shoulder to cry on neh!"

I hate Mandla people. He walk out a proud man.

There can't be no wedding. I love Lwazi,I can't imagine us not together. What is my world without him?
No I can't.

I bury my head on the table and cry.

Imagine us apart.What kind of crap is that?

A hand tap my shoulder.

"What's wrong?"

It's him.

"I have a toothache"

I don't where that is coming from.I guess I just want him to feel sorry for me and forgive me without getting an apology.

He lift my head up with his hand, "When did it start?"

I sniff, "Yesterday"

Holy word!!I need a self pincher.

"I'll get you painkillers,did you eat?" He ask.

I nod.

He hurry to get me painkillers and a glass of water.

My face is wet with tears,don't ask me where I trained to become this awesome actress. I mean I even have hiccups and holding my cheek with the other hand.

He come back and beg me to drink tablets.

"Come lie down" he say holding my hand.

This is like Hallelujah!

He put me on bed and pull covers over me.

The secret smile I have when he kiss my forehead. He get right beside me and put his arms around me.

Mandla need to see this.

Come morning I will be having a severe headache. He will have no choice but to forgive me and love me.

Chapter Hundred &Four

Fikile Biyela

.

I don't understand this.

There are ladies walking up and down my kitchen,cooking,chatting and laughing loud.

I put the briefcase on the table.

They don't care that I'm here nor recognize me.

"Good afternoon" I say.

The pregnant one turns, "The madam is here"

All of them turn and look at me.

Zethu start dancing.I thought they'd be in a therapy room getting consoled about their night in prison.

"You are glowing, fill us in" that is Nozipho.

Okay. My brother went and told his wife that I may be seeing someone and she told all my sisters.Now they've broken into my house, cooked dinner I never knew about because they want me to dish out my private life to them.

Where can I buy them chill pills?

I sit on the chair, "Who told you to come in my house,without my consent and cook my food?"

"It's lady's dinner date" Sena says.

Is it?

"In my house?" I ask.

"Duh!!" She say.

They are full of crap.

"We've cooked delicious meal.What a night we're having!" Nozipho say.

I'm bored by this.

"Guys I appreciate being alone after a long day at work.This thing you're doing exhaust me" I say.

I have a glass of bubbles in front of me.

"That's what Zethu is here for,taking care of your throat honey" she say.

I sip on it, "You are the best"

"I know honey, Ty tell me everyday" she say.

I roll my eyes,

"So how was it like to be locked up?" I ask.

Nozipho laughs, "Can I punch the record button first?"

Sena snatch the phone away from her.

"I don't know which was worse between the police captain who hated us with all his being and the cold floors" Sena says.

"You slept on the floor?" I ask shocked.

"With a thin blanket that had bugs and stinked. The one like that one they have for a dog in Inkandla" Zethu say grinning.

I laugh, "Did you bath properly yesterday? Did you scrub your bodies and put dettol and salt in the water?"

"Rejoice holy daughter" Zethu say.

"You did good though, Phumla needed a few punches. I just hope dad get some enlightenment from isangoma" Nozipho say.

Zethu put her hand up, "I don't want to hear about that man. I ignored his calls all day"

Sena grin, "To think his wife allowed him to let us be in that place for 22 hours, nx"

I understand why they are angry with them but unfortunately they are not going to get any kind of apology instead there is more punishment for them.

"Has anyone checked on Simtho today?" I ask.

Simtho has been keeping a low profile ever since she lost the baby. We only see her if we go to her house. Don and Junior have temporarily moved in with her. I'm grateful for Don's support.

"We passed by her, she is fine" Sena say.

"We need to take her out, have a road trip maybe" I suggest.

Nozipho shake her head, "She need to physically heal then we can have that road trip. For now all we can do is to be available and supportive"

"When she has healed she need to visit Mini's grave, get a cleansing ceremony and go to Loyiso's home. She still have a long journey to go" Sena add.

I nod "You're right, I'm just happy she is this strong"

"Updates" Zethu says.

That is an announcement.

Nozipho go first, "We bought sex toys"

We all jump.

"Get out!!" Sena say astonished.

Nozipho laughs, "We only have one life, explore while you can"

"I need to try that out with Tyson" Zethu say.

"Have you started putting them into good use or they are still sealed?" Sena ask.

Nozipho smile, "All I can say is we need 18 hours of night and 6 hours for a day"

OMG! People are busy with greater things at night while we are sleeping. God have mercy!

"What do you have?" Zethu ask.

I'm all ears.

"Silicone dick, electric cup and vibrators" she say.

My mouth hang open, "So my brother is that sexual open?"

She nod, "He give me the best life, when I die there will be no regrets. I can not be without him"

She is blushing. This is cute.

"Sena you're next, updates" the president of gossip nation say.

Sena exhale, "We fought. I said some hurtful words now I'm faking to be sick every time he is around because I don't have the backbone to apologise to him"

Zethu chuckles, "I had a 'welcome home' meal and sex, you were faking sicknesses"

Sena glare at her, "Don't feed on my misery. I was angry at him about Phumla's pictures"

"I told you to let it go, look now you're exactly where Phumla wanted you to be" Zethu say.

Nozipho burst out laughing.

I look at her, "Share the joke Mrs Biyela"

"She came walking like a granny with a scarf over her shoulders, Lwazi was accompanying her with his hand over her"

We all laugh.

"I must say I enjoy the extra care and attention. I must carry with this a little longer" Sena say.

Zethu shake her head, "You will be bursted sweetly and that will mean two things to apologise for"

I nod at her, "Rather apologise now. Lwazi will forgive you"

She sigh and look at us hopelessly.

Zethu groan angrily, "He did something awful to you, you said hurtful words to him"

"So?"

"Two wrongs make right" she say.

Who raised Zethu?

I laugh "What?"

"You do me wrong, I do you wrong then we are even. Things are automatically right" she say dishing up.

The lies and truth behind that.

Nozipho take a piece of meat she was supposed to put on my plate and eat it.

"All I can say is Tyson is in for a long exhaustion" Sena say laughing.

"My meat is not enough" I say.

"You didn't cook anything" Zethu say.

"This is my food you cooked"

Sena roll her eyes, "Is the salad okay?"

"Nope I need more cucumber" I say.

She dish it in the bowl.

"More meat for me" Nozipho say mouthful.

I've been silently praying Zethu forget about my turn but God had headset on by that time.

"Fiki you're next,updates" she say.

I put food in my mouth,

"Work,work,work" I say.

They all look at me.

"I'm serious" I say laughing.

"Who has been sending chocolates and winter coats?" Nozipho ask.

"I'm the one who bought them,the manager had them delivered to me" I lie.

"So it is the Woolworths manager who has been sending you clothes and chocolates?" Nozipho enquires.

Is it possible for a pregnant person to crave news?

I need to end this.

"Yes" I say.

They all say 'mhhh'.

I'm happy they start another topic immediately. Zethu seem to have it all together with Tyson.It's all because of Tyson's level of understanding.

I missed having time with my sisters. I'm grateful they came even though we are incomplete.

Zethu is tipsy and refusing to help with cleaning my kitchen.

There is a hard knock at the door.We look at each other.

Sena jump to the dishcloth and wipe her hands.

I'm still confused when she grab off my jacket and put it over her shoulders.

"Go open" she whisper to Zethu.

Oh it's Angelina Jolie now!

She sit on the chair and lie her head on her arm.

We need to be supporting actors.

We need to pull serious faces and action!

He walk in.His eyes land right on her.The sadness crawl right that moment on his face.

He greet us and sit next to her with his hand on her face.

"How are you feeling?" He ask concerned.

Sena coughs, "It still hurt"

How does one make her voice that wobbly in an instant?

"I will take the day off tomorrow then we will go to the doctor" he say.

He is too sweet.

Zethu crack up laughing, "This is too funny"

I give her a stern look, "You need to go to sleep"

She put her fingers up, "No I need to watch this.What is it? Bold and The Beautiful.No no no,it is Days of Our Lives and this is Hope"

Now I don't know!

"Zethu!!" Nozipho warn.

My father's daughter just laugh at us,

"Just tell him you are sorry for what you said,you didn't mean it.Then apply for a Media studies in UJ"

I gasp.

Lwazi is looking at her confused.

She clap her hands, "She is not sick or anything, she just can't face you after everything she said"

Okay this is over.

Lwazi look at Sena.

"Babe"

Sena exhale, "Okay I'm sorry for everything I said. It was wrong of me and I regret it"

Lwazi scratch his head, "So you are not sick?"

Sena stand up straight, "I'm fine"

He sigh, "Thanks God!"

Is that what he is going to say? Just thanks God you're not sick.Sena have strong ancestors.

"Belgravia anyone?"Zethu ask.

"Nay fuck you!" Sena say.

"Thank you"

Don't give Zethu drinks and expect everything to flow smoothly!

Chapter Hundred&Five

Sena Biyela

.

I couldn't believe my ears.We are sisters, we are supposed to have each other's backs.A part of me is grateful though.She made it easier.

Look at me now!

I'm holding a front seat like a madam that I am.He is holding a wheel with one hand, the other is on my thigh brushing it.

He is listening to Tamia-Make Tonight Beautiful,there is a shadow of a smile on his face.

I keep stealing glances,he look happy.I love him,if I was to fall for another man that man would be a book character.

He turn down the volume.

"I'm craving a mutton pie,do you mind if I pass by the garage?" He ask.

"We have pies in the house" I say.

He smile "Of course we do"

He drive straight ahead,I fold my arms and listen to the music.

I don't know what made him this happy.Is it that I'm not sick?

We get to the house,he open the door for me and lead me holding my hand.

"What's up?" I ask.

He stop and look at me.

"I love you, do you know that?"

I nod.

"Yes"

He smile, "Good then"

I raise my eyebrow "What is behind the happy face?"

"This weekend I'm going to pay your lobola,your dad gave me the go-ahead.The only thing that was troubling me was your sickness but now that is settled I'm happy"

"It is too soon" I say.

He frown "For what?"

I exhale "Simtho is still mourning, the whole family is.Ziphe on the other hand is still missing"

"Your dad said it okay,he knew all that" he say.

It sound unfair to the sisterhood.

"We have to wait"

He sigh "Sena I'm going to lobola you this Saturday"

"I said we are waiting,my sisters are not okay. I need them with me,all of them, happy"

He chuckles, "And that makes you raise your voice?"

Here we go again!

I exhale "I expect you to understand simple things. You know how me and my sisters roll. We are one"

He fold his arms "It's not a wedding"

Like duh!!

"Just because you don't have siblings to share your happiness with doesn't mean...."

He is giving me an ordering look.

"Go on,I'm listening"

I clear my throat, "I'm just saying I need to have my sisters with me,all of them"

"The important person is your dad,he is the one I'm paying to"

Now we are fighting in the middle of the house, great!

"Okay then I will not show up" I say walking away.

He grab my arm, "Not this way,that way.To the kitchen I need my pie"

Is he for real?

"I'm not your wife yet and you are not handicapped" I snap.

He nod and walk to the kitchen.This is going to be my worst night.

I go to the bedroom, change into pyjamas and get on bed. I put my knees up and switch the TV on.

He walk in after a while with his pie and bottle of water.He sit on the edge of the bed and eat.

I feel guilty.

"Do you need anything else?" I ask.

He shake his head.

I sigh, "Why are you like this?"

He look at me, "Like what?"

"I don't know,you are just too understanding"

He bite on his pie and look at me again.

"I know I'm a bitch these days,my temper is uncontrollable but you don't put me on my lane"

Getting away with things is tiring.I've been getting away with lot of bad behavior in this relationship.He push everything aside.

He eat his pie silently until he finishes.He drink his water and walk to the bathroom. He come back and change into pyjamas.

I sigh as he switch off the side-lamps.This is not how I want things to be.I don't want to be the commander of this house.

I switch the lamps on.

"Lwazi"

He look at me.

"I'm sorry for everything I've done.I'm sorry for everything I've said"

"You are forgiven" he say.

I exhale, "It sounds like you are forgiving only to close the chapter"

"What do you want from me Mama kaQuinton?"

"I want you to be angry with me.To make your emotions visible"

He rub his eyes.He sit and lean on the headboard.

"I'm not that person Sena, I thought you'd understand that by now. I'm not Mike Tyson"

I pull up the covers to my chest, "I'm not disputing that"

"Then allow me to be me.If I'm weak,that's me. Allow me to be weak,I'm not going to change who I am for you. You fell in love with me while I was this Lwazi,now that you've seen people you want me to change" he say calm as ever.

"You are twisting what I said" I say.

"You want me to shout at you?" He ask.

"Just a little"

"You want me to force you to do things that you don't want to do?"

I exhale "If necessary"

"Here is the thing, I didn't grow up under a big house surrounded by angry men waving guns around. I didn't have a protective dad who would kill for me and filled my credit card with millions of allowance. I had to survive in order to live, I worked in different households. I saw things, I experienced things, I learnt lessons"

I feel insulted by his statement.

"You make it sound like it is wrong to be rich" I say.

"You think it's okay to be shouted at. You think it's okay to be forced to do things that you don't want to do"

"It's different, you are my partner" I say.

"I'm not arguing with you. I'm trying to tell you that my life has moulded me into this person that I am today. We are both grown, we know wrongs and rights" he say.

I nod.

"I hear you"

"Don't expect me to pull unknown personas. I'll never shout at you nor force you to do things"

"It's boring" I babble out.

"You know what Dave Willis says?"

I shake my head.

"He say: Husbands love your wives well. Your children are noticing how you treat her. You are teaching your sons how they should treat women, and you are teaching your daughters what they should expect from men"

Do I want Quinton to be like his father?

"I want Quinton to be able to speak and act on what on his mind" I say.

He take my hand, "A strong man doesn't have to be dominant towards a woman. He doesn't match his strength with a woman weak with love for him because men are like steel when they lose their temper they lose their worth"

"Where do you get so much wisdom?" I ask.

"In my head"

I laugh "I love your head"

"I'm serious you can't measure manhood with a tapeline around biceps, level of shouting or physical actions.I aspire to be great, greater than my father and greater than your ideal husband"

I close my eyes, "You are my ideal husband"

He smile, "Just that I don't shout?"

"We've ironed that"

"I do shout at you in my head"

Is he for real?

I laugh "And what end up happening?"

"You don't stop talking,so the best way is for me to let you be and realise your faults later" he say.

"I'm so anti apologetic"

He laughs "You rather be sick?"

I laugh "And that witch,Zethu.Ay maan she must never drink again"

We laugh.

"Tomorrow you will be sick" he say.

I frown "Are you prophesying my Lord?"

He hold my neck, "Yes my child. I'm seeing your legs unable to walk in the morning"

OMG!!

"What else can you see my Lord?" I ask laughing.

He smooch my neck.

"I see your cookie-jar in terrible pains.I see your thighs bruised but there is something confusing my child!!"

I'm in stitches!!

"You my child keep wanting for more and your man end up taking a day off.There is a dark cloud surrounding your bedroom my child"

Maybe I love him like this.Quiet, humble and handsome.

Wait the son of God is taking my pyjamas off!!

Chapter Hundred&Six

Fikile Biyela

.

Today we are going to our first date together. I'm excited, super excited actually. The watch is very slow today, I keep glancing at my wrist and sighing disappointedly.

Sitting in my expensive hackneyed office, in front of piles of unprocessed paperwork with my thoughts astray.

I think I'm wasting my time by being here. I'm the boss's daughter, the daughter boss, get what I mean. I can knock off right this minute without having to report to anyone.

Yes.

I pick what is mine and walk out. I'm consumed by the contemplation of my tonight's look, I don't even see where the loud 'goodbye' is coming from.

When I get to my house I call him to check what he is up to.

Dooch! He is still at work.

It's no problem though, I will use the remaining hours to design my look.

There is this lady who has helped me with make-up when attending events. Instead of booking short notice make-up services I'd rather have her pro hands fancying my face.

She arrives shortly after I made a call. I give her something to drink then we get on it.

"So what are you wearing?" she asks.

I haven't thought about that.

"It's going to be a dress, I don't know which one yet"

She stops sculpting my cheeks and looks at me.

"Did you see the time? Girl you need me more than you think" she says.

She is very bubbly.

I laugh, "Finish up my neck is tired"

Well she insists on going to my closet, I start the fitting and turning around with a smile session.

I'm on the fifth dress, I swear this is my perfect look of the century. I look better than Rihanna on Grammy's red carpet but, she is not satisfied. So I'm taking this one off again.

She squeals and throws the blue pantsuit at me.

"This is it" she says.

It is an off shoulder pantsuit I'm not sure if it's gonna work. I don't want to be there looking glamorous and shivering.

She give me a pair of classic nude heels that I didn't know I had.

"Look at yourself" she say pulling me to the mirror.

I look absolutely beautiful.

I smile "I'm what I call a stunning beauteous,enthralling hall of fame lady"

"I got that and I agree babe,you look A+ beautiful" she say.

I need to take a few pictures.She is honoured to be my camera girl.

We walk back to the living room chatting and laughing. There is someone standing tall in the middle of my house.

Why is he not ready?

Glancing at the watch on the wall I see the time has escaped our schedule.

"Girl bye" Cindy,the make-up girl says.

I nod at her and look at him again.Is there something wrong?

Are we cancelling this date?

"You look beautiful" he say.

"Why are you not dressed? Are we no longer going?" I ask.

He look at himself.He is wearing a pull on Chino short,black hicker shoes and the printed black T-shirt that have his clan names written whitely on its back and a bold NKOSI on the chest.

"I'm dressed" he say.

I feel exhaustion in my veins.

I look at him,expecting him to say he is kidding we are still to pass by his house.

But no, he is not.

He walk to me,wrap me in his arms and kiss my forehead.

"I missed you" he say.

I melt.

A smile escape my lips, "I missed you too"

We share a hot kiss for a few seconds.He let go.He put his forehead on mine and exhale.I get lost in his tiny,almost shut eyes.

Now we are wasting the time by staring at each other. He is thinking exactly that too, we laugh out.

"Ladies first" he say.

I steal a quick cheek-kiss and walk.He laugh out loud.

Oh! Today he is driving a Polo.

Doesn't he know that Polo is one of the STI's causes and a symptom of HIV?

I don't know why I'm loving him, I just do because I do.

Why on earth would a CA drive a Polo on his first date?

"You're driving us in this car?" I ask.

He opens the door for me, I sigh.

He gets on his side smiling, "This is my first car"

"First car?"

"The very first car I owned, I was working in a bank by that time. I took a 20km spin that day" he says smiling.

"This car looks new" I say.

"I don't have anything that looks old"

He is full of himself.

"Can't you remember the once famous Polo bujwa?" He asks.

I laugh, "Stupid me! What an ancestor this is"

He laughs, "I'm so glad you thought it was new"

He makes the journey very short with his silliness. We are in Suncoast without even acknowledging it.

I'm the one who booked the table so obviously we have the magnificent view of the sea.

He looks uncomfortable.

"Are you okay?" I ask.

"People are staring at us" he says.

"They'll get over it soon, I made sure this will remain private"

He leans back on his chair and exhales.

The waitress attends us.

He doesn't touch the starters, he is only gulping a glass of water down his throat.

I understand, men don't like cheese balls.

Finally our platter arrives.

He is looking at it with this expression I can't explain.

"It's a platter of seafood; crayfish, calamari, prawns, umhhh langoustines and..."

He laughs, "Hold it right there my love, this place is called what what Grillers is it?"

Lord have mercy!

"It's Havana Grill, a very famous restaurant in Durban" I say.

He stand up and go to the waitering lady on another table. He lean over her and talk using his hands. I can see the guests on that table are irritated.

He comes back and sit.

"You was supposed to raise your hand" I say trying to be calm.

He pick his glass of water, "I don't mind walking to them"

"Okay you have your forks" I say.

He laugh, "No, they are going to grill my meat. I don't eat snails and all sea cockroaches"

I fix a hard look on him, "Are you for real?"

"Yes I did tell them to grill a steak for me, enjoy your langastone" he say laughing.

Langastone???

"What is wrong with you?" I ask laughing.

"There is nothing wrong, I didn't sign up to eat sea creepy animals"

I give up!

"Watch and learn" I say preparing my first bite.

I chew, he grin.

If it was any other day, with any other person I'd be offended and getting my ass out of this date.

His food arrives, together with my bottle of Malbec.

I do the honours of filling up the glasses. He is watching me weirdly the whole time.

"This is?" He ask.

Malbec, obviously.

"It's a wine. Don't you like red wine?" I ask.

He doesn't answer.

I roll my eyes, "Forgive me, I know most men prefer whisky"

He chuckles, "I don't have any alcoholism preference"

Shoot me now!

"What?"

"I don't drink" he say.

Jesus get your holy chest here!

"Why? I mean why don't you drink,did alcohol do anything wrong to you?" I ask.

He frown, "You make it sound like it's weird not to drink"

It is weird.

"I'm interested in knowing why a grown,above 18years man doesn't drink" I say.

"I don't have problems I can't face"

Excuse me?!

I look at him shocked, "What?"

"I have nothing to drink for"

This is an insult my fellow drunkards of South Africa.

"Let's drop this topic, drink your water I'll drink my wine." I say.

He smile.

Who drink 3 glasses of water in such a short period of time?

We finish eating. Our next mission is to be revealed by him.

"Where are we going now?" I ask.

He check the time, "My house"

I sigh, "It's our first date,we are going to make it memorable. Let's go watch a movie,it will be a first movie we watched together"

"I also have TV in my house" He say.

You chose him Fiki,now deal with him.

I wonder if this is not a trap.Once a man start pursuing you about going to his house it only mean one thing.He want sex.

"Umuntu wami madoda"

I stop and look behind me.He is standing, watching me with a smile.

How can you walk in front of a person who stop midway and throw 'umuntu wami madoda' lines?

"Come on you're in the front now" I say.

He laugh and walk on.

I read the printed names on his back.

"Mphazima kaLanga" I say loudly.

He does a dance. Or an indlamu style. I don't know but he push his foot backwards and do a head dance collaboratively.

"Was that a dance?" I ask.

"I was responding to the recite of my clan name. The great Mphazimas, oNdlangamandla" he say proudly.
I smile.

I'm in love with this person.

But this is not the route to his house!

"Where are we going?" I ask.

"To my house in Zimbali, don't worry it's big enough to accommodate you. I even bought a big mirror, filled the drawers with ten lipsticks, Ponds and all other paintings you women use"

I laugh, "You have a house in Zimbali? I'm going there, right now and I have facial paints waiting for me?"

"Yes, I even bought leggings"

I don't think I'll ever be ready for him to meet my sisters. The picture of him interacting with them and chatting with Zethu kills my heart

Chapter Hundred & Seven

Fikile Biyela

.

I'm familiar with Ballito, white people dominate the place. I wonder how he found a house here? I mean him.

"Do you love this place?" I ask.

He is just driving. He doesn't care about beautiful nature we pass by. He doesn't acknowledge that we are inside Zimbali.

"I love my house in here" he say.

I did say he doesn't care about here being Zimbali with its famous lodge. The only thing he cares about is his house.

All houses look the same. His is the same double-storey like the one opposite. His neighbour is a white man, he is out the balcony smoking a cigarette.

"Do you know him?" I ask.

He frown "This is not Inkandla where I know my nextdoor's date of birth"

It's a normal house. The walls are just walls. No paintings.No pictures.Even the tables have no flowered vases on top.

He put my bag on the kitchen table,

"Welcome to my house"

He is happy.

I know I'm supposed to compliment something about the house since it's my first time in here.

I look around looking for something I can compliment on.Mhhh....

"I love the..." Oh come on! Think of it.

He is looking at me with his eyebrow raised, arms folded.I'm a bad liar.

"Nice aircons" I say.

He laughs and turn his back on me.I sit on the chair.The kitchen cupboards look empty even when they're closed.

He look at me, "You mean aircons are the only thing you love in this house?"

"And you Ndlangamandla" I say.

Cheesy! The melting eyes and soft smile that follows.

"My heart is pounding" he say beating his chest like a beat.

"Can I have something to drink?" I ask.

"Yes,I don't have alcohol though"

Who said I want alcohol?

I give him a look and go to the fridge.It's a big nice fridge,ask me what's inside!

Tropika juice,half bottle of cold drink,old tomatoes and 5l maas.Oh there is also a 2l filled with water.

"Is this tap water?" I ask with a bottle in my hand.

"No, river water"

I know his sarcasm, I get a glass and pour water.

"How long have you had this house?" I ask.

"Year and a half,but I only come here to visit. My old son is here more frequently" he say.

I know he have kids but we haven't reached that phase where we talk about them.I wonder how old is his first son but I don't want to jump guns.

"Where is the toaster here?" I ask.

He laugh "I eat bread if I want to eat bread I don't burn it"

"You've never tasted my cheese toast sandwich"

He is okay with living in a dull skeleton of a big house. Although his bedroom is a bit exciting to look at his mood has dropped. I don't know if it's something I said. I've been on and on about his uglily designed house.

I sit on the bed and watch him walking up and down in front of me. He eventually sit next to me and take his shoes off.

"You'll find everything you need in the bathroom, I bought women bathing gels and all" he say.

Of course he is not joining me! I head to the bathroom.

There is a nightdress on the hanger. Indeed there is everything I need for my bath. Who advised him?

I finish bathing, lotion my body and put on the nightdress. I'm barefooted!

When I walk back in he have his head turned down.

"Are you asleep mister?" I ask jumping on his bed.

He look at me, "You look beautiful"

In a nightdress, really?

He stand, "I will go bath"

What can I do while he is gone? Why not look around.

I go from room to room inspecting. They are all cold. Even his study is cold, I don't know if it's because of neatness or absence.

The last room is decorated though. I think almost every Springbok player is pasted on these walls. There is a little cute table at the end corner with lot of silver trophies.

There he is. The room owner. He is holding a rugby ball. I wonder if those are his original arms or he have plastic biceps.

I sit on the small leather couch. This room is the only exciting place in this house. This person even keep healthy diets magazines.

His voice bring me back from the magazine.

"Here you are, I nearly called amabutho aseNkandla"

Now I have to close this muscle building nutrition page and put the magazine back on its place.

I stand "I hope I wasn't invading"

He look dazzling with just a towel on his bottom, his chest have muscles protruding, like a magnet it attract my hand.

Uh-uh get some grip Fiki! My subconscious warns.

I take my eyes off his body and look at the boy's picture.

He get to me and take my hand, "Let's get out of here before we get in trouble with the champ"

I guess the champ is the owner of this room.

I decide to ask no questions. I'll know everyone when the time is right.

Oh! He has put a bunch of flowers on the bed, next to the pillow on the left.

"Whose flowers are these?" I ask.

"Yours. I heard fancy girls love flowers on their bed"

Fancy girls? Yeah ne.

I pick the flowers and smell them. Any man, other than him, would've gave me the flowers before we even went to the restaurant.

I just have to find a perfect spot for them around this room.

"Do you like strawberries too?"

It's a question. I'm not sure if he is faking the idiocy or being real.

"I'd like to sleep" I answer.

He take extra pillows away and gesture for me to come. He make me lean on his chest, he is running his hand through my hair. It's not a romantic gesture, he is analysing how these fake hair is planted on me.

"So MaBiyela how do you want us to be?"

I have to turn my head and look up to his face.

"Huh?"

He grin, "I'm asking how do you want this relationship to be"

I think I'm lost.

"Turn around" he orders.

I turn, we lie face to face. His face is back to the sadness, uncomfortableness and worrisome.

"What's troubling you?" I ask.

He frown, "I'm not troubled. Are you going to answer my question?"

"I don't understand the question" I say.

He exhale, "I'm grown, so are you. We need to get life straight, facts straight and put everything on a silver plate. I believe you have your expectations, wishes and preferences in a relationship. That's what I'm asking"

I need a glass of wine. This is going to be a long night.

"So...?"

I shrug my shoulders.Maybe I need time to think that over.

He chuckles, "I'm not scared to voice out mine. It will be a pity to start a relationship only to find out halfway through that it's not what you want"

This should be interesting!

"Okay, sing little bird" I blurt out.

He give me a look.This is a serious moment.

"I'm not a little bird.Well I love you,first thing that drew me to you was this beautiful face,then I fell in love with your personality.But I'm not just looking for a pretty face with a perfect body on a bubbly personality.I need someone who can accept me,for who I am.I'm not an individual, I come with a luggage,three kids.I can't be in a relationship with a person who can't have a relationship with them.That's why I haven't dated."

I haven't met his kids, but I know I don't have a problem with them.I'm not evil.

I nod and let him continue.

"I'm a Zulu guy,I don't believe in 50/50"

Say that again!

"You are a sexist?" I ask shocked.

"You can have your freedom,do whatever you want and make house rules as much as you want but I'm still the head of the house,I have the upper hand.You don't do things without negotiating them with me. You wear G-strings and lie on bed,I go lock the doors and double check everything.I pay the bills,I fix the washing machine.Even the driller that you put on your wet hair"

I roll my eyes.Hairdryer!

"That doesn't make you dominant though. I'll be cooking,washing your clothes..."

He cut me in, "We are boys only in my mother's womb,I know how to do things for myself"

I sigh, "Okay preach preacher"

He burst out laughing. I love it when he is relaxed.

"What I was meaning to say was I need respect. You have to respect me as your boyfriend,that doesn't include bowing for me,but I wouldn't mind if you did"

I widen my eyes at him.He smiles.

"Lastly I need a woman who understand where I'm coming from"

Marriage and runaway wife.

"I have no problem with all those terms" I say.

"But...?"

I exhale, "You are still married"

He look away.

It might be another addition to my list of love nightmares.

"The thing is we were married traditionally, it was what the society believed in"

What is that supposed to clarify?

"So?" I ask.

"She is still a Nkosi,ancestors will always acknowledge her as one.There were no papers signed,only inyongo was sprinkled and that was enough for our families" he say regretful.

I let out a chuckle, "Then I'm a sidechick by heavens grace"

He pull me to his chest, "Don't say that"

I don't feel the warmth I'm supposed to feel on this chest.My heart has broken.History is going to repeat itself.

"Fikile" he say my name.

I look at him surprised.

"I love you"

I inhale his words, they run through every vein of my body.My heart skip two beats.He sound so sincere.

This is what girls in movies call melting.

"You have doubts?" He ask,evidently broken.

I can't lie to him.

"Yes,you are not mine"

The sadness draw back in his eyes, "I'm scared"

He is scared of what?

"Why?" I ask.

"You are going to leave me"

I swallow. I can't make promises I can't keep for the sake of comforting him.

"Given a valid reason I might.Love alone doesn't stabilize a relationship" I say.

He blink and rub his forehead, "I..I know... I just,Fikile...I.."

I kiss his stuttering lips, juicy!

"But I'm not leaving before we have sex"

He is shocked. His Chinese eyes are all out. I wish I was a normal person and regretted saying that. Is the wine having an effect on this behavior?

"Wow, Jesus!" He says in disbelief.

I laugh, "Not that I'm going to leave you, no I don't leave that easily. I hold on through thick and thin, you'd swear I'm a wife sitting on a millions of insurances"

He picks a pillow and puts it over his face. He is laughing.

He throws the pillow away and looks at me with a smirk.

"You know Sthelo was a result of me having sex at tender age. He is now 15 years, imagine the experience I have now"

I smile, "You naughty, you had a child at 16 years?"

He laughs, "It was a disaster"

It is the first time he touches my bare body. First time he squeezes my breast and groans softly. I gave him permission so I endear his hand caressing my cookie-jar. He is in no rush, he is kissing every part of my body. I'm short of oxygen, I need him to put that condom on faster.

My wish is granted. My lungs are running out of oxygen. My screams are filling the whole house. He is hitting every corner. He is gently but very deep and strong. I will always remember his face, his loose opened mouth, red half shut eyes and soft groans. I don't think I can get this out of my mind. He is in his own world.

.....

And then?

I'm all alone on the gigantic bed, early in the morning. I look around, the scent I inhale tells me he is gone. He woke up, showered, dressed up and left.

Of course he didn't leave any note. This is Inkandla guy.

I check my cellphone. No message from him. Sigh!

I must get out of this bed too. Make breakfast, maybe. Shoot! He might have no breakfast stock.

I go to the bathroom and wash the night off my body. A smile escapes my lips as I recall last night's deeds in my head. I think we need to record a sex tape, I need to watch us when I'm alone and missing him.

I open the closets. He bought a few dresses and jeans. Who told him my size?

I take a jean and white t-shirt. I love that these clothes were bought by him so I feel confident and gorgeous in them. Shoes?

Yes, I have black pumps and assorted sandals. He is creepy.

I make my way to the kitchen. I wonder where he is. Maybe he is gone to get us breakfast.

There is a guy eating from a bowl on the kitchen table. He have headset on his ears.

I don't know if I should turn back or proceed.

As I'm contemplating, he turn to my direction. Our eyes meet.It's the same hulky boy in one of the room's picture.The rugby one.

He stare at me surprised, I make my way forward.

"Good morning" I greet politely.

He take the headsets off, "Hi"

It is awkward.I shouldn't have left the bedroom.

"Have you seen Skhumbuzo?" I ask.

"Oh dad went out to get breakfast"

Dad? Is he the fifteen years old son? He look twenty-one.

"Oh" I say.

"What are you?"

The question take me by surprise. I look back at the boy,he is staring at me.

"What am I?" I say.

"As in who are you,in relevance of what?"

Is this boy rude?

"You'll have to ask your dad,I will go back to the bedroom" I say.

He stand, "Wait, you have a bedroom, here?"

I stop, "Your father's bedroom"

"Are you his girlfriend?" He ask smirking.

My gorgeous Lord!

"Nice to meet you" I say and walk on.

Is Skhumbuzo allowing a 15year old to work out,play rugby and be that hulky? Some father he is.

That kid should be enjoying his high school years and asking girls out for the first time.

Thirty minutes later he walk in,wearing a vest, and short track pant and Nike sneakers.

He hug me, "I'm so sorry for leaving you all alone,I had to get you breakfast"

I smile, "It's fine.You didn't tell me your son is over"

"He came at 1am,you guys have met?"

"Not really,I sort of bumped onto him" I say.

He yell, "Sthelo"

He appears after a few seconds.

"Baba" he say standing by the door.

His eyes are fixed on me.

"This is my girlfriend, Fikile but you call her Ma.If you're not comfortable with that say Aunt" he say.

"I will say Aunt, if that's okay with you aunt" he say.

I smile, "You can call me Fiki if you want"

"Hell no" Skhu say.

I give him a look.

"You look familiar" he say.

I shrug my shoulders at him and smile.

"He is Sthelo" Skhu say.

I already know that.

I look at Sthelo, "You have a cute name and look old for your age"

He look pleased, "Well,thank you"

"Right, we will find you in the kitchen" Skhu say.

He walk out,I turn to him.

"He is 15years?"

He chuckles, "And very stubborn, you'll have to very firm "

So my life is taking another turn.I'm going to be a stepmom or aunt of hulky young boys.I wish I can predict future,but from where I stand it is livid.I'm about to step into shoes that aren't mine.

Will they fit me? If they do,what if the owner of them returns to claim back what's hers?

Chapter Hundred & Eight

Simtho Biyela

.

I love my parents but,they are taking over my house and I need my space.Dad is sitting like taxi owner on my couch, his wife keep feeding him my food.

"How much are you going to eat my food?" I ask my mother.

She turn the steak in the pan and ignore me

I'm surprised,they came here specifically to give me support.Or so I thought.

"Won't you tell Donald to bring a classic drink?"

Bathong! I give her a bored look.

What is a classic drink? They love alcohol too much. Unfortunately I got rid of every bottle while pregnant.

"Your father is thirsty" she say.

"There is juice, tea and water" I say.

He set the plate,throw two rolls at the side and mayonnaise.

"You need grocery.I don't understand what Junior is eating in this house,no wonder he is so pale"

She doesn't know that Junior survive on Spur and Debonnairs.Don disobeys my healthy eating rules, that I make lying on the couch.

He has become my kitchen manager. He is the one in charge of breakfast, lunch, snacks and dinner.As a result I haven't lose baby weight, instead I'm gaining extra kilos.

"You don't eat a lot" she say throwing a small piece of meat on my plate and one roll.

"I eat a lot" I argue.

She pick their plates and place them on a tray.

"You are not supposed to eat a lot,that's what I meant.You need to lose weight"

I follow her with my slim plate.

"I don't care about weight,Don doesn't care either" I say.

Don hasn't said anything about me gaining weight,he love me like this,he is the one feeding me anyway.

"Trust me he is never going to say anything but,those chubby cheeks aren't cute" she say.

She came all the way from Mandeni to diss me about my weight.

"Thanks for the words of support" I say loud,for Dad to notice.

He look up,I draw sadness on my face.

"What words of support?" He ask.

I glare at mom,she is not even paying attention.

"Mom was telling me how I look ugly and fat" I say.

He look at her with disapproval, "Mama what are you telling my daughter?"

I sit relaxed on my one seated couch waiting for him to take my side and show her flames.

"She need to work on losing weight" she say serving him.

"She doesn't owe anyone a weightless body. She have many things to worry about than thin bodies."

I have a tiny smile cracking my lips.

"A woman should always look great, no matter what. Our schedule and sadnesses must not be our unpleasant looks excuses" she say.

As I wait for dad's comeback, sipping my juice.

"She look beautiful, weight has never defined beauty. Weight control should be done for healthy purposes not good looking. Stop bashing my daughter to normalise your beauty standards"

Taking another sip!

"Baba you are...."

One look, she shut up.

"Do you want more meat baby?" He ask.

With a huge smile, I nod my head.

He shift, "Come"

I wink at mom and hurry to squeeze myself between them.

"Be ready to take comments on social media" she say.

Dad is cutting meat into small pieces.

He chuckles, "Let them say anything they shouldn't say, I will deal with them individually"

"All they will do is form a hashtag, like #SimthoLoseWeight"

She is not going to stop, is she?

"I don't care" I say.

"Sbusiso and Ziphelele are not slim, you will not be genetically lost" dad say to me.

Right.

Later mom cleans up while I watch Supersport with dad. It's not my favourite channel, but I need to be here I don't want to be around mom.

"Your sister is in initiation of becoming a sangoma" he say.

I frown, "What?"

"The sangoma we consulted with your uncles said she is under supervision of ancestors and that can only mean one thing" he say.

I can't believe my ears.

He hand me the remote, "At least we know she is safe,even though we don't know when she will come back"

I press mute on the remote and stare at him,my mouth hanging open.

"Did you tell others?" I ask.

"Yes,where is Fikile?"

I shrug my shoulders.

Ziphe is going to be a sangoma??? I'm in denial.

"New love!" he say reversely.

My attention is grabbed.

"Who is in new love? Fiki?" I ask.

He raise his eyebrow.

"Come on dad,I know nothing" I say.

"Me neither"

Now I have to milk this information outta him.

"Did you see anything that indicate that she is dating? I haven't seen her properly" I ask curiously.

He shake his head and yell for mom to hurry up.

"Dad" I say shaking his arm.

He laughs.

"Fikile is not my peer so I don't know what goes on in her life" he say.

"But you said she is in new love"

He sigh, "Because she disappears without anybody knowing,receive Woolworths gifts and have that Nkosi boy popping in her office then they act like business associates"

I flip my mind.

Who is Nkosi boy?

"Who is this Nkosi boy?" I ask.

"Our Inkandla neighbour's son" he say.

I know if I ask more questions he will snap.

"Oh the one who herd the cattle!" I say pretending to be in deep thoughts.

"No,that boy is highly educated"

Oh! One tick from me to him.

"I know him,he drive a silver grey Mercedes" I lie.

"I don't know,he have a number of cars.He is very humble, my brothers always ride in his cars whenever they want to go somewhere" he say.

This guy already have couple of points in my family. Who is he?

"So you like him?" I ask.

He frown, "Like him? No,Simtholile.He is scheming with my daughter"

Ouch!!

"Fiki is old" I say.

"That's my daughter"

I keep my opinions to myself. I need to know more about this arising new love in my family.I've been in a shell too long,things are happening and I'm in the dark.

I see them to the door. They give me tight hugs before leaving.

Mother dearest cooked me some vegetables.She doesn't listen, I will eat what I want.

I will snoop around Fiki's life soon,for now let me watch Truth Bombs Mom.

And who is that?

Did mom turn half way to remind me to eat butternut?

I open for whoever it is.I lower the TV volume.

"Hello"

I didn't expect to see him here.He have a bunch of flowers in his hand.

I smile, "Hey"

He lean over and give me a tight hug.Right?!

"I didn't expect you here" I say.

"These are yours" he say.

"Wow thank you,you can put them over there" I say.

Damn! I was supposed to take them and smell them.

He come and sit down opposite me.

"Long time, hey" he say looking around.

"Indeed"

He brush his hair, "I'm sorry I never checked on you"

I smile "I know you are a busy man.How is my sister?"

"She is great,had her hair dyed yesterday"

That's like Zethu.

"What colour now?"

"She said it's not maroon so I don't know" he say.

"You are coping though. I mean,with her" I say.

He laugh, "I can handle my girl"

I sit up straight, "I've been hoping to have a private moment with you"

He bite his lower lip,cute!

"You know what I'd love to know" I say.

"No I don't"

He is fooling me.

"Come on,Tyson.You know I saw you,I want to know why"

"I seriously came to check how you're doing" he say.

"I know and I will be more fine if you give me closure"

He sigh, "He was going to kill you,that's would've destroyed Zethu"

"You could've stopped him or shot him to injure him" I say.

He grin, "You miss that wanker?"

"Yes,he was part of my life"

He stare at me.

"Does your current boyfriend know?" He ask.

"Nothing wrong with questioning my mystery" I justify myself.

"He gave me a reason to eliminate him,which was my long time wish"

Now here is the truth!

"You kill people? Just like him" I say disgusted.

"No" he protest.

I throw a cushion on him.The white liar!

"Yes,you operate just like him.My sister is in danger"

He stand to his feet, "You are taking this the wrong way.I'd never hurt her"

"Sit down in my house!" I firmly say.

He exhale and sit down.

"What made you choose her? Why not your type" I ask.

He frown, "What is my type?"

Duh!

"Same race as yours"

"Black and white is a good combination" he say smirking.

He have time for games, I don't.

"Really?" I ask grossly.

"You want to know why I'm with her,right?"

I nod my head.

"She is beautiful,she doesn't fake herself and she can stand up for herself. Imagine what she'd do to me if I lifted my hand on her,I'd probably die the next day"

He is stabbing the wounds.

"Is that all?"

He smile, "Nope.She accept me for who I am and have a permanent place in my heart"

I exhale "I will be watching you like a hawk"

"Just because I killed your wanker?"

I shoot him a look, "He was the father of my child"

"I'm sorry,I wish the other guy was the father" he say.

White and arrogant, weird combination.

Just then the other guy emerges from the door.He look at him surprised.

"Tyson thee tycoon" he say.

I'm grateful to the brown foodie bag on his hand.Bye mom's cooking.

"Hello man" Tyson say.

He look at the flowers, "You bought my girlfriend flowers, I will buy Zethu a lingerie"

Tyson smile, "Please do, tonight"

"What a game!" I say sighing.

"Did you hear Ziphe is becoming a sangoma out there?" He ask.

Tyson frown. Don doesn't know anything about private stuff.

Oh Tyson is family too!

"I hope it's untrue" I say.

"What is wrong with being a sangoma? She will tell us our problems, paste her face white, walk barefooted with lot of animal skin bangles around her"

"Sounds scary" Tyson say.

"Nothing is scary, she is still a human" I say.

Don laugh, "Except that she will now cough, emitting snuff with her nose"

I can't believe Don is making fun of Ziphe like this.

"It's not funny"

I'm getting irritated.

"Thapelo will have to burn incense every time before slaughtering a vagina"

Tyson gasp, "You're kidding! I need to prevent Zethu from becoming one"

I glare, grossly, at Don.

He cough, tap down his feet and growl loudly.

"Say Makhosi Tyson" he say.

Tyson frown, "Why?"

"Just say it" he say.

He cough again, Tyson say hesitantly.

"Mackhosi"

Don laugh, "Camaku!!"

I wish I can find this as interesting as him, but my mind is refusing to accept that Ziphe is gone to becoming a sangoma.

It's far fetched. From being kidnapped by an enemy to be in initiation of becoming a sangoma. It doesn't add up.

Chapter Hundred & Nine

Nozipho Biyela

.

I don't understand why my husband has to be the one to deliver the bad news to Thapelo. This should be handled by adults.

"Do you really think she will come back as a sangoma?" He ask me.

I sigh. This dress won't fit me. I'm squeezing myself in it and holding my breath. Being pregnant can be very frustrating, especially when you have to look good for the public. I shop every weekend, clothes grow smaller within a blink of Sena's Bullseye lashes.

"Yes, sangomas are trained to see the unseen isn't?"

He sigh.

"Make fast"

I turn, give him one of my murdering looks.

"You're not even helping me put this on, can't you see I'm pregnant?"

He put his cellphone down.

"You should've asked" he say walking toward me.

Right now I feel like crying. We should be in this together.

"Leave it" I say, controlling my voice.

He stubbornly put his hands on my dress. I yank them off and walk away with the back of the dress unzipped.

He follows me, begging me to stop. I tell him to keep his precious hands to himself.

He think it's a joke. I walk to the kids and tell them I'm going to buy them pizza.

I grab my bag and walk out. I wait for him in the garage.

"Babe you're walking half naked" he say.

"Unlock the car" I say sternly.

He put his hands on the waist, shake his head and exhale.

He get on his side without a protest. Good for him.

I sit at the back, relaxed with my arms folded before my chest. He should turn the music on.

"You are angry, seriously Nozi?" he say his head turned to me.

I'm humming a song. He sigh and turn ahead.

I wonder how long is Ziphe going to be in that unknown place. Bab' Biyela said it could be years. I wonder if Thapelo is going to be able to hold on.

Some people went for sangoma initiating and never came back. Some came back after five years. Few men can wait that long. It is not fair to wait for someone that long. It is not fair to be dumped over a calling you couldn't defy either. This is tricky.

Their marriage has survived it all but this could be the last straw and we can't pin the blame on neither of them.

How is Thapelo keeping up? Living in this huge house they bought together must be a torture alone.

"Must I open the door for you?"

Is that even a question?

I roll my eyes and lean back on my seat.

He come open for me, I get out. His eyes are fixed on my back. I lead the way.

"Look who is here!" that's Mandla.

"Hello Mokoenas" I greet striding to them.

"Hi" Thapelo say.

Zanda appears and frown. Thapelo and Mandla are stealing glances at each other secretly smiling.

"Are you okay?" Zanda asks.

I smile, "100% fine"

"Here comes the husband" Mandla say.

I look at Sbu walking in.

"Guys what happened?" Zanda ask.

Sbu walk straight to the fridge without greeting.

"Oh! He refused to help me dress up. Apparently I'm all alone in this" I say.

"What a pervet!" Mandla say sarcastically.

"Me and you riding the same boat" Zanda say.

Thapelo laughs. It is good to see him laughing.

Mandla look at her apologetic. I wonder what happened.

Sbu walk back and sit next to me.

"I'm dying a slow death" he say.

He have a death wish this one. I share a certain look with Zanda.

"I heard your father was here" Thapelo say.

I'm the first to exhale. Silence follows.

Sbu clear his throat first, "Yes he came by"

They all look at him. They hope for better news.

"She is gone to where sangomas are trained, so the sangoma they consulted said"

I'm trying to read Thapelo's emotions.

"Why?" Mandla ask.

"Nobody knows why. It's what it is, the bad thing is her return cannot be predicted" Sbu say.

Zanda stand, "I need to process this"

She drag her feet and walk away. Ziphe is her friend so I understand. We all have to get over it and make peace until she comes home.

"Umhhh...that was unexpected, but I guess she is fine wherever she is and that make it better" Mandla say.

"How is it better Mandla?" Thapelo ask.

"At least we know she is alive"

He stand and limp two feet away,

"What about me? Her husband"

Mandla look at Sbu. I didn't expect him to be happy, but he should be relieved at least.

"People who go for that shit return after decades. What am I going to do with myself in the meantime?"

"We are here for you" I say in consolation.

He chuckles, "You guys won't be my wife, my smile keeper, I won't share my bed with you. I need her to be here for me, she vowed before the priest that only death will do us apart"

Sbu stand up, "She have no control of her own damn life right now. Be considerate for a minute"

"I've been considerate all my life. It doesn't matter anymore, I'm destined for pain and misery it never pays out" he limp away.

I turn to Sbu, "You shouldn't have shouted, you know nothing about consideration yourself"

He sit down, "Get off my back Nozipho"

"Get your heart and brains back" I say.

"Now is not the time for pregnant couples' fights. Nozipho go talk with him" Mandla say.

I pull myself together and follow Thapelo. He is taking a whisky shot. I doubt that was prescribed on his medical release.

"Not now Nozipho" he say.

I sit on the chair and look at him, not bothered by his uninviting look.

"You understand it wasn't her choice right?" I ask.

"I don't care whose flipping choice it was, I feel like hell anyway"

"Do you love her enough to accept her for who she is going to be?" I ask.

He shake his head, "My love can't be questioned, but hers can be. She has left me, again"

"Unwilling" I add.

"You don't understand, you can't. You are on your bed every night with Sbu's arms wrapping you. You hear his voice every minute, he is always there to nurse your cravings and emotional tantrums. He doesn't turn his back on you, you never go to bed not sure of your future. Nozipho your heart has been bent a couple of times, mine has been broken over and over again by someone who vowed to love to death"

I rearrange my braids. This is hard for him.

"So you are giving up Thapelo?" I ask.

"What other choice do I have? I need to let go"

"You are still married" I say.

He touch his wedding band, "It is over Nozipho. It was just me holding on for nothing. She'll gladly sign divorce papers when she comes back, she will be free at last"

I frown, "You are not thinking clear Thapelo."

"With an injured leg, empty house and hollow heart, my mind couldn't be any clearer. I'm sure people of her type aren't even allowed to associate themselves with males" he say and gulp another shot of whisky.

I let out a huge sigh. Such shocking news go better with hamburger and chips.

"You shouldn't be drinking" I say.

"Does it matter?" He ask.

"With or without her you owe your life decency"

He pours another shot, "I don't have a life, you are mistaken there"

This man is a disaster. It's not fair on anyone to go through all he has gone through.

"My mother's daughter, the only blood relative I had, has cut me out of her life. She hate my guts. And now my wife, my only hope is gone. So I'm going to be decent for what? For who?" He say in despair.

"You don't know what future holds"

He pull a chair, "It holds a divorced sad man with nothing to live for and a bunch of happy friends"

"You are not alone" I say.

"Physically"

Just then Sbu walk in.

"I shouldn't have lashed man,apologies" he say.

"Tell the kids to come over tomorrow" Thapelo say.

"Why?"

"I'm throwing my late babies a party" he say.

Excuse me!

"What is that called?" I ask shocked.

"A party,I acknowledge them. They deserved to live, but the cruelty of this world reached them before my hands could hold them"

I'm speechless!

"Wow! That's a good thing to do bra" Sbu say.

He look at him blankly then lift his glass with a huge grin.

I need to find Zanda!

Chapter Hundred &Ten

Sena Biyela

.

Beside everything that is happening in the family the day was a success.I don't know how much my father charged Lwazi,but the satisfied smile on his face tell me he is twice a rich man he was.My poor Lwazi!

"You are getting married soon" that's Aunt Lydia walking in.

"Yes,I want a December wedding" I say.

"No,sooner"

What does that mean?

"They are coming back with Izibizo next month" she say,clearly excited.

"Why don't I know anything about this?" I ask.

She stop eating a pawpaw slice, "Don't you want to get married now little mouse?"

"I do"

"Good,next month Lwazi said he want a wedding date from us after izibizo ceremony"

I'm shocked. Lwazi said nothing to me about wanting to get married soon.

"I need to call him" I say walking out.

On my way I bump on Fikile smiling at the cellphone screen.

Who is she fucking now?

I find a quiet spot and dial his numbers.

He answers.

Him; My love

Me ; Hey babe

Him; You are still coming back to Durban tonight?

I sigh.

Me ; Uncle Thobela said we're spending the night here

Him; Aargh that man hates me!

I don't even want to know what he said to him. He was born a hater.

Me ; What is it that I hear about izibizo coming next month and wedding happening sooner afterwards?

Him; Next month feel like two years but I will wait, I've waited four years

Me ; (with a huge frown) Ah babe how am I supposed to make all preparations in such short time?

Him; You have sisters, we can also hire twenty people to help out. I want you officially

I blush. Anger is flushed away.

Me ; I want it to be a family wedding then

Him; Anything you want, but I'll invite my colleagues too

Me ; As long as those people give gifts worth of R3000 it's fine, but they must not be more than ten

Him; I love you mamakhe, okay

Me ; I love you too myeni wami

He laughs.

Him; Soon to be, kiss my son for me

I drop the call with a huge smile on my face.

"Sex call?"

I turn around. It's Zethu with a cider on her hand.

"Hey you unmarried woman" I say.

She laughs, "It's going to be a long night. Did you agree to the sudden wedding?"

She knows too.

"Why not? That's my man, not a stranger"

She smile, "I'm going to cut a cake"

"A couple cut the cake themselves idiot"

"Did you see Fiki?" She ask.

I stop and look at her.

"What is making her happy?" I ask.

She take a gulp, "I've been cracking my head trying to connect the dots"

"Why is she suddenly secretive about her love life?" I ask.

She shrugs, "Maybe it's a sugardaddy or a man with one eye"

I cover my mouth and laugh.

"Laughing at what bitches?" It's Simtho.

My sister look better now, her spirit has lifted. She has gained a bit of weight, but she look hella fine.

"Madam Fikile might be dating one eyed man" Zethu whispers.

"He is fine"

Whoah!

We are over her.

"Let's go to my room" she say.

We follow her. Did she introduce Simtho and left us out?

"What are you up to? Don't touch my wine in the kid's bedroom" Aunt Lydia say.

"You put alcohol in kid's bedroom?" I ask shocked.

"I didn't put, I hidden it" she say relaxed.

Zethu clap her hands, "And here we thought our aunt is a born again Christian. Now who is going to represent us in heaven?"

"Jesus himself drank wine. Who are we to go against Alpha and Omega?"

We burst out laughing. I knew church only changed her heart not her throat.

We carry on with our journey to Simtho's bedroom. We sit on the bed while she switch on her laptop.

She show us pictures. It's her with a dark man, with smaaaaall eyes in a certain restaurant.

Wait, I know this guy.

"Is this the guy from the restaurant the other day?" I ask.

"It's him, the arrogant one with the ingwe vest" Simtho says.

Zethu is frowning, trying to remember.

"I thought she disliked him" I say.

Simtho laughs, "She is a twisted human being. I stalked them"

"What is his name?" Zethu asks.

"Skhumbuzo Nkosi, he is a very liked man back in Inkandla. Even dad threw a couple of compliments to him" Simtho says.

I gasp, "Dad knows?"

She laughs, "That is Sherlock Holmes"

"What do you think of him?" I ask looking at them.

"He lacks style, but he is handsome" Simtho says.

"I need to meet him first before making a remark" Zethu says.

We look at her with disapproving looks.

"Fiki is probably keeping him underground, how are you going to meet him?" I ask.

"By coincidence"

"What are you up to?"

Simtho instantly closes the laptop. Zethu looks at her up and down.

"Why are you quiet? Were you gossiping about me?" She asks.

"We are planning Sena's wedding" Simtho says.

"Minus one plate" she says looking at me.

I can see right through her eyes, she is sleeping with this guy already.

There is a knock, Simile appears.

"Gogo wants her ulcers' medicine that was in my room. I don't know anything about it, she insists it was in my room" he says.

"Which gogo suffers from ulcers here?" Fiki asks confused like all of us.

"Gogo from Durban"

Aunt Lydia!

We all go with Simile to see what is happening.

"Aunt what are you looking for?" Simtho ask.

She glance at Simile then glare at us.

"My medicine, I'm not playing with you three" she say pointing at me, Simtho and Zethu.

"Why did you put medicines in my son's room in the first place?" Fiki ask looking under bookshelves.

"You three will not sleep until I get my medicine" she say.

It dawns to me.It's not the medicine, but the wine she told us not to touch.

I laugh, "We took no medicines"

Then there is a voice singing not far,

"When A...Woman... Loves.No it doesn't say that.It says When..A...Sister... Loves,she get us money..Mo-ne-y..Mo-ne-y..She get us moooo-ne-y"

Where is Nozipho?

He have a bottle on his hand,staggering back and forth singing. He is kaak drunk. I'm so glad the kids are not here to witness their father/uncle like this.Only Simile will be traumatized.

"My brother!!!" Zethu praise.

Aunt Lydia charge to him and grab the bottle on his hand.

"Thief!!" She say.

He doesn't care,he carry on with singing.I've never seen him this drunk.Zethu is clapping her hands while he sing.

We have a big fight to witness in the morning.I shall not miss it,so I must sleep early.

Chapter Hundred &Eleven

Zanda Dlamini

.

Our time is up.We've stayed with Thapelo,now he is back on his feet and unfriendly like a thirsty traffic cop.

I love him,he is my boyfriend's best friend but he has changed and I'm scared of the person he has become.

His has developed a close friendship with booze.All of his friends have tried talking sense into his head,but he made it very clear whose mouth and money that alcohol consume.

I'm packing our clothes in our temporary bedroom. Mandla is with him in the lounge. I try by all means to be ten feet away from Thapelo. I don't get along very well with angry people.

There is a knock.

"Come in babe" I say trying to zip one of the suitcases.

The door opens.

I exhale, "It's good you are here, come close this suitcase"

"Zanda it's me"

I turn around quickly. It's Thapelo.

I move to the other side of the bed, "Oh! I thought it was Mandla I'm sorry"

He look at the suitcases. He walk and zip up the one I was fighting with.

"Come here Zanda"

My eyes are about to pop out.

He is tipsy. His scar look deep today. Where is Mandla?

His head bend down, his shoulders move up and down.

Why is he laughing?

"You are scared of me. Jesus! Come here I'm not going to bite you"

Does he know how intimidating he is? Or how unfriendly his face look.

"How are you?" I ask, trying to act bold.

He touch his chest, "Me? Does it matter. How is my friend's baby treating you in there?"

Where is Mandla?

I told him I don't want to be alone with Thapelo.

"He or she is fine"

He nod.

There is that look that send shivers down my spine. The one that penetrate through your eyes to the stomach.

"You are just like her. A version of an angel. Pureness and innocence written all over."

I sit on the edge of the bed and look at him.

"Looking good without making any efforts. I know exactly what attracted Mandla to you, it's what attracted me to her. I saw a future in her, but more than anything I saw myself, as a better man, through her eyes" he say.

"I'm very sorry for what you're going through"

He shake his head, "Don't be. Just do me one favour"

I blink and stare at him.

"Don't change" he say.

"What do you mean?" I ask confused.

He come and sit next to me. He put his hand on my shoulder.

"Don't change, he loves you. My friend love you Zanda, just like I loved her. She changed along the way, I accepted the changes thinking she was growing up. Indeed she was growing up, growing up to leave me"

Ziphe have no idea how broken her husband is. She have no idea how much love she has left behind.

"Thapelo I'm sorry"

He shed one tear. I don't know if he is crying because of the pain or it is alcohol making him cry.

"I miss her everyday. It's hard to let go of something you adore so much"

I put my hand on his back, "It's going to be fine"

"I don't want things to be fine, not without her. If she is not here, nothing need to be fine. It's pointless"

Now that I'm calm and out of my fear shell I could ask some questions.

"You want to divorce her when she comes back?" I ask.

"Divorce is only a process of making married couple break up official. We will be only making it official" he say.

I exhale, "I never thought I would see that day come. You were my ideal couple."

"It suck being me Zanda, but I'm happy Mandla found you. All the pain he went through have been washed away" he say.

"Yours will be washed away too, we serve a living God"

He chuckles, "God hate some of us"

I look at him shocked.

"Don't ever talk like that" I say.

"It's God himself that advise us not to lie. Why do I have to lie about him? He has never done anything good for me. He give me only glimpses of how happiness look like"

"You are here today because of him. Be grateful for the little things he does for you, bigger blessings will follow" I say.

"I want no blessings"

He has never put his foot on the church door, otherwise we wouldn't be having this argument.

"Do you have any wishes?" I ask.

He frown, "Yes"

"What is it that you wish for?"

"A car accident or anything that is going to damage my brains so hard that I lose my memory permanently"

I gasp in shock.

"I don't need all these memories" he say.

I resume packing the clothes. He has shocked me to the core, I can't even look at him.

"So why were you scared of me?" He ask.

I shrug my shoulders.

"Come here" he open his arms.

Hug?

I disappear on his chest.

"Take care of him Zanda. Don't ever change, okay" he say.

"I won't. Don't change either, you are not a drunkard"

He put his head on my shoulder and exhale. I let him be. He need us more than ever.

When he finally untangle himself there is shadow passing by the doorway. I look at his eyes, they are red with alcohol and pain.

"It's going to be okay" I assure him.

He nod and sit on the bed.

I walk out to check whose shadow was it. I find Mandla taking shots from Thapelo's whisky. He can't take his own advice this one.

"Drinking is becoming a tradition in this house" I say behind him.

He turn around, "Is he calm?"

"A bit"

He nod, "Maybe if we stay with him a little longer he will end up completely fine regardless of circumstances"

"Do you hate your house, mister?" I ask.

"No, do you hate my friend ma'm?"

I roll my eyes.

"I will carry on with packing, drink fish" I say walking away.

I find Thapelo collecting the hangers on the bed.

I notice something I didn't notice before.

His ring is gone!

He removed the wedding ring.

Chapter Hundred & Twelve

It was easy to recognise him, even between hundreds of people. She has seen him on TV, newspapers and social networks. If she could get him she could get a temporary shelter over her head for a couple of days. Then she could figure things out.

She knows his wife disappeared with no trace. Her face was on every board in Durban. It could be the reason why he is here, looking like a tsunami survivor.

She take a few steps forward, she is still not sure how to approach him. His face doesn't look inviting, it never does. Not even when she bumped on him with his beautiful wife on couple occasions months earlier.

She needs money, so it's him or another night on the street looking for favours.

"Do you need company?" she ask, flashing a nervous smile.

He doesn't even bother to look up. She is not sure whether he heard her or not.

"Hi would you love some company?" She ask louder.

He give her a look that send cold shivers down her spine. She should just walk away. Yes, she must leave.

But, her mother needs the money. She must develop some backbone. She is in charge now. Her mother depends on her. She must take the responsibility her brother left her, she must make means and those means must work.

She grab a sit opposite him. He size her with his eyes. She is astounded when she see how sober his face look.

Get a grip Phindile!

She smile, hiding any traces of fear her face might show.

He doesn't smile nor take his hair-raising eyes off her.

"I'm Phindile" she say giving out her little hand.

She look at the hand, then back to her face.

How do urban girls do it? Hooking themselves up with men.

"Do you even have matric?" he ask calmly, but ghastly.

The question doesn't make her comfortable.Is she that transparent?

He doesn't wait for her to answer, "Wearing skimpy dresses in night clubs while you're supposed to be busy with your future"

She didn't come for lectures. He doesn't know her therefore he have no right to judge her.Beside there are lot of girls her age here.

"I came to have fun,just like everybody else" she say.

He shake his head, "Are you having fun?"

Why is she lying? She didn't come for fun,she came to look for those Durban rich men who are said to have itchy hands and have no problem with providing money.

"The question should be,are you having fun? If not, I'm the girl to talk to" she say boldly, trying to sound sexy and appealing.

He fold his fist,clenching his jaws.

"Young lady,be out of my face before my heart take a third beat" he hiss.

Did she say anything wrong?

"I know your wife disappeared, you probably need to get some steam off"

He bang the table,great that the music is loud and people are minding their own drinks otherwise all eyes would be on her.

She stand immediately, "I'm sorry sir"

He click his tongue, "Fuck off from here!"

She disappears.

He is left alone, with his sorrows.Tricky how people claim to find solace in the bottle, but with him his problems are still clear as daylight.

When he walks out the club,his feet are a bit heavy.It's just after midnight, he finally remembered his bed.

He notice a human figure scuffled next to his car.Probably a passed out person.

It is the same girl from earlier.One of desperate hookers,he think to himself.

"Hey you tikline,what are you doing here?" He roars.

The poor girl stand up slowly, "I..my brother I'm not trying to..."

He click his tongue, "Get the fuck off here"

She take steps back and stop with her hands clasped together.

"I'm begging you, please assist me with a job at least"

Is this a joke? Who said he is a walking hiring company?

"Send CV's to hiring companies, geez!"

He open the car door, but he is touched when she speak again.

"My mom haven't eaten for three days, I promised her I will send money. But the truth is I don't even have the place to stay, from tomorrow"

"If that is some sob story you use to get free money then you're making a huge mistake" he say looking at her.

She take out a cellphone, scroll down then pass it to him. He reluctantly take it and read on what's on the screen.

His heart tears. He look at the young breadwinner before him.

"Where is your father?" He ask.

"He died when I was young"

He feel sorry for her. He know how it's like to have nothing.

"Don't you have older siblings?" He ask again.

Her face change. She look like she is about to burst crying.

"Don't you?"

She exhale, "I had a brother, a loving brother, one night he left us without any notice. They say he is not dead, he in a sacred place guarded by ancestors. It's been five years, mom lost hope. I had to take over, mom fell sick"

He stare at her, without a single blink.

"He just left without any reason?" He ask.

She shake her head, "He didn't live a happy life, but that was within him. He took a selfish decision, if the ancestors led him then they are selfish too. We needed him, mom sent him to school with our last penny so that he can have a better life and dust us up with him"

"Get inside the car" he say.

She look shocked at first, then hurries to the other side.

"Seatbelt!" He say, but to her it felt like roaring.

"How old are you?" He ask.

"I'm eighteen" the girl says.

"Eighteen? And what's your name?"

She introduced herself inside the club, but no offense she tell him again.

"I'm Phindile"

Surprisingly they get in the house and find Zanda in the kitchen having coke and cream buns.

She stand up when she see the company Thapelo have. The intimidation she usually get from his presence vanishes. Who the fuck is this?

"Good morning" Thapelo say.

Zanda look at the watch, "It's not even 2am"

"But you're up, I brought you a friend" he say.

Zanda look at the girl, with pure hatred.

"I'm okay friend wise, I don't replace people that easily" she say and walk away.

Thapelo catch up with her.

"She is a girl in need, like you were once upon a time" he say.

Zanda burp from coke, she doesn't even care, she burp again.

"Stop doing that" Thapelo say.

"GOOD NIGHT lovers"

Thapelo sigh and turn to the girl and lead her to the guest bedroom.

Chapter Hundred & Thirteen

Zanda Dlamini

.

The stomach growl is the first thing I hear when I open my eyes. I look around. I'm all alone on this bed.

Where is he?

I look for my cellphone under the pillows. Well there is a text message from him. He had to rush for an early meeting, he will come see me by lunch time.

My skin cringe as I think about the girl Thapelo brought home yesterday. As for Thapelo, it's going to take me sometime to get over what he is doing. He is very quick to move on.

I have to get up and make this hungry baby food. I walk to the bathroom.

I'm glad there are two rooms, with long passages between this bedroom and the main bedroom. Hopefully I'm not going to bump to them as I make my way to the kitchen downstairs.

I breath out in relief as I find no trace of them down.I'm only going to make breakfast for me,and Thapelo because he is injured.His mistress will sort herself.

I'm going to make normal breakfast; bread, eggs and chutney.I set the table for the two of us and send Thapelo a text message to come down.

I won't wait for him,I dig in.He walk down shortly but,his mistress is not with him.Good!

"Good morning" he say.

Yes,sometimes he can be very intimidating but not when I'm angry with him.

I give him a nod.

He sit on the chair opposite.He is no longer using the crutches.I don't know if the doctor gave him that order,or his stubborn mind did.

"Where is our guest?"

When he say 'our' who is he including? Hopefully not me.

"You want coffee or juice?" I ask.

"I'm having a Firstwatch"

Really dude?

"Sorry, it's not on the menu" I say.

"Yes, it's in the cabinet"

He is getting deeper and deeper in the booze land.Sadly there is no stopping him.

I pour him a juice, he take it with no argument.

Just when I think I'm having a peaceful breakfast the girl appears looking drained with the same clothes as last night.

I need to breath. I'm also a guest here.

"Good morning" she say in a shallow voice.

"Hey,come join us"

I need to fix my eyes on my plate otherwise I'm going to puke.

"Zanda!"

I look at him.He give me a silent look that ask me to feed this girl.

"I only made food for the two of us" I say and shift my focus back to the plate.

"Umhhh..I can walk to the garage and grab something. I have R50 with me" she say.

I clear my throat and pick my glass of apple juice.

"No go fix something in the kitchen. After breakfast we need to go fetch your stuff from the landlord"
Thapelo say.

I guess they are making it official.

The girl walk to the kitchen.I raise my head and look at Thapelo.

"So you no longer need me and Mandla,I mean this girl can take care of you right?"

He sip the juice, "I'm helping this little girl, her brother disappeared.Her mother is suffering from TB,she need a place to stay and a job to sustain a living and take care of her mother"

"And you jumped to the rare opportunity to save her?" I ask.

He chuckles, "You,more than anyone else,must know how it is like to have nothing"

I nod, "You have a valid point there, but life has taught me to be careful as to who I let in my life. I was lucky Mandla found me,he was also lucky he saved me.But what happened to Marcus,won't happen to Jonathan"

"So what do you suggest MaDlamini?" He ask.

"Be careful, don't let anyone take advantage of you"

He exhale, "I get you"

I smile, "So what's her name?"

He frown.

What? He doesn't know the girl's name.

We burst out laughing.

The girl walk back with a plate of few slices of bread and a glass of juice.

"What are you eating with that bread?" Thapelo ask looking at her.

She look down shyly.

"Butter"

"Is that okay with you?" Thapelo ask.

She nod.

"So what's your name? Bread and Butter?" I ask.

She doesn't get the joke.I wouldn't too,I mean I was a bitch toward her minutes ago.

"I'm Phindile" she say.

"Where do you come from? How old are you?" I ask.

"Yo!!!" Thapelo say and bite his bread.

"I'm from Eshowe but now mom live in Darnall she have an RDP there,I'm eighteen years old of age"

"You could've been my hommie" I say.

She nod.

"Eat,her questions will never end she is pregnant"

I look at Thapelo disapprovingly.He must stay on his lane.

I don't know this girl's full story but I'm going to be civil in this whole situation. I hope Mandla will come with better solution than to have Thapelo accommodating a strange girl in Ziphe's house.

Maybe he can look for a place for her,then Sbu can help her with a job while they cover her bills for that period.

I give her my dress so that she can change before leaving.Thapelo didn't forget about his Firstwatch.He went to his study with the bottle and asked me to tell him when the girl is ready.

"Sisi I'm ready" she say walking to the kitchen.

I turn around.The dress doesn't fit her properly.

"Okay I will call Thapelo" I say and walk away.

"Sisi just a minute" she say.

I stop and look at her.She look uncomfortable.

"I'm sorry for coming here, I promise I will stay in that room and not invade any of your space"

I exhale, "Look Phindile,I don't hate you or your presence.You are a guest,keep it that way"

She nod, "I promise"

I smile, "I will help you with anything as long as I can. I will give you my numbers when you come back"

"Thank you"

I find Thapelo glued to the laptop with a glass next to him.My eyes run to the screen:

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I clear my throat,he close the laptop instantly.

"She is waiting for you" I say.

"Tell her I'm coming" he say dismissively.

I walk and stop before I exit the door.

"You can wait?" I ask.

He look at me.He knows exactly what I'm talking about.

"The first month is hard.How would years feel like? I don't know, what if the wait isn't worth it? I don't know,like seriously"

I nod and close the door.

He walk down after a while.I need fresh air.I follow them out shortly.I drive to Zethus place.

Why is her boyfriend not at work?

They are on the couch talking and laughing.They are cute together.

"Hello" I greet.

Now I feel like I'm invading their space.

Maybe I should've drived to my pregnant partner Nozipho.We would've talked about cravings, baby clothes and discussed milk formulas and baby foods prices.

"Welcome to my place doll" Zethu say her face lighten up.

"I've been here before,more than hundred times" I say sitting on the single couch.

"Whatever! Say hi to my boyfriend" she say.

I want to roll my eyes.

"Hi Tyson" I say.

He smile, "Hello stranger"

"Fikile is dating a guy from Inkandla.Can you believe she haven't told us anything but she was the first to know when we got these love of our lives?"

She doesn't level her speeches,she go straight to the point.Honestly I don't know how to gossip in front of a man.I don't want to paint that image about myself.

"Maybe she will tell us,they are still getting to know each other" I say.

Tyson stand up, "When all these gossips spill out I don't want to be the suspected source"

I laugh, "You can stay,she will stop gossiping"

"I know better" he say.

He give her a long,intimate kiss.They even groan to each other.Don't they know anything about appropriation?

"I'm sorry,her lips are addictive" he say looking at her affectionately.

I'm glad when he disappears because the pink colour on Zethu's cheeks disappear too.

"How many times do you guys get intimate per day?"

The question just pop out of my mouth.Anyone would've been shocked by it,but not her.

"Maybe twice during the day. At night we only stop when we fall asleep"

I gasp, "And when do you fall asleep?"

"Eleven to twelve, it depends"

I'm really starving my Mandla. I need to up my game.

"Don't have a prescribed place where you do it. Be it the kitchen, balcony, bathroom, garage or pool" she say.

I laugh.

"Bedroom is my prescribed place of the deeds, I've had a few couch incidents and bathroom ones" I say.

She shake her head, "Don't be a lady for sex. Sex before marriage is a sin, that make us whores. So why act like a saint fixing the priest's collar, be the whore that you are and make your sin worth the punishment you will receive in heaven"

"Imagine if the world was ran by you. Toxic!" I say.

She laugh, "I can't be bad in the kitchen and be bad in the bedroom. Pick one struggle"

"So Tyson is a great cook and you are a great whore?" I ask.

She give me her thumb and laugh. She go back to Fiki's subject.

She talk a lot, laugh a lot and make all sort of facial expressions. It's actually funny to be with her. She make every situation look easy and funny. She make life look like a nice Nigerian movie, and everyone is a starring.

She really feel excluded from Fiki's love life and making it a big deal. I'm only going to meet that person when Fiki decide it's an appropriate time. Unlike her who is meeting the guy tonight, by coincidence.

Chapter Hundred & Fourteen

Fikile Biyela

.

He is getting used to eating in restaurants. He has been begging me all week to go eat in this traditional food place his colleague complimented.

So far I don't think anything could go wrong in our relationship, but that's what everybody think in new relationships. This man loves me more than he love his ingwe vest.

I have hired a person to sort that Ballito house, which he see nothing wrong with. That day I had to drag him to the shops and make him buy proper grocery.

He said Sthelo eat selectively what's on his diet circle. I still don't get the fuss that boy have over sports. I don't think he likes me, the only time we talked was when he wanted me to pass something on the

breakfast table. Other than that he was talking with his father about sport or paying attention to his tablet. I hope the younger ones are more welcoming.

So here I am again, struggling with make-up and suitable outfit. Unfortunately today I couldn't get that girl, she is away with her boyfriend. I can't ask my sisters either because once they insert their noses I will never have peace in my life. I'm planning to introduce Skhumbuzo to them after two months or three. I need to enjoy the beginnings first.

I have multiple African designed dresses that aren't for cultural functions only, but appropriate to wear anywhere. Since we are going to a traditional restaurant I will have to wear one of them.

I fit each of them and get no satisfaction. Maybe I should try skirts. Like they do, I tuck in the white T-shirt, put African printed highwaist skirt and black heels. I look amazing, like a decent Zulu girl.

I would've wrapped a matching scarf on my head, but I'm not good with head wrappings. I put the earrings and make last touch ups on my face.

My heart sinks when he walks in. He is wearing a track pant and Bafana Bafana jersey on top. But he smiles, my heart wakes up and beats two times a second.

"You look amazing MaBiyela" he says.

I wish I could say the same about him.

We hug and kiss. Sometimes I don't believe it myself, I have a boyfriend! He loves me too.

"How are you?" He asks.

He was asking me the same question over the phone probably fifteen minutes ago and I told him I'm fine.

"I'm missing you" I say.

He smiles, "How can you miss your man when he is right here?"

"Yes he is here, wearing soccer jersey on our way to the restaurant" I say flipping my lashes.

"I bought this for R350. Maybe I should've worn it all, with soccer shoes"

That would've got everyone taking pictures of us and posting them on social networks and making me front page joke.

"Now you really need a stylist that's going to be in charge of what you buy and wear, when" I say walking to take my bag on the couch.

"What is a stylist?"

I sigh, "You went to varsity, you should know different careers and jobs"

"Oh"

I walk in front of him. He always insists I walk in front, with reasons that he wants to watch out for me. Then he'd be walking behind me complimenting even my foot heel.

"Sthelo has been asking questions" he say in the car.

I look at him frightened, "What questions? He doesn't like me?"

He glance at me with a frown.

"He was asking me about his mother" he say.

I don't think I want to have this talk right now.

"He now understands and can't wait to meet one of your sisters he named"

A smile creep out from me, "Which sister?"

"You have twelve sisters, how would I know?"

I don't have twelve sisters.

"It's just me,Ziphe,Zethu,Simtho,Sena then there is Zanda and Nozipho" I say.

"That's twelve people"

He mustn't make me angry.

"You should collect your primary school fees" I say.

He laughs.

To say this place is beautiful would be an understatement.Walking through the entrance, looking at the African designs on the walls, make me feel like an untouchable Zulu girl.

The waiter lead us to the table. Mr Nkosi here is smiling and looking around with a proud smile.

He pulls out the chair for me.Who taught him?

"This place is a wow" I say.

"Stick with me,I will take you to all wow places" he say with a smirk.

I laugh, "Your friend recommended this place,it wasn't your idea.You've only took me to township hall and made me watch indlamu"

"You were taking pictures and recording" he say proudly.

I went to watch him.He was the best of them all.The way he was leading his group and singing made my tits dance.He was doing it with so much determination.I fell in love with him again.I've fallen in love with the three of him.The stupid him,the unfashionably him and indlamu leader.

Time to order.I can't find anything I want here. It's all sort of traditional food,from samp with usu to dumplings and phuthu.

"I'm having a dumpling and cow's inside parts" he say with fascination.

"I still don't know what I'm going to eat"

"Have umgxabhiso" he suggest.

I shake my head, "I'd rather have phuthu and imfino"

He look at me smiling, "So you love imfino,just like my mother"

I do like imfino,maybe not like his mother but I do.

We place our orders and get drinks in the meantime. I'm glad they have cold drinks,for a moment I thought they sold ijuba and magewu only.

There is maskandi music playing softly,my man here know all the songs and lyrics.While watching the surroundings my eyes bump on a familiar girl wearing black glasses and a big hat.

"Who is that watching us?" He ask.

I'm still in shock,disbelief and anger.She can't act like a decent person,just for once.She has upgraded herself into a sister stalker, wow!

"The second youngest brat" I say.

"You know that girl with big summer hat?" He ask.

I exhale, "Skhu I just told you that is my young sister"

"No,you said brat"

Argh whatever!

"She is here to annoy me" I say looking at her.

She is pretending to be reading the menu now.

"Invite her to our table" he say.

I widen my eyes, "It's a death wish"

He lean back to the chair, "I understand you don't want people to know that you're dating me,but I wanted to be a good person"

I look at him and sigh.He look disappointed,that make me feel guilty a little.I stand and go to where she is.

"You are being ridiculous and a witching bitch" I say.

She take the glasses off.I can wipe that smile off her face.

"Hello suster"

1..2..3..4..5

"Zethu what do you want?" I ask slowly.

"I'm here to eat isijingi (pumpkin porridge)"

I click my tongue, "Come join us"

I'm left standing, she has dashed to the table in a lightning speed.

"Babe this is my sister" I say.

"Which one from the twelve?" He ask.

He want to annoy me.

"I'm Zethu, the most beautiful one. Who are you? Never mind that, is Bafana Bafana playing today?"

See, this is what I was avoiding.

Skhu, is not the one to take offense that easily. He laughs.

"You are indeed beautiful" he say.

Oh the smile on Zethu's face.

"Thank you. I hear you are worshipped back in Inkandla"

What? We are both frowning.

"You've been snooping around?" I ask in awe.

"No, Simtho have... So brother you look like a black China"

I clear my throat, "Zethu we came to eat in peace"

"Uh shut up! Who is her?" She ask Skhu.

Skhu laughs, "Did you order anything?"

She grins, "No, my boyfriend is white I think I should take him here one of these days"

I give Skhu a look that says 'I warned you'.

"Where did you meet him?" Skhu ask.

That get her smiling, "He stalked me, disappeared like a smoke and showed up again"

Skhu doesn't understand it, but he nods.

"So did you meet this tall one in a strippers club?" She ask pointing at me.

He look at me with a frown, "No"

I need to clarify this now than late.

"I drink at home, or with them" I say.

He look relieved. So what if I was going to strippers clubs?

He look at Zethu, "So you drink too?"

"That's part of life, it goes without saying"

He chuckles, "It's part of having money to waste"

"Are you a Shembe believer?" Zethu ask.

He touch his head, "Babe do I need a hair cut?"

I laugh "No,you are fine"

"He only need to wear appropriately" Zethu says.

"I'm not a girl,I dress up to cover my body.You dress up to get attention" he say.

I can't believe this man.

"We dress to be representable" Zethu explains.

"I have nothing to represent, I'm not a model" he say.

"You are irrogant" Zethu say.

He smiles, "Because I don't want to wear suits like your arrogant father?"

"My father is not arrogant" Zethu argues.

"Nor Sthelo's father is" he say smirking.

Zethu look at me frowning, "He have kids?"

"Yes,three sons" I say.

"Where is the mother?"

This is why I wanted some time before letting them know.

"She left" he say.

"That's good, and she mustn't come back unless if it's for her kids"

I'm glad when our food arrives, that means we can talk less.

"What am I going to eat?" She ask looking at us.

"Order something" I say.

She shake her head, "I want to eat now"

If I slap her now Biyela will be here five minutes later in a killer mode.

She pick the chair and go next to Skhu, "I will share with my brother-in-law"

My heart sinks.Skhu came here because he love traditional food.She doesn't wait,she grab the fork and knife on the table decorations.

"Okay you cut the meat,I will cut the dumpling.Do they sell white wine here?" She ask.

"No,this is not a bar" he say cutting the meat.

She stop cutting the dumpling and start eating.She should wait for him,this is his food.

"So there is no salad?" She ask.

"Normal people come to this place,they don't eat dumplings with salads" he say.

I like how he is handling her.

She has eaten half the food when Skhu start eating. She will pay back for what she is doing to my man.

"I'm hosting a house party next weekend you are invited, there will no elders"

"Zethu!!!" I say warningly.

She look at me, "Focus on the leaves you're eating"

"Skhu doesn't like house parties" I say.

"No,I love house parties" he say defensively.

"What is a house party?" I ask him.

"A group of people drinking inside the house" he say.

Sigh!

"You don't drink" I say.

"But I love watching you drink"

He just want to come.Zethu grab Skhu's glass and drink all the coke inside.Instead of tearing my mouth and draining my voice about it I raise my hand for that waiter.

Chapter Hundred &Fifteen

Fikile Biyela

.

I owe it to whoever called Zethu.She was still making dinner a hell for Skhu when a certain call came.She was sad when she left,but she assured Skhu that they will see each other soon.I hope soon is not soon.

Strangely Skhumbuzo took no offense in anything she said, he was putting her in her place or laughing it off.I'm relieved he has dealt with the main bitch,but there is still Sena and Simtho.Sigh!

"How does her boyfriend manage?" He ask again.

"Tyson is young and carefree like her"

He chuckles, "I like her.She is highly spirited and very genuine"

I sigh, "Let's go"

I want to spend the night with him, again. Yeah, curse me all you want but I want more sex, yet we are still in phase 'Getting to know each other'.

He look at me, "Let's go to my place then I will go drop you at your house later"

He read my mind. I hide my smile.

"Unless if you don't want to..." he say trying to read my face.

I fake a sigh, "Fine"

He is now worried, he doesn't know that the first thing I'm going to do when we are in his bedroom is to strip these clothes off and suck his black pipe. I didn't do that the last time. It's time I show him why Mvuse kept coming back. Ok, I don't want to talk about that fool. I heard his wife came back to him, after he apologized and apologized and told her I tricked him with muti. I don't even want to confront him. Him and I are no longer on the same level. I date black Chinese accountants/auditors/ndlamu leaders.

He turn down the maskandi song he has been playing.

"Am I rushing things?" He ask.

Now?

"What things?"

"Love things" he say.

I laugh, "I'm not a village girl, I want sex immediately"

I think I need to filter what comes out of this mouth. I always shock him with my plain responses.

He recovers from the shock, "I never thought I'd meet you"

"Yeah, I choose who I meet up with" I say.

"I didn't know you before I saw you, get over your fame zone. I meant I never thought I could meet someone who will fall in love with me and be honest like you"

I laugh.

"Oh, you think I'm in love with you?" I ask.

He smirk, "Believe me you can't live without me"

His ego!

"How did I live all these years?" I ask.

"God sent some fools to hold my place while I was building up my life for us"

I stare at him. He glance at me then smile proudly.

"You need a blow job" I say.

He laugh and shake his head. The so-called cousin's place is actually his place. I haven't been in Durban North ever since my sleep-over. Lungile calls me every chance she get. I like her, I've started calling her 'zalo' like Skhu.

"I still remember what you said" he say.

"What did I say?"

He ignore me and get out. He come open the door for me. He is not telling me what I said, but he look very excited.

I lead the way as usual, but I stop when I hear him groan behind me.

Then...

He is on the ground. There is a man beating him with a stick.

I need to run.

No, I can't leave him.

He get up immediately, he run to the car. He is out with a stick too, they are fighting.

"Babe!!" I'm yelling.

I need help. I don't know where the flipping phone is. I need to call the police. My boyfriend is being attacked.

No no no!! He is bleeding. He is still fighting and shielding himself though.

I should help him. Biyela didn't raise a cheese girl, I know how to throw a fist.

I look around, I see a stone. I pick it up and aim at the attacker. It goes over his head. I take out the shoe, this time it hit him.

He stop immediately and look at me.

Skhumbuzo look at me too, then he look at the shoe I threw. I waste no more time I charge to the guy with the other shoe on my hand. He jump and run away.

My breaths are escalating, I turn to Skhu.

"Babe!!" I'm crying now.

I pull his head down to me to inspect the damage.

"Love it's not what you thinking..."

I cry louder, "Where is the security of this place?"

He is trying to hold in laughter. What's funny?

"That's Nqubeko sthandwa sami stop crying"

I don't stop.

He pull me by the hand to the house.Why is he so chilled?

Lungile is watching TV,she turn it off and rush to us.

"What did you do to her?" she ask.

She should be worried about her cousin,who is bleeding from the forehead.

"He was attacked just outside" I explain.

She frown and look at Skhu.Skhu start laughing.

She roll her eyes, "Oh,Nqubeko! Don't worry about them,they always do that."

"Who is Nqubeko?" I ask confused.

"My brother (laughs)..it is stick fighting"

I need to breath.

"He attacked you" I say.

"That was just a tease.They do worse some days, you should save your pretty tears for things that matters" she say.

Are they kidding me?

"Go clean yourself zalo" she say.

He give me an assuring look before going.

"This is not healthy" I say.

She smiles, "He is a man.What kind of a man doesn't know how to fight and defend himself?"

"They scared me" I say.

She look at me down, "Should we buy you shoes?"

How do I say this?

"No"

She look at me weirdly then turn on the TV and lower the volume.After a while Skhu walk in.

He sit next to me, "Are you okay?"

I nod.

He kiss my forehead, "Don't be scared"

"You scared me Skhumbuzo"

He smile, "I love you"

I exhale.

Then he appears. My shoes on his hands. I should've seen the resemblance.

Is he not going to come in?

Skhu start laughing, "Coward!"

Lungile look at him, "Are you standing over our heads little brother?"

He look at me with fear written all over his face. No ways!

"Is she calm?" He ask Skhu.

"Come sit" he reply laughing.

He sit opposite us, uncomfortably.

"I got your shoes" he say.

I'm embarrassed. I can't believe I raised my hand or shoe on his brother.

"Thank you" I say shyly.

"The heavyweight champion you see next to me is my woman, the one I told you about" Skhu say and kiss my hand.

"So you are untouchable now, yo!"

"I apologise for the silly intervention, I thought you was attacking him" I say in a big girl manner.

He sit relaxed, "Yo MaBiyela you surely can hit with a shoe. I think I need a doctor"

He is exaggerating.

"I think you boys need to know your lane now, otherwise MaBiyela here is gonna do unimaginable things to you nc nc" he say.

I pinch his arm. It's not funny.

"I apologise for everything I ever did wrong to you Nkosi" Nqubeko say to Skhu.

Now they are making it a joke.

Skhu hold my hand, "This is my brother Nqubeko, he comes after me"

I look at him, nicely. He is a version of him, with normal eyes though. He must be in his late twenties.

"Nice to meet you" I say.

He smile, "You are indeed beautiful. Is it safe for me to bring your shoes there?"

Lungile laughs, "Slap him babe"

Now they are taking this far.

"Seriously?" I say.

I take the shoes and head to the bathroom to wipe my feet.He follows me.

"I'm only wiping my feet and coming back you know" I say.

He close the door, "Remember the deal"

We have a deal?

I frown, "Nah"

He smile, "I think we have to lock ourselves in the bedroom"

He can't be serious.

"Skhu,your brother is here and I was joking" I whisper.

"Okay let's go to your house"

My word!

I leave him there and walk to the lounge.

"You should visit MaMvelase she has been dying to see you" Nqubeko says.

Okay, their mother knows me.

I smile, I don't know what to say.

"Babe I think we need to go, you have an early meeting tomorrow remember"

I look at him,he keep a straight face.I don't have an early meeting.

"So when are we officially meeting her?" Nqubeko ask.

"Soon" he say taking my hand.

There is no turning back.

"It was nice meeting you Nqubeko.We will be in touch Lu" I say.

The man in front of me is on cloud nine already. What did I put myself into?

Chapter Hundred &Sixteen

Fikile Biyela

.

The way he is excited is making me doubt my 15years experience in the D sucking industry.What did I get myself into?

"Here we are" he say as we arrive.

He drove so fast! Tonight he is not making me walk in front, he is leading the way. By the time I walk through the door, he is already drinking a glass of water. I've never seen anybody drinking water like this man.

"Is it for beautiful skin?" I ask.

He frown, "What?"

"Drinking 50 litres of water daily"

He doesn't understand.

"It's what ladies do. Do you want a sandwich?" I ask.

Now I'm delaying. I'm nervous what do you think.

"Let's go sleep unless you're hungry" he say with a little smirk on his face.

I open the cupboard, "I can do with a pack of peanuts"

I grab a Kit-kat he bought days ago. I unwrap and break a piece for him. He doesn't take it when I offer, instead he is looking at me with a smile.

'You're making this whole thing awkward " I say munching.

"I never thought you had this side" he say.

I look at him, "What side?"

"The scared one"

Oh he think I'm scared!

I raise an eyebrow, "I'm scared of what?"

He hold his front, "Of Nkosi"

I laugh.

"I'm not" I defend myself.

He finish his water, "Find me in the bedroom. Ciao"

I laugh out loud. Skhu, ciao?

It's my turn to have a glass of water. I'm Fikile, the top dog! Skhu need to know who he is dealing with.

I strip the clothes off, unfortunately all my sexy under wears are upstairs so I'd rather be naked. I throw the clothes on the couch and follow up barefooted.

I find him reading something on his cellphone. He feel my presence and lift his head up. His mouth hang loose, his eyes are fixed on my lower body.

Check mate!

I catwalk to him, "Still up for a game Mr Nkosi?"

Instead of answering he clear his throat.I put one leg on his left side and hold his head with both my hands.

I brush his lips with mine.When he think the kiss is coming,I run my tongue on his face.I don't know if his hands are trying to push me away,I take his chin with two fingers and make him look at me.Yeah look at this bitch!

"I possess this body.At least for tonight" I say in the most seductive, slutty voice.

He didn't expect this.I softly suck his lower lip while staring right into his eyes.I push his hand back when he try to hold my head.Not now.

"Maybe we can do this better with no clothes on"

Did he hear what I said?

I lift his Bafana Bafana top, he help me get it off.I smile and kiss his chest one..two..three,he lose his breathing pattern.

I use my knee to push him to the bed backwards.We kiss.He is very hungry.I should give him more tease.I run my tongue down to his neck while pushing my hand into his bottom.Ow things are already tough in the Nkosi premises!

I pull down the trackpant and boxers.The mighty Nkosi firmly stand up against all odds.I massage him with my hand while going for his wet lips and devouring them.He try by all means to get me off,wanting to shove me under.

I stand by my word.I go down on him.His breathing turn into deep moans.I go down with my throat,he sit up and hold my head.I lift my head up,his eyes are closed.I shove my tongue into his mouth then push him back on the bed.

"Babeee co..me on!" he say out of it.

I feast on it.He is begging me to stop,then plead me not to stop simultaneously.

When he start getting restless, getting up and lying back again I press my tongue more,then suck him for dear life.

"No babe...love no please" he say gripping on my hair.

He try pushing me away, but I stubbornly stand under the rain with my mouth wide open.He jerk off some,then a loud groan follows.I give myself a high five.

He kneel down,next to me.Our eyes lock,I smile.

He make a face, "I'd love to kiss you"

I nod.

He push me gently until I lie on the floor with my back.He lean over me and start kissing me.

"You are mine Fikile and I'm all yours" he say.

I moan as he suck on my breast. He push my legs apart with his hand and run his hand in my cherry.

He lift my legs to his shoulders, hold my baby lips apart and stare.Awkward!

"Babe" I say.

"I love you" he say shifting his eyes to me.

"I love you more"

I feel his tongue separating inner flesh,his finger going in and out of y cherry. I'm lost in the moment.My screams are filling up the room.

"I need you babe" I scream.

His head disappear between my thighs,he is moaning as he eat it.I need to feel him inside,but he doesn't let go of my legs. I fail to hold in.I splash on his face.My whole body shake.

"Fuck I love you" I whisper with my eyes closed.

He is breathing heavily. I feel his arms lifting me up.He put me on bed with my stomach down.He part my legs and squeeze a pillow under my stomach.

"Mine,yours babe" he say sliding in behind.

I enjoy every thrust.I return every moan.He is confessing his true love for me nonstop.I love him and somehow it feels like I'm making love for the first time.Maybe I am.All I long I was just fucking.

He fall next to me and lift me up to his chest.I lie on his chest and feel his heart pounding.His eyes are closed,his mouth is slightly opened.I put my hand on the side of his face.He open his eyes and look at me.

"I love you" I say.

He blink,twice.

"I love you too, more than I ever imagined.Tell me anything you want, I will do it,to prove myself"

I smile, "Never break my heart"

"I will never,you are my queen"

I kiss his forehead.He laughs.

"I'm not a kid,give me a proper kiss" he say.

I get off him, "Never, who knows where that mouth have been"

"What?" He laughs.

We go to the bathroom and take a shower together.I bend over for him in the middle of showering,I want to hear him moan again.

He pull me to his chest as we lie on bed naked.

"You are very good" he say.

I smile, "I've been told"

He keep quiet and look at me with a straight face.I realise I just stepped over.

"I'm sorry,that was inappropriate" I say embarrassed.

His eyebrows form a V as he frown.He is not pleased at all.

"I did sex before" I say,like duh!

"I don't care,the only dick you're going to talk about is Nkosi here and the only vagina I'm going to talk about is Apple there.Now till forever"

Apple?!

I sigh, "Fine,you look ugly when you are angry"

"You look ugly when you cum"

I hit his chest, "Are you crazy?"

He laughs "Trust me,you don't want anyone else to see you like that.At least I don't judge you"

"It's doggstyle every time then" I say turning my back on him.

He kiss the back of my neck, "I love you with every fibre I have in my body.Maybe we should make this official, because I'm never going to let you go.Not you"

I take a deep breath, "My family is a little bit crazy"

"Especial your dad"

What is it with him and my dad?

"There is Aunt Lydia,my brother and Donald.I don't see them making things easy for you"

I am scared of him meeting my family.They will judge him and grill him with questions to the point where his marital status is accidentally revealed.

"I can manage,I love you" he say.

He have no idea what those people are like.

"You have met Nqubeko.The others you will meet next week,it's Nkanyezi's birthday. Except for Nceba he is coming here tomorrow"

"Who is Nceba?" I ask.

"My little brother.He speak English better than white people, and he doesn't know how to stick fight like a man" he say grinning.

"He sound matured" I say that purposely.

He chuckles, "He is older than my dad, trust me"

I laugh, "I guess you are more close to Nqubeko since you're both stupid"

"Yeah I got the chance to toughen Nqubeko up, with Nceba I was not around I had started varsity when he came from my uncle's to stay at home"

I nod.

"I can't wait to meet him"

"I can't wait for you to meet my kids. They are grown charming young men, just like that one of yours" he say.

I take a huge sigh, "Simile! I don't know how he would react, I've never introduced my boyfriends to them. Except the other day when he wanted to beat shit out of my ex for making me cry"

He laugh out loud, very amused.

"I saw that one isn't about games. What happened after? This is cute" he say.

"It's not cute"

"I hope they accept me. You are my future, I don't want anything to stand between us"

I exhale, "I know"

"Push your butt to me"

What?

He pull me to him. I feel his erection poking me.

"Aren't we sleeping?" I ask.

"Apple is too warm, I can't control myself"

Ahh fuck!!

"Mine, yours babe"

Chapter Hundred & Seventeen

Zethu Biyela

SORRY I CAN'T COME OVER, SOMETHING CAME UP. LOVE YOU ALWAYS

My heart sink immediately. It's been two days since I last saw him. I've cooked dinner, you know what I mean, but I prepared dinner for us. He promised me he will spend the night with me today but again something has come up. Maybe I'm too used to spending most of my days with him. I should stop being a nuisance wifey-girlfriend and let him be. When he get time he will come to me.

Since I can't eat all this food alone I decide to pack it and go with it to Thapelo's place. He is still my brother-in-law, he needs us more than ever. When was the last time I checked on him? I'm awful.

I call Zanda to let me in. She sounds bored over the phone. We need to catch up. She is forever indoors, wobbling food.

She comes to the car, dragging slippers. I roll my eyes.

"I thought I was the ugliest woman on earth, but look at you" I say passing the containers to her.

"What is in here?" She asks.

"Food"

"Meat?"

Gosh!

"Fish" I say.

She smiles, "I love you"

"Whatever! You need to take 'pregnant lady' beauty tips from Nozipho"

She doesn't care. Tomorrow I'm dragging her to the salon. She also needs sexy outfits. I want them, her and Nozipho, to do a photoshoot.

Mandla sees me first, "Who are we without you?"

"Hello guys"

Oh! there is a new face.

"Hey, it's like you knew we were starving" Thapelo says.

I sit, "Thanks to Tyson for ditching me. Who is this?"

Why are they looking at me like this?

"This is Phindile" Mandla says.

I give him a look, "And who is Phindile?"

Thapelo looks uncomfortable. What is going on here?

"She is Thapelo's friend, she is in need of a place to stay and currently looking for a job"

I look at the girl. She is too young to be looking for a job and I don't know her, as Thapelo's friend.

"So Thaps you decided to turn my sister's house into 'Unemployed Girl's Shelter'?" I ask.

"Yes"

He is testing my good heart.

"You know I can chase her out, right now?" I say.

He chuckles, "Of course you can, you don't know how it is like to have no job, no food and no shelter"

"Are you fucking her?" I ask.

His face turns red. I'm glad I'm his sister-in-law, he can't beat me.

"I'm not. She is just a kid"

I smile, he is mad.

"Hi Phindile" I say to the girl.

She is frightened,

"Hi"

"I'm Zethu, this is my brother-in-law" I introduce myself.

She nods.

I don't know why I'm so insecure about her being around my sister's husband. She must be eighteen or something, and that is the dangerous stage.

"I stay alone in a huge flat, I need a room mate" I say mindlessly.

She looks at me surprised, "But I don't work"

"We have a restaurant in town, you can come and wait for us" I say.

She smiles innocently.

"I'd appreciate that, but..." her smile fades away.

"What sweetheart?" I ask.

"I don't have matric" she says clouded with shame.

"And I don't have Honours" I say.

She frowns.

"Tomorrow you will move in with me, then the following day you will start training"

She gets on her feet, "For real? Oh my God. I must call mom"

She walks away excited, punching her phone. I turn to Thapelo glaring at me.

"What?"

"That's how much you don't trust me, really?" He asks, fuming with anger.

"That doesn't matter, I don't trust myself with living with someone. I mean, how am I going to do my stuff?"

What did I get myself into? Sometimes I don't think.

"To hell with you Zethu! I love Ziphe..I mean I loved her"

I raise my eyebrow.He click his tongue.

"I'm not going to date people under my age again.I've been there,done that and got burnt" he say.

I exhale, "I'm sorry.She can stay with you"

"No it's fine,take her.Just don't teach her bad habits.Her mother depends on her, she also need to go back to school next year.Don't charge her for house expenses I'll cover that up"

He has always been the big brother, with Mandla.I wish he had kids,to spend all this protectiveness on.

"You are a good guy,unlike Tyson" I say with a sulky face.

"I saw him in Getaway shopping goodies"

Excuse me?

"When?" I ask.

"It was around five"

Why would he buy goodies for me then cancel on our dinner? He didn't even tell me he will go shopping. When he does shopping for his young sister I always tag along. What is going on?

"I need to go" I say.

"Zethu" he calls.

"Drop the girl at my place tomorrow afternoon" I say.

I pass Mandla feeding Zanda my fish. He must learn to cook for her.

"You're leaving?" He ask with a frown.

"Yeah"

"Are you okay?" Zanda ask.

"I will tell you everything once I've known whether to be okay or not" I say then walk out.

I get in my car and drive to Tyson's house.I need to know what is going on.

He look astonished as his face meet mine on the door.

"Aren't you gonna let me in?" I ask.

He glance inside then look at me, "Hey babe"

Really?! I shove him aside and walk in.

There is a skinny white lady drinking a glass of wine on the couch.My head start spinning.

I turn my head to look at him,he need to explain before I unfold my fists and open this mouth.

The lady look at me, "Who is this?"

"It's Zethu, I told you about her. My girlfriend" he say.

Who is she? That's what he should be explaining.

"Oh! Your black girlfriend. She is not that bad"

Tyson try to hold my hand, "Babe, this is Nicole"

"Nicole the wrestler, Nicole Scherzinger the singer or Nicole Kidman the actress?" I ask.

"No sweetie, I'm Nicole Givanston, the wife" the skinny bitch say.

My knees feel weak. I look at Tyson.

"Darren's wife, her son is sleeping upstairs" he say with trails of fear.

"He is our son Tyson, he know you as his father" she say angrily.

"Yes he is" he say awkwardly.

"This is what came up?" I ask glaring at him.

"Babe..."

I give him my hand, "I need a glass of water"

"Can I talk to you?" He ask following me to the kitchen.

I stop by the counter and look at him. I'm so proud of myself for being this calm.

"You are mad at me?" He ask.

"What is going on here?" I ask.

He blink, rapidly.

"Huh?" I demand the answer.

"She is Darren's wife, she brought my son over"

"And that was hard to tell me because?" I ask glaring straight into his stupid eyes.

He keep quiet.

"Do you need a break so that you attend to your family?" I ask.

"No, I love you baby. I'm scared you guys won't get along, they need me"

I exhale, "You know I thought you were this powerful, clever businessman who knew how to set boundaries and maintain his personal life accordingly. I was wrong, but maybe I wasn't. You just don't love me enough"

He step toward me, "I love you. God knows I do. I just wanted to spend time with my twin's family. I don't want him to think I deserted them"

Do dead people think?

I sigh, "I have no problem with that, I have a problem with you keeping that from me"

"Is it too late now to say sorry?" He ask.

I smile, "No"

He put his hand behind my neck and slowly put his lips on mine. I missed him. I've never been this crazy about someone's lips before.

"I'm sorry my love" he whispers.

"You're forgiven" I say my hands running over his chest.

He smile, "And you were here to get a glass of water"

"No I'm okay now"

He laugh, "Okay I need you to do one thing for me"

I look at him.

"Don't take anything she say to the heart. Ever since Darren passed on she is always angry. She need love, not hate. Be patient with her"

I don't know how to feel about this. The woman look naturally rude. But I nod in agreement. He kiss my forehead.

"You will see Danny in the morning" he say happily.

"Who said I'm sleeping over?" I ask.

"Your yummy pussy"

Oh! I crack with laughter.

"Tyson go check on Danny" she yell from the lounge.

I look at him, "Really?"

He sigh, "He is always having nightmares"

"That's bad, go"

He look at me hesitantly. I give him an assuring look then walk to Nicole, she is scrolling on her phone disregarding my presence.

"Your hair is excellent" I compliment her.

"That's what Tyson always say, thank you"

I let out a chuckle, "He doesn't lie"

"At least not to me"

She put the phone aside, "All the Givanstons have beautiful hair. It's a pity, you are bringing a new different generation with your hair type"

She doesn't know me.

"I bet it is" I say.

"I should take him for a haircut tomorrow, plus he need new boxers"

I'm going to strangle this bitch.

She smile, "Tyson barely talk about you, so tell me about yourself"

"That's for another day. It must be nice being married to the twin, if he dies you don't care to visit his tombstone with flowers and cry your lungs out. You just bring your skinny ass to the living twin and woola!"

She blink twice, "Are you trying to mock my husband's death?"

"You are white, you are supposed to know English better. Your husband died, Tyson is my boyfriend. Stop acting like his wife, be his brother's widow." I say in emphasis.

She laughs, "I am a Givanston. You are just a chick, passing by. Don't get on my nerves"

"You can keep your name, but keep your claws off my boyfriend and go visit your husband's grave" I say.

"What's the fuck?" Tyson's voice say behind me.

I meet his face, he look murderous.

Chapter Hundred & Eighteen

Zethu Biyela

.

He excuse her. She walk up the stairs crying her eyeballs out. He wait until she disappears than take a few steps toward me. His jaws are clenched, he look so angry.

"Tell me my ears were deceiving me" he say.

I don't move an inch. He stop near my face.

"You talk shit to my brother's wife, huh?"

I don't cry, I'm Zethu. That's what my innerself keep saying to me.

"You have no idea how rude she was to me. Are you perhaps fucking her?" I say calm as ever.

"I asked you a simple thing, to sympathize with her. Instead of that you talk shit, poke on her wounds and get fucking insecure for shit" he roars.

"You didn't tell me by sympathizing with her you mean I must take her rudeness and racism. I tell you what, I don't let people walk over me, boyfriend's brother's widow or not"

"Don't provoke me. You need to learn to respect people in my life, go up there and apologize" he says.

There is a loose screw in his head. I look at him, not able to explain his stupidity.

"Respect is a two-way street. I'm not gonna go around wasting my respect, she must work for it. I didn't kill her husband, give..."

He grabs my top, breathing heavily. Fortunately the bottle of wine Nicole has been drinking is inches away from my hand. I grab it. I grew up in Mandeni, inhaling Sappi smoke with Squambe taxi drivers fighting in front of me. Before he can blink there is a broken bottle in my hand.

He lets go of me, "What are you doing?"

"I'm glad you have a chance to ask. I'm waiting for you to make the biggest mistake of your life, then you will see what I do" I answer, devil rising all over.

"You're nuts" he says in disbelief.

I chuckle, "You think, you and your white little family are gonna have your way with me? No, you're wrong. I will fuck you up before I allow you to put your hands on me"

He exhales, "I would never put my hands on you, I don't know what came over me"

"Is it?" I ask.

He looks at me, "Zethu put the bottle down. Let's talk"

"Funny! Go fuck your brother's wife, I don't care. She might buy you new boxers"

He frowns, "What?"

"Her words, not mine. I hope she makes you happy"

I walk away, fighting tears that threaten to come out. My heart is broken. How dare he attack me without getting the full story? How can he choose her over me?

I get in the car and drive out. My heart is heavy, but I don't want to break down. I'm going to be okay. It happens, people choose other people over others all the time. I'm not the first, nor the last. It's life.

I don't know how I managed to sleep, the last time I cried like last night was when Loyiso died. My heart breaks all over again as I recall how he grabbed my clothes, looking like he can kill me and sleep peacefully at night. He looked at me like I'm some cockroach.

I check my phone. There is nothing from him. Not a lousy 'sorry' message. I swallow the big lump on my throat and get up.

I take a long warm shower, mix it with my tears then get out feeling one percent better. I don't have time for makeup and match-dressing. I wrap a doek around my head and wear long ugly maroon dress. I don't know who it belongs to, I probably stole it from Nozipho long time ago. I do steal their clothes.

I drive to Wimpy and order breakfast. My mind is roaming faraway. I only eat a slice of toast, my appetite somehow deplete.

I drive back to my place and wrap myself on the couch. It sucks being single. I didn't even get a good morning text.

Phone disturbs me. It's Sena, I sigh.

"What?" I answer.

"Are you for real? Who goes out dressed up like that? You're ruining our name"

I sigh.

"What now, sister?"

I hear her grunt, "The pictures of you eating breakfast at Wimpy, dressed up like Gog' Flo"

Oh gosh! I can't deal.

"That's the least of my worries. Tyson and I had a big fight, and there is no light" I say.

"Come on, couples always fight. None of them ever went out looking like that"

She won't understand. I hate being hurt.

"I don't care, that's the important line" I say.

She laughs, "This is the first, go speak with him. Make sure you are calm, don't bring any internal warriors. Have a logic conversation, talk some sense into his head if you have to. See your fault if you have. Love is not black and white"

"I don't know" I say fighting the lump in my throat.

"Trust me, people use you by your weakness in order to get to you. And your weakness is your temper. Put it in control"

I exhale, "I will go later"

"That's my sister"

"I have a roommate, she is going to be a waitress at Gala Diners from tomorrow" I say.

"Zethu you can't just hire people, we have an agency to do that for us"

I knew she would whine.

"I'll explain later, let the management know"

She sighs, "Fine"

"Tell Quinton I love him, bye"

"I want my dress back, that dress was bought by Lwazi. You are a thief"

"I've heard worse, bye"

I drop the call.

After her call, my father calls. I smile, teary.

"Dad"

"How are you feeling?" He asks.

"I'm good, how is mom?"

"She is fine, I'm also fine"

I laugh, "You are always fine dad. To what do I owe this call?"

"Can't I call my baby?"

I roll my eyes, "You can"

"Did he hurt you last night?"

My heart stops for a second. How did he find out?

"No. Why are you asking?" I say in a brave voice.

"Nothing. Let me know if he does something stupid. I didn't raise you to be played by white boys"

Really?

"Dad, I'm a big girl I can take care of myself" I say.

This old man doesn't get it. He just wants to control everything. He gives me eight warnings before dropping the call.

I log in to my WhatsApp to return messages. There is an unknown number that sent me a message. It's a picture.

It's them, having breakfast.

Now Nicole is taking it too far. Who gave her my number?

I delete the picture and block her number.

I'm here sulking because we had a fight, and he is with her eating breakfast looking all happy dovey! I'm not about to get on my knees and crawl for love.

Chapter Hundred & Nineteen

Fikile Biyela

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I decide to have an early day, I need to do shopping and catch up with the sisters. I need to convince Zethu to cancel her house-party so that I can host my dinner. Well, I'm not planning to invite my parents nor Aunt Lydia. I think it's better if I introduce him to the siblings first then parents. Beside my dad can get all Zulu and demand him to marry me.

I miss him, all the time. He is not the 'texting' type, he calls. I don't know how many times he call me a day. He is just the sweetest man I know.

I drive to the mall, do my grocery and decide to have my nails done. I grab a few jeans then drive off.

I might see him today, I don't know but I'd better cook dinner. I know how much he hate eating leaves like a rabbit, so I will do curry and rice.

I put the rice on the stove then go up to shower. My phone beep as I take the stairs down after dressing up in my casual clothes.

It's Zethu's text; I'M KILLING MYSELF

And now?

I call her immediately, but she doesn't pick up.

Is she high?

I call Sbu, he answers after a decade.

"Big sister"

I'm freaking out.

"What is happening? Zethu is texting me saying she is killing herself"

He laugh, "Maybe with booze"

"She is not answering her phone" I say in frustration.

"Okay I'm going to go check on her, she better make my drive worth it" he say.

"Okay, let me know when you are there"

Zethu had never had suicidal thoughts. Maybe she is bluffing. Why would she kill herself, her life is smooth. Tyson love her to death.

I'm pacing in the dining room, impatiently waiting for Sbu's call. How slow can one person drive? Nx. I grab my car keys and dash out.

I get inside like a police officer.

"Zethu!!!" I yell.

Sbu reply from the bedroom. I walk there and find him brushing her head while she is lying on his lap.

"What is happening?" I ask with my heart pounding out.

"Tyson broke her heart" Sbu say.

I exhale, "What did he do?"

"He is fucking his late twin's wife, I hate him" she say breaking down.

I can't express my shock.Wtf!

"How did you find out?" I ask in astonishment.

"She sent me the picture of him sleeping in new boxers she say she bought"

Wait a sec..

"Who is this woman?" I ask.

"Nicole, she is a bitch and he stupidly take her side" she say.

Okay,now a certain bitch is tormenting my sister and Tyson is neglecting her and picking her side.I don't care if her husband died because of Tyson, I'm not going to let them make Zethu cry.

"I need to see this moron" Sbu say,filling up with anger.

"We must, but he must come over here. Zethu get up" I say.

I know exactly how people like Tyson operate,getting his ass here is going to be easy.

I quickly look for a lingerie. I know Sbu is going to hate this.I call Zethu to the bathroom.

"Why am I wearing this?" She ask.

I wink, "To get Tyson here"

She frown then slowly take it.She look so broken and hopeless.I know she love him and this is her first serious heartbreak.

"Sbu don't freak" I yell before we walk in.

He cover his face, "Get the fuck out of here!"

"It's not the first time you see a lingerie" I say.

He curse, "Not on my sister.This is disgusting"

I laugh, "Nothing is revealed here.Open your eyes and help us"

He look at Zethu with a disgusted facial expression.

"You are stealing sex,but you go overboard for it.Why are you buying lingerie? For which fucker cause you're not married?"

Argh!! Brika.

"Not now..Alright, Zethu lie on Sbu's lap.I will not show his upper part,only you and his legs" I say getting my phone ready for taking pictures.

They look at me like I'm crazy.Sigh!

"We want to deal with Tyson, is it? Now let do something that's going to get him here flying. We know his possessive ass" I say.

Sbu hate being a part of it. I totally understand, he is a black brother. In his head we mustn't wear all these kinky staff, only his wife must. Double standards!

I make sure not to capture his face. I forward pictures to Zethu's phone and order her to update her status with them.

Sbu walk to the lounge to watch soccer. We keep checking if he has viewed them. Five minutes later he has viewed them. Woola!

Zethu dress up, I go to the kitchen to prepare bucket of icy water. The door opens.

It's Thapelo and a little girl. My heart light up. It's good to see him, he look better than before.

"Hello" he greet.

I smile, "Hello Mr Sunshine"

He laughs, "What is your brother doing here?"

"Watching TV, did they shoot your leg or eyes?" Sbu reply.

"They shot my dick"

I give them a look, "We are kids, hello"

They laugh.

Zethu appears, "Oh Phindile you're here"

She knows the girl with a huge bag?!

"Guys this is Phindile, my roommate" she say taking the bag.

I look at Sbu with a frown, "You need a roommate?"

"No she need a room" she say then order the girl to follow her.

Sbu turn to Thapelo, "Where did you find this girl?"

"Long story. Why are you all here?" He ask taking a seat.

Before we can answer there is a white angry face at the door. Sbu get on his feet.

"Where is Zethu?" He demand.

He get a fist against his jaw for an answer. Sbu have his collar in his hand.

"Who do you think you are?" He is asking.

Thapelo break them apart. Sbu is fuming. What I didn't know is that Tyson tried to put his hands on Zethu. I trusted him, he is turning out to be like Loyiso.

I should pour cold water over him, but I stop myself. Let Sbu deal with it.

"I'm not cheating on her" he say.

Sbu is hearing none of it, he want to have him on his hands.

"I don't care, I care about you giving your bitch my sister's cellphone number. I told you not to hurt her, now she want to die because of you"

He remove blood on his lip, "I didn't give anyone her contacts. I swear you're making a mistake"

"Why are you here?" I ask, calmly.

"I want to see her"

He is lying.

"No you saw her pictures and thought she is cheating on you. Did she show up in your house when you sent her your picture wearing your new boxers?" I ask.

He look shocked, "What?"

"When pictures of you having breakfast with your wife were flaunted on her face did she show up on your door?"

He clench his jaws, "She is not my wife"

"Yes she is not, you are taking over your brother's place. Isn't you also took over his businesses? The game continues" I lash.

Sbu chuckles, "And he thought tagging my sister along his games would work. You are a mess bro! If you want to play Darren, leave my sister out of it"

He try to speak, but the cat get his tongue.

"Guys I think that's enough" Thapelo say.

I grin at him, "No it's not, Tyson need to choose which life he want to live. Zethu doesn't need irrelevant drama"

"I love her" he say apologetic.

"Do you love her enough to let go of Darren?" I ask.

He keep quiet.

"I thought as much. Please get out of here" Sbu say.

Thapelo try to intervene, I stop him. Zethu appears with her arms folded. They stare at each other.

"Queen" Tyson say.

Zethu exhale, "Leave"

He look hurt by her words, he wait for confirmation.

"I don't ever wanna see you again" Zethu say.

He shake his head, "You don't mean that"

Sbu push him out,he doesn't fight.He bang the door after him.I look at Zethu.Tears are running down her face.

I hug her, "He is not worth these tears"

"I don't get it.I love him so much"

I stay until Zethu fall asleep then leave along with Sbu and Thapelo.I wonder how that little girl feel with all that drama on her first day.

I park my car in the garage,but something rush into my mind.I left rice on the stove,I didn't even lock the doors.

I get inside the house on full speed and dash to the kitchen.

I stop dead on my track as I find a guy sitting on my kitchen chair.He is wearing a three-piece suit,his eyes are glued on the cellphone.

"Who are you?" I ask my heart pounding out.

He look up, "Please forgive me for making myself comfortable.You were in a big hurry and left the doors unlocked"

Who is he?

"Can I help you?" I ask.

"I'm here to pick you up,but it's late you can sleep" he say.

Pick me up?

"Your rice burnt,I didn't know you left a cooking pot.I hope you are not hungry"

I'm hungry, what is he thinking?

"I'm Fikile,the house owner" I say sizing him up.

"I'm sorry" he chuckles.

"My name is Nceba.I was told to come here and pick you so that you join us for dinner.But you left as I arrived,then I was instructed to wait for you and make sure everything is fine"

I sigh in relief, "Everything is fine,thank you"

He give me his hand,I shake it.

"I'm happy to finally meet you" he say.

I smile, "Likewise"

"I wasn't sure what to buy you,I ended up buying this bracelet. I hope you will not throw it in the bin" he say handing me the small box.

I smile, happily.

"I love it"

He nod and give me a stern look, "Don't disappoint us"

I frown, "With what?"

"By leaving him.If he does something you don't like talk to us or sit down with him.Leaving must not be an option"

He is somehow making me nervous.

"I won't leave" I say.

"I trust you"

"How old are you?" I ask.

He chuckles, "Around 25,26 and 27"

I laugh.He is afraid of telling people his age.

"How is Nqubeko?"

"He is fine.I heard you gave him a good hiding.I owe you a pair of high heels for that"

I laugh, "Am I ever going to hear the last of it?"

We chat a bit before he leave.He is the good one.He is handsome, polite and well mannered.The way he dress up scream 'Backham' instead of 'Nkosi'.

Now what am I going to eat?

Chapter Hundred &Twenty

Simtho Biyela

.

He is looking at me with so much sadness. It's like I'm leaving the country and never coming back.I kiss his lips one more time.

He sigh, "I hope they treat you good"

I doubt I will get a warm welcome. The last time I was there the cousins and neighbours were shooting murderous looks at me.I remember the other one who kept telling people that I killed Loyiso.

"I'm strong babe" I assure him.

He force a smile, "I know you are"

I disconnect my phone from the charger,the driver is already waiting by the door impatiently.

"Kiss?" I ask him.

He stand and hold my waist.

"I love you" he say warmly.

I smile, "I love you more"

We kiss,slowly.He doesn't let go, I laugh and push him off.

"3days?"

I nod, "Yes,only three"

I know I will miss him like crazy.He has been with me every step of the way.He is the first person I talk to when I wake up and the last person I talk to before I fall asleep.And Junior. My Junior.I love him, he is understanding and very clever for his age.I expected him to ask questions and pick on the mood, instead he is treating 'mommy' like an egg.Somewhat I feel like the gap is closing when I'm with him.

He walk me to the car,we spend another 4minutes kissing. The driver is irritated and Don is enjoying it.I know a lot of people don't approve of our relationship.The sad part is I don't care anymore.I've been getting a lot of judgement, I've finally reached the 'whatever' phase.

I'm praying for this drive to be longer,but you know I always get the opposite of what I want.The driver speed and get in Stanger before I can lecture my heart with: Do not take anything they say.

It feel like years.I remember the first day I stepped on this yard,I was happy. He was happy.His father was happy.He wasn't a bad person,he loved me and protected me with his all.He just couldn't protect me from him.He couldn't protect himself from himself either. I wonder if the fatherhood would've changed him.

"Makoti"

The voice bring me back on earth.There is something running down on my cheek, I quickly wipe it.

"It's okay" he say.

He was the best father-in-law.He never judged me,even after everything he didn't hate me.

I greet him formally.He shake my hand and lead me to the house.

I sit on the chair opposite him, "I hope I'm not early"

He shake his head, "I'm glad you have finally decided to come"

I feel uneasy.I feel like he is going to appear somewhere.My hands are shaking. We also shared some memories on this table.He'd sit me down and tell me about his childhood memories. I'd be playing with his dreads.

"Here"

I look up, it's Mbatha handing me a glass of water. I drink, my hands are shaking.

"Did he hurt you?" He ask.

I look at him, he is staring at me with his wrinkled eyes.

"No" I say without thinking.

He nod while tapping on the table with his fingers. I don't like him questioning me. I don't have all the answers he'd like to have. I know he want closure.

I look at him, he is in deep thoughts. I clear my throat.

"I was hoping to go home tomorrow" I say.

"Everything will be done today. We need to remove ithunzi on you before the sun set"

As time goes few people arrive, including hood boys who are in charge of goat slaughtering. I know it is stupid of me, but I decide to be busy in the kitchen. I felt awkward sitting in the room with those women. I'm relieved none of them talked about me and Loyiso.

I make tea for Mbatha and women then call one of the boys to come take the jug of juice.

"Yebo sisi" he say coming through the back door.

"Take this juice" I say pointing at the jug.

He frown, "And do what with it?"

Er!!

"Drink with others"

He chuckles, "No sistery we drink beer"

"There is no beer here" I say.

"They sell it at the tuckshop across the road" he say pushing his hands into the jacket pockets.

So I'm supposed to give them money? Shuu. I get my purse and give him a R50.

"You'll get two beers there" I say.

"Mara sistery you're loaded, you can give us a R100 so that we also get cigarettes"

I give him a look, "Take it or leave it"

He click his tongue, "Mxm! Rich people are stingy, if Bra Loyiso was still alive we would be swimming in the beers but you decided to kill him. Bitch!"

I watch him, frozen, until he disappears. I didn't kill Loyiso, Tyson did. I gave him no consent, I had no clue. I hope Loyiso, wherever he is, knows that I never took his soul. I'm not that cruel.

The ceremony start, one of the aunts take me outside with a dish of cold water. She talk while pouring water on me.

There is a huge lump on my throat. I feel like crying my lungs out. I don't know what is happening. Everyone is enjoying the feast, good memories are being shared.

They give me a tray of full chicken and steam bread slices. I don't have any appetite. This other woman is on my throat asking why my family didn't show up. I'm tired of explaining. My mother may be a housewife but her schedule is always tight.

Finally people start leaving, only one aunt is left. She is spending the night since she live far. Bab' Mbatha ask if I would like to rest. Being alone is what my heart want right now.

"Did you put enough blankets in Loyiso's house?" he ask the aunt.

"Yes, more are on top of the wardrobe in case she feel cold"

My heart is pounding. What???

"I will sleep in his house?" I ask.

"Your house" the aunt say.

To say I'm scared would be an understatement, but I need to get away from this aunt.

I look at all directions before walking in. The lights are on. His picture is hanging on the wall. His eyes are staring right at me. I close the door behind me and walk to the picture.

"Hey" I brush his dread.

He is staring at me. He might have questions for me, just like I have for him.

"It feel like a dream, or like one of your stupid games"

I chuckle, he got away with a lot of things. One of them being;

"I can't believe you stayed with me for almost four years but only sang for me once. You had a lot of hidden agendas, but I loved you anyway"

I shed one tear, "I wish we had a good good-bye"

I sit on 'our' huge bed. No matter how happy I am with Don, Loyiso and I have history. We shared bad and good memories, now they're all haunting me.

I open the wardrobe. I smell his shirt, his memory reside in me, I remember how he smelt like this every afternoon.

I take his brown coat and put it on. He loved it. I walk out the door. In the township people don't lock the gates. I only push it open and walk out.

There he rest. I kneel in front of him.

"Long time"

I put my hands on the tombstone. The wind is whirling harshly. I squeeze my dress in my thighs.

"I hope you have met our daughter. I hope up there you are protecting her. I wanted to meet her and hold her in my arms, but I guess God decided she is better in daddy's hands. I know you Mbatha is protecting her at all cost. Please do tell her mommy loves her, even though I didn't meet her I miss her. I miss her little kicks. I miss feeding her chicken, yes she loved chicken from my stomach. You also loved meat, steak. I hope you guys have enough meat in heaven"

Tears have blurred my vision, "I hope you've forgiven me, for all my mistakes. I loved you, your actions pushed me away. You pushed me into Don's arms..he..he make me happy. I'm happy, more than I ever was. Forgive me! I've forgiven you as well"

"I came here to have a good bye with you. A good bye with no tears and hatred.. Goodbye my love. Mbatha wami. I will always cherish the memories we made. You have a special place in my heart, babydaddy"

"Have a good night. I love you both"

I wipe the tears. I'm at ease now. I walk back home. Bab' Mbatha is out Loyiso's house door.

He remove the phone from his ear when he see me.

"Where have you been?"

I keep quiet and look at him.

He put the phone back to his ear, "She is here Biyela..Yes she is fine..Okay I will tell her"

"You can't just wander in this area, we have dagga boys who are always lurking for people. Not only do they rob them of their belongings, they rape and kill" he say.

"I'm sorry"

"Your father want you to sleep" he say.

Seriously Muzi?!

"Okay I'm going to be on bed"

I get in, he close the door and leave. I search my phone in my bag. I have 53 missed calls and tons of messages.

The first person I call is Don, he left more messages than all of them. I know wherever he is he is going insane.

Chapter Hundred & Twenty One

Zethu Biyela

.

Phindile has started at the restaurant, she take a cab to and from work. Thapelo is temporarily taking care of her, financially. She just came back but she is already on her feet cleaning.

"What must I cook?" she ask.

"Cook me a man"

She frown.

I sigh, "I want my man, not food"

I can't believe I'm this pathetic. Life ne!

"I'm sorry sis' Zethu"

She is an angel I tell you. I motion her to sit.

"You are not a maid here, you are a room mate. You cook when you feel like cooking, and cook what you want to eat. And we have a cleaning service, when you come back from work you need to rest"

She nod her head.

"Great. Do you have a boyfriend?" I ask.

She laugh, "No"

"Neither do I"

We laugh.

"I have a sister, younger than me, she went missing. There is nothing concrete we are holding on, except hope. Then my pillar of strength has left me, this is not my year" I sulk.

"My brother disappeared five years ago. Mom searched hospitals, morgues and prisons with no success. Now she is suffering from TB and diabetes, I'd do anything to keep her alive. She is the only family I have"

I pull her for a hug, "That's sad, I'm sorry you're going through such pain at this tender age. But you have to return to school"

We cook supper together. She know her way around the kitchen, I'm passing ingredients while sipping on wine. I also help with stirring curry pot.

After eating I leave her watching TV and go bath. My life is fucked up. Trust them when they say money doesn't buy you happiness.

I put on the big Nike t-shirt I stole from Sbu's house. I stole it for pyjama purposes.

I bump on Phindile. She look frightened.

"What is it?" I ask.

"He want you"

I frown and walk to the lounge.

Really? Legs on the table, remote in his hand and my TV playing some stupid music channel.

First thing I kick his feet off my table. Yes, I kick. Then I grab the remote and switch off my TV. He has an audacity to come here like a debt collector and make himself comfortable on my couch.

"You.. you are wearing a man's t-shirt! What's the fuck?"

He falls to the floor when he attempts to stand and grab me. He is kaak drunk. I don't know why God is challenging me like this.

"What are you here for?" I ask.

He balances by the couch and closes his eyes. Wow, just wow!

I roughly shake him, "Get out of here"

Where is his Nicole?

"I want to stand up and look at you. I miss you, my queen"

Sigh!

"Do we really have to do this? We are adults we are supposed to have a clean break up. And you are a bee, buzzing annoyingly next to my ear" I say lifting him up.

I'm going to push him outside and lock the door. Then I will call Nicole to come and get him.

"Aren't you just a fucked up moron?" I ask leading him to the door.

"I'm your fucked up moron, I love..."

Mighty Jesus! Matthew! Johannes! Maria! Hezekiah! Adam & Eva!

He fuckin' threw up on my face! My t-shirt! I let him fall to the floor and run to the bathroom screaming. I get under the cold shower.

When I come back he is fast asleep on his vomit. I pull him and take off his shirt. I wonder how wives of drunkards deal with this everyday.

Phindile comes to check on me and finds me cleaning the floor with a half-naked white man snoring on the couch.

She gives me a pitiful look that says "Love neh?" I tell her to go sleep, I got this.

I should let him sleep on this couch with no blanket, but my heart fights that little devil whisper. I slap his cheek, another stupid argument starts. I drag him to the bedroom.

He sleeps peacefully on my bed. I never thought we would be here. I trusted him with my heart. I put my hand on my face that is drawn on his chest. To think he got this tattoo before we even started dating is creepy. I smile when running my fingers through his hair, I did this the first day I saw him.

I get under covers with him but leave enough space in between. I turn the lights off.

I wake to the sound of a cellphone ringing. He is still snoring, fast asleep. I pull the phone out of his pocket. Guess who is calling?

I smile,

"Tyson's phone hello"

"Who is that? Where is Tyson?"

I roll my eyes, "Nickie just leave the message, I will tell him when he wake up"

She chuckles, "Look here girly, Tyson is a family man and right now me and Danny need him. So put your bitchy ass on hold and do the honourable thing. Wake him up and tell him we need him"

I laugh, "You need medical attention for having such mentality state. Please don't disturb us again, we had a long night"

I drop the call and put the phone under the pillow.

I get off bed and walk to the bathroom. I wash my face, brush my teeth and wear my gown. I find Phindile in the kitchen fixing her lunchtin.

"Girl"

She glance at me briefly and dash to the fridge.

"Hi sisi, I'm late yazi"

I laugh at her. She is disorganized like me. Things are all over the place.

Ten minutes later she is running to the door with sleepers on. Gosh this girl!

"Shoes!!"

After Phindile has left I make myself a cup of coffee and cuddle myself on the couch.

Oops! I have a guest in the bedroom. I get in and find him staring at the ceiling.

"Nice hotel room you booked yourself into" I say looking at him arms folded.

He look at me and keep quiet.

"Thanks for throwing up on my face last night. It was a great gift I've ever recieved after being ditched and cheated on"

"I threw up on you?" He ask clearly shocked and embarrassed.

I roll my eyes, "Get up I want to make my bed, your wife or bitch has been calling and calling"

He sit up, "I have a terrible headache, do you have painkillers?"

"Is this a pharmacy? Am I a pharmacist? Are you my patient?" I ask.

"Queen"

Really?

"Get out" I say firmly.

He sigh, "Where is my shirt?"

I roll my eyes.

"Can I use the bathroom first?" He ask.

"Sure"

He walk to the bathroom and stay inside for ten minutes.I didn't allow him to go shower his body, I thought he wanted to pee.

I knock on the door, "Don't waste water"

I wait by the door until he get out looking yummy with damp hair.

"I'm hungry" he say.

"This is not a hotel,go home I'm sure Nicole have prepared you Jamaican breakfast" I say.

"I love you,only you just so you know"

I exhale, "Go Ty"

"Let's talk,please"

"We passed that stage" I say.

He chuckles, "It's either we talk or fuck each other's brain out because I'm never letting you go Zethu.I know I'm piece of shit,with a fucked up life. I'm sorry I fell in love with you and subjected you into this life.One way or other you need to accept me,change what you can and live with me"

I let out a chuckle, "Is it?"

"Yes it's that or death does us apart" he say.

There is no smile.No uncertainty on his face.

"Are you threatening me?"

He shake his head, "I wouldn't do that.So what is it gonna be?"

"I don't know"

He smile, "I want to fuck you"

"What if I don't want to be fucked?" I ask.

"We will make such harsh decisions once we are horny" he say.

We are still outside the bathroom door. He take my hand, I allow him. We walk to the kitchen.

"I visited his grave yesterday, I feel better. I know he wanted me to be happy and you are my happiness"

He squeeze my hand, "Talking with him made me realise how short life can be. Starting from today I want to cherish and love you with all I have. I love you, only you"

I exhale, "Love is not a problem, Nicole is"

"I only want to be part of Danny's life, she can fly to wherever she want. I don't love her, never have"

"That make her part of the package, mother and child always go together" I say.

"If I have a soft spot for a person she can have things her way, but when I lose that soft spot things go my way or otherwise"

What is 'otherwise'?

He sit me on the chair and make breakfast. He must wear something on top, it's a disturbing view.

He dish for me,

"You need all the energy. Have some redbull too, I'm very horny plus angry"

I laugh, "Angry at who?"

"At myself for being a fool"

"You are right, you're very foolish my dear"

He smile, "You should stop telling your brother your problems. I didn't grow up in Mlazi eating brown bread and potatoe chips, he nearly broke my jaws"

I laugh. We are good.